



Severn Mentoring
IT, Online Safety & Acceptable Use Policy
(Community Mentoring & Alternative Provision – September 2025)

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out Severn Mentoring's approach to safe, responsible and lawful use of technology, internet access and digital communication.

It applies to:

- All Severn Mentoring staff, volunteers and service users (mentees and learners).
- All electronic equipment owned, provided, or accessed for Severn Mentoring purposes, including laptops, tablets, phones, and online platforms.
- Any internet use that occurs during Severn Mentoring sessions, including supervised tuition or mentoring activities in community spaces.

This policy supports:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*
- *UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*
- *Keeping Learners Safe (Wales)*
- *UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Education for a Connected World Framework (2024)*

2. Policy Statement and Aims

Severn Mentoring recognises that technology is a powerful educational and communication tool but also presents risks if misused.

Our aims are to:

- Safeguard all learners and staff from online harm.
- Promote safe, responsible and respectful use of digital platforms.
- Prevent cyberbullying, exploitation and exposure to inappropriate content.
- Ensure all use of technology supports learning, wellbeing and positive engagement.
- Protect Severn Mentoring's data and reputation.

3. Acceptable Use Statement for Service Users

All learners and service users who access Severn Mentoring technology or use the internet during sessions must agree to the following **Acceptable Use Agreement**:

Service User Commitments

1. Respectful Behaviour:

- I will use technology responsibly, treating others with respect in all online interactions.
- I will not use abusive, threatening or discriminatory language.

2. Appropriate Use:

- I will only use devices, apps and websites for mentoring, tuition or approved activities.
- I will not access, download or share inappropriate, illegal or harmful content.

3. Privacy and Safety:

- I will never share personal details or images of myself or others online.
- I will not use others' logins or attempt to access restricted areas.
- I will report anything online that makes me uncomfortable or worried.

4. Cyberbullying and Respect:

- I understand that cyberbullying, online gossip or harassment is not acceptable and will lead to intervention or removal from sessions.

5. Device Responsibility:

- I will handle Severn Mentoring devices carefully and return them as instructed.
- I will not install or delete apps or alter security settings.

6. Social Media:

- I will not contact Severn Mentoring staff through personal social media accounts.
- Any digital communication will take place through approved professional channels.

By participating in Severn Mentoring sessions, learners and parents/carers agree to follow this Acceptable Use Statement.

4. Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Model safe, respectful and lawful use of technology.
- Only use Severn Mentoring-approved devices and accounts for work purposes.
- Never contact mentees via personal phones or social media.
- Report any safeguarding or online safety concern to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.
- Keep devices secure and lock screens when unattended.
- Store and share digital files only via encrypted or password-protected systems.

Breaches of these expectations will be addressed under Severn Mentoring's disciplinary or safeguarding procedures as appropriate.

5. Anti-Bullying (Online / Cyberbullying)

Severn Mentoring has **zero tolerance** for any form of online bullying or digital harassment.

Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful or false content about someone online.
- Using text messages, social media, gaming or other digital platforms to intimidate or humiliate.

Prevention and Response:

- Staff discuss digital behaviour and kindness during mentoring sessions.
- Learners are supported to recognise the impact of online words and actions.
- Any report of cyberbullying is recorded, investigated and addressed under the **Behaviour & Code of Conduct Policy**.
- Parents, schools and local authorities are informed where appropriate.
- Serious or repeated incidents may lead to removal from online access or referral to safeguarding authorities.

Our anti-bullying approach aligns with:

- *KCSIE 2025 – Online Safety Section*
- *Rights, Respect, Equality* (Welsh Gov, 2019)

6. Internet Use – Filtering, Monitoring & Supervision

Because Severn Mentoring operates primarily in community and tuition settings, internet safety relies on **supervision, controlled access and staff vigilance**.

At Severn Mentoring sites:

- Internet access is **filtered and monitored** via provider-level controls to block inappropriate content (violence, extremism, pornography, hate speech, gambling, etc.).
- Monitoring software flags search terms or activity that may indicate risk.
- Logs are reviewed by the Service Manager / DSL.

In the Community:

- Staff are responsible for supervising all internet use by mentees during sessions (e.g., café Wi-Fi, mobile hotspot, community hubs).
- If secure access cannot be guaranteed, the mentor should restrict online activity to offline learning tasks.
- Public Wi-Fi must never be used for personal or confidential information.

Remote Learning / Tuition Platforms:

- Only approved educational or communication platforms may be used (e.g., Teams, Zoom with password entry, or safeguarding-approved software).
- Sessions must never be recorded without consent and purpose.
- The DSL reviews any online delivery methods to ensure safeguarding compliance.

7. Data Protection and Privacy

All digital communication and storage must comply with the **UK GDPR** and **Data Protection Act 2018**.

- Personal data must never be shared via unsecured email or cloud storage.

- Staff must log out of systems after use.
- Any suspected data breach must be reported immediately to the **Data Protection Lead**.

(See the Severn Mentoring **Data Protection Policy** for full details.)

8. Education and Awareness

Severn Mentoring actively teaches young people to:

- Recognise online risks such as grooming, scams, misinformation and cyberbullying.
- Protect personal information and use strong passwords.
- Report concerns safely and confidently.
- Engage positively and respectfully in online communities.

9. Monitoring and Review

- The DSL and Service Manager review IT use, incidents and security logs termly.
- Policy effectiveness is assessed after any online incident or guidance update.
- The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

10. Named Leads

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Richard KEAR

Data Protection Lead (DPL): Richard Kear

IT / Systems Contact: Josh Carter

Approved by: Directors / DSL

Date: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Applies to: All Severn Mentoring staff, volunteers, and service users