Warwickshire Adult and Community Learning

Online Learning Guidance – information for learners

Thank you for joining one of our online courses. We hope you agree that learning online can be a productive and positive learning experience although a little different from face-to-face classes.

It is important to recognise that the online classroom is still a place of learning and certain standards are expected when you communicate with those engaging with you.

General Guidelines

- Be on time. Sessions will start and finish according to the timetable.   If you join late, please don't interrupt the session. Remain silent. Your tutor will support you.
- Be prepared. Come to the meeting with a positive attitude and with any course materials or resources that you have been asked to have ready
- Where possible, choose a quiet location – away from pets, children, etc. Turn off the TV and any music.
- Be ready to take part. Not everybody is confident in speaking up within a group, especially when you don't already know other learners. However, to make the most of your learning experience we ask that you share ideas, ask questions, and contribute to the discussions.

What you will need

- A PC, laptop, tablet or phone with a webcam (PC's, laptops and tablets work best with the software)
- Earphones with a microphone
- A quiet room – preferably on your own
- A comfortable space/table for you to undertake any practical activities or space to write
- NB check the lighting in the room. Sitting with a window or light directly behind makes it difficult for others to see you.

Prior to the lesson

- Your tutor will send you a link prior to the start date of your course explaining which platform you will be using and how to access it.
- If you have any health conditions that you wish your tutor to be aware of, please inform them by email.
- If you can't attend as expected, please notify your tutor by email prior to the start time.
- NB only those invited to a lesson will be able to enter the 'room'.

When communicating online

- Be respectful of others and their opinions.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and others').
- Beware of using reply all when emailing – does everyone need to see your message?
- Remember to stay on topic. Is this relevant to your subject?
- Remember to listen and not talk over each other – this comes with practice! Mute yourself when not talking.
- The class tutor will have the final say in enforcing the rules.

- Please remember we still need to keep each other safe. If you are concerned about your own or another person's safety, please tell your tutor or report it using the Safeguarding number.

Online Safety in class

- If possible, blur your background or use a backdrop. If this is not possible, check there are no personal or sensitive items in view.
- The tutor may ask you to turn off (mute) your sound so that noises from home do not disturb others. Only unmute when you have something to say.
- The camera on your device must be switched on during class.
- To ensure all participants' safety and privacy you are asked not to film or record any of the sessions. Your tutor may record sessions as part of our responsibility for safeguarding or if performing an assessment of learning as required by an awarding organisation.
- Please ensure children and any other members of your household do not wander into view of your webcam.

Security

- Remember that your password protects you from pranks or more serious harm.
- Don't share your password with anyone.
- Change your password if you think someone else might know it.
- Only share an email address or other personal information if necessary.

General Online Safety

Cybersafe Warwickshire is here to help you stay safe online, so you can browse knowing you're protected against scams, fraud and security problems. Their Report and Support services signpost readers to the most appropriate tools to report unwelcome or criminal activity and support you to access advice about how to protect yourself online

Safeguarding, PREVENT and British Values

We confirm that all safeguarding procedures will be adhered to. Your tutor will have completed up-to-date training in safeguarding, PREVENT and British Values in accordance with Warwickshire County Council requirements.

Please contact acl@warwickshire.gov.uk if you have any questions or concerns. Call Janet Dawson on 07557 005984 or Richard Heath on 07557 005985 for support or advice.

Glossary of terms associated with online abuse

If you feel you have been the victim of any of these activities, listed below, or have been exploited in any way, seek support.

Cyber Stalking
Repeatedly sending messages, including threats of harm, harassment, intimidation, or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety. These actions may be illegal, depending on their nature.

Harassment
Includes sending offensive, rude or insulting messages and being abusive. Nasty or humiliating comments on posts, photos and in chat rooms. Being explicitly offensive on gaming sites.

Identity Theft
Identity theft happens when fraudsters access enough information about someone's identity (such as their name, date of birth, current or previous addresses) to commit identity fraud. Identity theft can take place whether the fraud victim is alive or deceased.

Image-based abuse (IBA)
An intimate image or video is shared without the consent of the person pictured. This includes images or videos that have been digitally altered (using Photoshop or specialised software).

Impersonation
Bullying can extend to hacking into someone's social media account or emails and using the person's online identity to send or post vicious or embarrassing material to others.
Creating fake profiles on social media are commonplace and, in some cases, can be difficult to be deleted quickly.

Online Hate Crime
Hate Crime is any criminal offence committed against a person that is motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone because of: race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, individual characteristics that make someone appear different e.g. alternative subculture, physical appearance, style of dress. This can be manifest as threatening behaviour and can include hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail, online abuse, for example on social media or email, displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters inciting others to commit hate crimes.

Scam emails/Phishing
Be wary of unusual messages asking for assistance with financial transactions. Even if the message appears to be from someone you know and trust, you should check it's really them that sent the message by calling them or speaking with them in person.
Never respond to any requests to send money, or have money transferred through your account, by someone you don't know and trust.
You can protect your important online accounts by using a strong separate password and, where available, turn on two- factor authentication (2FA).
If you have made a payment: Inform your bank, or payment service provider, such as PayPal, as soon as possible. They can help you prevent any further losses. You should also monitor your bank statements regularly for any unusual activity.

General advice:
Do not respond to abusive messages.
Screenshot anything that is sent to you (this can be used as evidence to prove the bullying is taking place).
Mute accounts, so you can no longer see them - but they aren't aware that you aren't being notified of the messages. Block & Report the accounts if you are unable to mute, and/or the bullying continues.
Tell someone - take the screenshots to somebody you trust (sibling, spouse, parent, carer, tutor, support worker). This way something can be done about the offending material.