

Staying Safe Online Guidelines 2023-2024

Digital Self-Care

In the 2023-2024 academic year, we will all be spending extensive periods of time online, so it is important to safeguard your digital wellbeing and mental health. For example:

- Set your boundaries online – it is easy to spend all day looking at a screen with no breaks. Working online and then also spending free time on social media can take its toll on your mental health. Setting boundaries online might help you manage your digital wellbeing. Scheduling regular breaks off-screen and taking time to do something different that is not online and move your body will help.
- Use wellbeing controls – many devices and platforms offer options to help you manage how much time you spend online. It may feel difficult to separate study time from down time. Turning off notifications or activating 'do not disturb' can give you time and space away from your screen.
- Check your privacy settings – to keep yourself safe and secure, it is good practice to review your privacy settings every few months.
- You will receive more information on these areas in the Digital Induction, scheduled for the week before teaching starts and available for reference all year.
- The University is committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to digital teaching, learning and assessment. The Digital Equity Policy covers the mechanisms to address this.

If you would like to talk to someone about your wellbeing, you can request wellbeing support by using the [Wellbeing Access form](#).

There are also online support resources, such as Big White Wall and TalkCampus, which can be accessed through the [wellbeing page](#).

Privacy

When engaging in online learning, we should be mindful of the environment that we are in and the security of ourselves and the people around us. There are steps we can all take to stay safe online. For example:

- Build your digital resilience. Safeguard your systems and devices against online threats. Install anti-virus protection and keep it updated.
- Think about where you are accessing the online learning. Choose a quiet location. If you are in a public place, is it appropriate to access the online learning with members of the public around you? Are you disturbing the people around you? Consider wearing headphones if possible.
- Consider the privacy and security of the people around you. Think about what will be seen by anyone else accessing the learning or by anyone else in the same space as you. Is there anything behind you that might breach yours or another person's privacy?
- Safeguard yourself and others. Be mindful of the websites you access and the individuals and groups you engage with; some may not be what they seem and you may leave yourself vulnerable to exploitation or unhealthy influence.
- You may be communicating with students in other jurisdictions. Be mindful of possible restrictions in that jurisdiction. Whilst in the UK we benefit from freedom of speech, that is not the case in all countries.

- You may be communicating with students who are under 18. Consider the appropriateness of your communications.
- Don't share links to online learning on public platforms where they could be easily intercepted.
- Read the [Do's and Don'ts for Digital Security](#) from the University's IT Services and [list of security awareness](#) webpages.

Behaviour

The University is an international community with many diverse views and perspectives. It is important that we are all good digital citizens and treat all others with dignity and respect, both online and off.

Students are representing the University whilst participating online and are expected to behave in a professional manner.

Students are expected to comply with the University's [Information Security Policy](#) and [Social Media Policy](#).

Unacceptable use includes online harassment, which is any use of University facilities to bully, harass, intimidate, ridicule or otherwise cause alarm or distress to others.

All students have the right to work, study and live without fear of intimidation, harassment and threatening or violent behaviour. This right extends to online activities as well.

As part of your studies, your participation in teaching activities may be recorded and these recordings used for educational purposes.

It is unacceptable behaviour to take screen shots or recordings of online teaching for any purposes other than learning. The uploading of such screen shots or recordings on social media may be misconduct under the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#) and disciplinary action may be taken.

Students are expected to comply with the [Recording Educational Activities Policy](#).

The University has a responsibility to ensure [freedom of intellectual enquiry and expression](#) within the law, while simultaneously encouraging tolerance of diverse views and beliefs. For more information about freedom of speech within Universities click [here](#).

Students are expected to comply with the [C19 Behavioural Policy](#).

Students who experience online harassment can report this by:

- speaking to their personal or senior tutor or the [Student Wellbeing Service](#),
- using the [Report and Support system](#)
- submitting an [Acceptable Behaviour complaint](#)

If you witness unacceptable behaviour online, you can support the University community by being an active bystander and report the issue using the links above.

Students who are found to be guilty of online harassment may be subject to disciplinary action under the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#).

Students who do not comply with the policies listed above may also be subject to disciplinary action.