

NCG Delivery Practice for Safe Online Learning Policy



<u>Policy Title</u>	Delivery Practice for Safe Online Learning Policy	
<u>Policy Category</u>	Compliant	
<u>Owner</u>	Assistant Director of Quality	
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>	Executive Director for Quality	
<u>Date Written</u>	November 2023	
<u>Considered By</u>	QTLA Forum / UCU / Policy Review Council	
<u>Approved By</u>	Executive Board	
<u>Date Approved</u>	November 2023	
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics.	
<u>Freedom of Information</u>	This document will be publicly available through the Groups Publication Scheme.	
<u>Review Date</u>	November 2026	
<u>Policy Summary</u>	NCG Safeguarding Practice for Online Learning Policy applies to all delivery of teaching and learning with all NCG staff. This strengthens arrangements for remote and blended learning.	
<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
Professional Services	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
Carlisle College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
Kidderminster College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
Lewisham College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
Newcastle College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
Southwark College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
West Lancashire College	<u>Yes</u>	Yes
<u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u>		
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>	
March 2021	Minor amendments to the purpose of the policy and additions of IT systems.	
September 2022 - Reviewed November 2023	Included the EIA statement, detailed in section 3.15 reference to reasonable adjustments and the link to the DfE's Teaching online safety in schools 2023 guide in section 6.	
<u>Linked Documents</u>		
<u>Document Title</u>	<u>Relevance</u>	
NCG Safeguarding Policy	NCG, and its constituent colleges, is committed to the safety and well-being of its learning community, which applies to arrangement for online and blended learning.	
NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy	The policy defines; the student 'Code of Conduct'; high expectations and positive behaviours which are applied to online and blended learning models	
NCG TLA Policy	This links to the NCG TLA policy in ensuring the learner experiences meet expectations in a safe environment; In practice, this means that learners are developing new technical, academic, or applied skills, knowledge, and inclusive and respectful behaviours through online delivery.	

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<p>NCG Recording of Meetings and Learning Activities Policy.</p>	<p>This links to this policy on a set of governing principles in the use of recording software (in the event the lesson is recorded) and also provides information on Copyright considerations</p>
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Equality Impact Assessment

	Judgement	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in 2.0?	Yes	Yes – ensuring our learners receive exceptional education
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	No	
Age	No	
Disability / Difficulty	No	
Gender Reassignment	No	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
Race	No	
Religion or Belief	No	
Sex	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	No	
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	No	
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	No	
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	Yes	The policy indicates the additional support that may be offered where a student has a disability or learning difficulty.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	This policy has been reviewed by the QTLA forum and NCG Executive NCG, prior to approval by NCG Corporation. The membership of these groups is indicative of the wider population within NCG.	

1. Scope and purpose of the policy

There have been significant changes within our sector in response to the COVID-19 outbreak impacting on the methods we traditionally use to deliver teaching and learning. Many programmes now incorporate some form of blended learning approach, which involves learners participating in some form of home study with online and remote delivery.

This policy sets out the specific expectations of NCG staff when facilitating online synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. It is not exhaustive and needs to reflect the best practice in a dynamic sector, however it is important to support teacher, educators and learners with broad guidelines on what is deemed acceptable when delivering education and training online.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NCG Safeguarding Policy, NCG TLA Policy, NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy and NCG Information Policy, in addition to guidance and advice provided on the Great Place to Teach site, including guides and tips to promote best practice.

This policy has very close links with the NCG Safeguarding Policy and staff should be ever vigilant to the additional risks to learners, and indeed themselves, when delivering more teaching and facilitating more online activity.

1.1. Definitions

The term **college** refers to the constituent parts of NCG and professional services refers to NCGs centralised services.

The term **learner / student** is used interchangeably and includes all learners, whether young people aged 14-18, learners with specific high needs, care experience students, apprentices, adult learners or higher education students.

The term **teacher** is used to describe all teaching, training and educational staff, including teachers, lecturers, instructors, skills trainers, learning support practitioners, coaches / mentors, work experience coaches and teachers in managing positions.

NCG **staff** refers to all staff in the organisation, including volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and volunteers.

Online delivery refers to synchronous (live) or asynchronous (directed, but not live) delivery of learning content. Apps such as Teams and Zoom are common tools for delivering synchronous learning, whilst other VLEs may be used. Asynchronous delivery could include the above, but also email or Dropbox distribution of materials for teacher-directed learning and assessment.

2. Policy Statement

NCG, and its constituent colleges, are committed to the safety and well-being of its learning community. This policy sets out specific responsibilities and expectations in preparing and delivering online teaching, learning and assessment. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which young people and adults can learn, develop and thrive, especially given the move to a greater proportion of online delivery and learning. As such all staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children and adults at risk who may be in need of help or protection.

3. Preparing to deliver online learning

All NCG staff have a responsibility to follow the points below when preparing to teach, train and educate learners using online delivery, to ensure the continued safety, well being and opportunity for all learners to thrive in NCG.

- 3.1. Staff and learners are expected to respect and observe the NCG / College Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct (available in the NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy) at all times.
- 3.2. Staff should approach online learning with the same level of professionalism appropriate to face to face delivery – there is no difference to professional standards when delivering to learners from a remote location, including home.

- 3.3. Staff are required to maintain their mandatory safeguarding training and annual refresher and the annual declaration for Keeping Children Safe in Education and DBS in iTrent.
- 3.4. Staff must be aware of the categories of abuse, the local risks to learners and the additional risks likely to arise from a higher proportion of online delivery, extending to cybercrime, cyberbullying and access to inappropriate, harmful, explicit and extremist material.
- 3.5. All staff will continue to follow the NCG Safeguarding policy and associated college procedures and advise their Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately about any concerns they have about the welfare of any learner, whether in college or not.
- 3.6. Staff should be vigilant to the signs of abuse and neglect and be proactive in addressing concerns – staff should always be mindful that ‘it could happen here’.
- 3.7. Staff should only use their NCG account and NCG-approved platforms for delivery, as these will have associated security, firewalls and backup; under no circumstances should staff use personal accounts or platforms and learners must never be added as friends to personal social media accounts.
- 3.8. Staff must not use any college computing or network resources to use or publish material that is obscene, libellous, defamatory or that causes harassment.
- 3.9. It remains the individual responsibility of staff to keep accounts secure and confidential whilst working remotely. Staff are responsible for all activities carried out under their username.
- 3.10. Staff are reminded that anything that is written or communicated about a learner may be disclosed as part of a freedom of information request – this extends to chat and forums within VLEs such as Teams, Zoom, eTrackr, Smart Assessor etc.
- 3.11. Staff should close all applications that may share confidential information through notifications, for example e-mails, and ensure their desktop is clear

of all non-essential applications before starting an online delivery. Registers, eTrackr and management information reports should never be viewed by the class.

- 3.12. Where at all possible online learning activities should be delivered by staff using a webcam in a suitable, quiet area free from distractions. If no such area or background is available, or if the home environment is being used by other family members, then it is perfectly acceptable to use audio only with headphones to help reduce background noise or staff may simply choose to share a slide deck or related screenshare.
- 3.13. Where webcams are used they should ideally be positioned against a neutral background and / or blurred, or with a virtual background applied. It would be good practice to source a college-approved background from the marketing team for consistency.
- 3.14. Staff should always be appropriately dressed to represent their professional status in line with college expectations.
- 3.15. NCG also has a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for our learners with disabilities, learning difficulties and care experienced learners to support their access to education, and ensure they are not disadvantaged during teaching, learning and assessment. Staff should discuss and confirm reasonable adjustments with learners at the earliest opportunity (typically at enrolment and/or initial assessment) to ensure that timely adjustments and/or support can be implemented. An adjustment may not be determined as reasonable if it impacts the integrity of an assessment or involves immoderate or excessive costs.

4. Delivery expectations

- 4.1. It is advised where possible that you **do not** record any webinar or online learning event with learners who have their webcams turned on – any recording would be viewed as property and may have implications for

GDPR and freedom of information if stored indefinitely. Be mindful of what you are writing. If an individual makes a request under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) rules, they have the right to request any information and organisation holds on them. Often, this will include emails, chat threads in Microsoft Teams or notes made in a meeting. Even emails that are labelled “Private” or “Confidential” can be disclosed in some cases.

4.2. If you do need to record, please read the following considerations you need to make:

- Wherever possible colleagues should first consider if they are able to record sessions where attendees are not captured and therefore no personal data beyond those of the presenter are in the recording.
- When this is not possible, recording a meeting, interview or conversation where participants will be captured, the participants should be informed that a recording is being made and will follow guidelines in the NCG Recording of Meetings and Learning Activities Policy.

4.3. Online learning activities should be conducted in a suitable, quiet area. If you are streaming from your home address, ensure that learners cannot identify where you live by having any personal information visible on the screen. Ensure your location services are turned off in MS Teams (via settings) or similar.

4.4. Staff should never act in a way that can be perceived as insensitive when using online delivery as some learners may struggle with access due to limited equipment, broadband, WIFI or levels of digital literacy.

4.5. Apply the lobby settings so that learners have to be invited into the session, ensuring that unexpected visitors can not join the session without teacher consent.

4.6. Staff and learners must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances during live streaming or when engaging with an NCG member of staff / learner.

- 4.7. Staff should never provide any learners with their personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- 4.8. Learners are expected to use their webcams when engaging in online learning unless they are unable to do so for technical, social or other identified reasons. If students are unable to use their webcam, they should advise staff in advance. Where learners have their webcams switched on, staff are asked to ensure that a; learners have a suitable, quiet area free from distractions and b; the learners apply an appropriate background / blur affect.
- 4.9. If you find it necessary to remove a learner, then you should formally document this with your line manager and explain the reason to the learner afterwards. It may be necessary to take further action, if this happens do so in accordance with the NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy, just as you would with a face-to-face lesson. Incidents should be reported and documented in line with policy.
- 4.10. Staff should present material clearly and be mindful that what works in a classroom may not work in an online setting. Information is best delivered in bite-sized chunks with regular assessment (see 5.0 for additional notes and links).
- 4.11. Research by Ofsted in June 2020 indicated that learners often prefer 'live' online lessons, where they can interact with the teacher and with one another, rather than recorded lessons.
- 4.12. Other research highlights the importance of keeping the message simple, avoiding overly complex graphics or illustration that do not add content.
- 4.13. Staff need to follow all protocols for safeguarding.
- 4.14. Any sessions that involve practical or physical activity should be properly risk assessed with agreement from the Head of Department and H&S manager.

4.15. The TLA policy will be updated to include protocols for evaluating online teaching practice.

5. Simple Routines for online synchronous delivery (not exhaustive and advisory only)

- Start the session just before the scheduled start time and post your expectations for conduct in the chat.
- Ensure your background is appropriate and that all unrequired applications are turned off to minimise distractions.
- Admit and welcome the learners via a lobby feature and if possible mark the register as they arrive using the S mark for learners who are attending synchronously (within 20 mins); and any learners that are receiving the material asynchronously can be marked with a I mark when they can evidence engagement (within 5 days of the session).
- When gathered, remind the learners of the expectations for conduct and etiquette (such as using the 'handsup' feature and muting microphones); remind them that they can speak to you after the session or message you immediately using college email if they have any concerns about wellbeing, safety or if they have any concerns about online risks.
- With clear agenda / aim / objective as a focus explain to the learners what you expect to achieve in the session and clarify your success criteria and how it will be assessed evaluated; explain how this fit in the wider scheme / schedule of learning and any adjustments that have been made to a more traditional approach (e.g. if you would normally be doing a practical illustration / aspect at this point).
- Review and / or recap previous material referring to a knowledge organiser, glossary, handbook or similar to help with consistent messaging – use informal assessment to help gauge understanding and then recap or correct any misunderstandings.

- Deliver new content in a clear and concise manner that builds subject matter (rather than delivering a topic all at once)– reduce the narrative and content you would expect to cover in a classroom setting into easily digestible bitesize topics – learners are likely to become distracted during the session, so prepare for this by aiming to hold their attention in smaller sections / chapters and assume that they will drift at some point; perhaps schedule short comfort / stretch breaks more regularly than you would in the classroom setting to try and manage the learners' focus.
- Use questing, chat, quiz, MS Forms etc to gauge how well learners have understood this material and to what extent they may have drifted; recap and correct misunderstandings as they arise and take the opportunity for any useful distraction to support in maths and English development.
- Repeat as appropriate.
- Review the learning and the original success criteria, with expectations for the next session, distribute any homework or extension tasks – again apps such as MS Forms could evaluate learning without the need for manual marking.
- Review the efficacy of the session and share with colleagues if the approach was successful or not; communities of practice (whether college or NCG-based) are useful vehicles for peer support.

6. More resources for online education

There are a number of useful resources to help you with remote education, including:

- NCG GPTT Team Community page available [here](#) and the Teacher Experience Guide available [here](#)
- The Department for Education's [guidance, resources and support for teachers](#)
- [The Department for Education's Teaching online safety in Schools 2023](#)

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- The Education Endowment Foundation's [overview of evidence on remote learning](#)