



Chelmsford Young Generation Amateur Musical Society

Registered Charity 275186

www.young-gen.co.uk

ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Including phone, messaging, images and online safety rules

Reviewed	June 2026
Next Review Due	June 2027

Policy Statement

Young Gen is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all members. Online safety, responsible communication and careful use of images are essential to protecting children, young people, adults at risk, volunteers and the reputation and culture of the Society.

This policy applies to all members of the Young Gen community, including committee members, trustees, production team members, chaperones, volunteers, contractors, members, parents/carers and visitors. It applies at HQ, at theatres, at off-site activities, online, and wherever online behaviour affects the welfare of a Young Gen member or the culture/reputation of the Society.

This policy should be read alongside the Young Gen Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Privacy Notice, image consent arrangements, Whistleblowing Policy and production-specific risk assessments.

Scope of Technology

Technology includes, but is not limited to, mobile phones, smartphones, smart watches, tablets, laptops, cameras, email, text messages, WhatsApp, social media, websites, shared drives, online forms, gaming platforms, video platforms, voice notes, artificial intelligence tools and any other device, platform or network used to view, create, store or exchange information.

General Expectations

- Use technology legally, safely, responsibly and respectfully.
- Do not create, view, download, send, post or share illegal, harmful, abusive, discriminatory, extremist, bullying, pornographic, defamatory, humiliating or otherwise inappropriate material.
- Do not use technology to bully, harass, intimidate, humiliate, groom, coerce, radicalise, exploit or impersonate anyone.

- Do not use technology in a way that brings Young Gen into disrepute or damages the wellbeing of another person.
- Report online safety concerns, harmful content, cyberbullying, inappropriate messages, image misuse or accidental exposure to harmful material to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant as soon as possible.
- If a member accidentally views, downloads, receives or is sent harmful, offensive or inappropriate material, or private/personal information about another person, this should also be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant as soon as possible.

Email and Group Communication

Young Gen will usually communicate with parents/carers and members by email about Society matters such as auditions, rehearsals, call sheets, costume requirements, show week arrangements, events and other Young Gen activities.

If group messaging is needed for rehearsals or productions, Young Gen should use parent/carer communication by email wherever possible. If a child or young person is included in a Young Gen group email because it is necessary for the production, a parent/carer for each child must also be included in the communication. All communication must be limited to Young Gen matters.

Emails must be sent in a way that protects personal email addresses and does not disclose them to others, for example by using BCC or another secure mailing method.

- Messages must be appropriate, professional and limited to Young Gen matters.
- Personal email addresses must not be shared without a lawful reason or consent.
- Sensitive personal, medical or safeguarding information must only be shared with those who need to know and should not be included in broad group emails.
- Unexpected one-to-one messages from a child that raise a welfare or safeguarding issue must be saved and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant.

WhatsApp, Text and Direct Messaging

- Young Gen should use parent/carer communication wherever possible.
- Adults must not engage in one-to-one private messaging with a child or young person unless there is a clear welfare, safeguarding or operational reason.
- Where direct contact with a child is necessary, a parent/carer or another appropriate Young Gen adult should be included wherever possible.
- Any permitted direct communication with a child or young person should be brief, courteous, limited to the agreed Young Gen purpose and retained or recorded where appropriate.
- If a Young Gen group message includes a child or young person, there must be more than one appropriate Young Gen adult in the group and communication must be limited to Young Gen matters. Parent/carer involvement should be used wherever practical.
- Adults must not exchange personal phone numbers with cast members under 18 unless there is a specific, agreed and recorded reason, such as emergency welfare arrangements, and parents/carers are aware.
- Informal, secretive, overly familiar, late-night or personal messaging between adults and children is not permitted.

Social Media Contact

- Adults must not initiate or accept private friend/follow requests from members under 18 or current acting members of the Society.
- Adults must not privately message children or young people on personal social media accounts.
- Members should not use personal social media accounts or other internet/web-based communication channels to contact Young Gen adults, production team members, chaperones or volunteers unless this has been expressly agreed for a specific Young Gen purpose and parents/carers are aware.
- Any necessary social media communication must be through approved Young Gen channels and managed by authorised committee members.
- Social media posts must be professional, respectful and consistent with Young Gen values and safeguarding expectations.
- No one may post content featuring members unless it is authorised by Young Gen and consistent with image consent arrangements.

Official Young Gen Accounts

Official Young Gen social media accounts may only be accessed and managed by authorised committee members or nominated adults. At least two appropriate adults should have oversight of official accounts. Direct messages received by official accounts that raise welfare or safeguarding concerns must be saved and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant.

Mobile Phones and Devices at Young Gen

- Members are not permitted to use mobile phones, smartphones or smart watches in the main hall during setting, revision, run-throughs, rehearsals or performances unless permission has been given for a specific Young Gen purpose.
- Members may use mobile phones during breaks and lunchtimes, unless a production-specific rule says otherwise.
- Backstage phone rules must be followed at all times. Phones must not be used in dressing rooms, changing areas, toilets, first aid areas or any other private/restricted area.
- Devices are brought to Young Gen at the owner's risk. Young Gen is not responsible for loss, theft or damage unless required by law.
- Devices should be protected with a passcode/password, which should not be shared with other members.
- Devices must not be connected to Young Gen networks or equipment without permission.
- Where Young Gen permits a device to connect to a Young Gen network or Young Gen equipment, the device should have appropriate security protections, including a passcode/password, up-to-date software and antivirus protection where applicable.
- Young Gen may refuse, restrict or remove access to Young Gen networks or equipment, and may review Young Gen-managed network or equipment use where lawful, proportionate and necessary for safeguarding, security or investigation.

Photographs, Videos and Recordings

- No photograph, video, voice note or recording should be taken of another member without permission and without compliance with Young Gen image consent arrangements.

- Children must not be photographed or filmed in changing areas, dressing rooms, toilets, first aid areas or other private/restricted areas.
- Rehearsal videos, photographs, voice notes and production materials must not be shared outside agreed Young Gen channels without permission.
- The use of photographs, videos, screenshots, edited images, memes or recordings to bully, harass, humiliate or intimidate others will be treated as a serious breach of this policy and may be a safeguarding matter.
- Official photographers, videographers, journalists and media visitors must be approved by Young Gen, made aware of safeguarding expectations and supervised or accompanied as appropriate.
- Young Gen will avoid publishing personal information with images unless this has been agreed and is necessary for the purpose.

Online Harm, Cyberbullying and AI Misuse

Online harm may include cyberbullying, harassment, sexualised comments, sharing nudes or semi-nudes, coercion, grooming, radicalisation, exposure to harmful content, screenshots shared to humiliate others, impersonation, misuse of images, and AI/deepfake-style manipulation.

- Cyberbullying or harmful online behaviour linked to Young Gen will be treated as a safeguarding and conduct matter where it affects the safety, dignity or wellbeing of a child, young person or adult at risk.
- Members should save evidence of harmful messages, posts or images where safe to do so and report the concern to a trusted adult, parent/carer, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant.
- Do not retaliate online. Block, report and seek help.
- Members who witness cyberbullying or harmful online behaviour should not ignore it. They should support the person affected where safe to do so and report the concern to a trusted adult, parent/carer, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant.
- Young Gen may report suspected illegal activity involving technology to the police or other appropriate agencies.
- AI tools must not be used to create, alter, sexualise, impersonate, mock, bully, harass or misrepresent any Young Gen member, volunteer, adult, production team member or child.

Sexting, Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Members must not create, request, possess, send, forward or share nude or semi-nude images of themselves or others. Any incident involving nudes or semi-nudes will be treated as a safeguarding matter. Young Gen will respond in line with the Safeguarding Policy and may seek advice from statutory agencies. Children and young people will be supported and not blamed for seeking help.

Member Guidance

Members should remember:

- Always respect others and be careful about what is said online and what images, screenshots or recordings are shared.
- Think before sending or posting. Messages, images and recordings can be copied, screenshotted, forwarded or made public very quickly and may stay online.
- If you or someone you know is being cyberbullied or feels unsafe online, tell a trusted adult, parent/carer, Young Gen adult or Childline on 0800 1111.

- Do not retaliate or reply to harmful messages. Save evidence where safe, block or report the person or account, and seek help.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers play an important role in helping members use technology safely. Young Gen expects parents/carers to:

- support Young Gen in implementing this policy;
- encourage safe, respectful and responsible online behaviour;
- talk to their child about internet, social media and mobile phone safety;
- report concerns about online behaviour, cyberbullying, image misuse or harmful content to Young Gen where it affects members or Young Gen activities;
- support restrictions on phone use during rehearsals, performances and backstage activities.

Reporting and Procedures

- Any online safety concern should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Assistant as soon as possible.
- Where there is immediate danger or a crime is in progress, call 999.
- Where the concern is about the behaviour of a Young Gen adult, the Safeguarding Policy allegations procedure will be followed and LADO advice will be sought where appropriate.
- Where the concern involves member conduct, Young Gen may respond under the Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, disciplinary procedures or other relevant arrangements.
- Where there are concerns that a member may be vulnerable to radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism, Young Gen may seek advice and make a referral to appropriate safeguarding or Prevent arrangements, including Channel where relevant.
- Young Gen reserves the right to review Young Gen-managed communications where necessary to safeguard children, investigate a concern or protect the Society.

Breaches of this Policy

Breaches may result in action including advice, warning, parental involvement, removal of phone privileges, restriction from activities, suspension or removal from Young Gen, referral to statutory agencies, police involvement, LADO referral, DBS referral or other appropriate action depending on the seriousness of the matter.

Useful Support

- Childline: 0800 1111
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Thinkuknow: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- Parent Info: www.parentinfo.org
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk