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BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



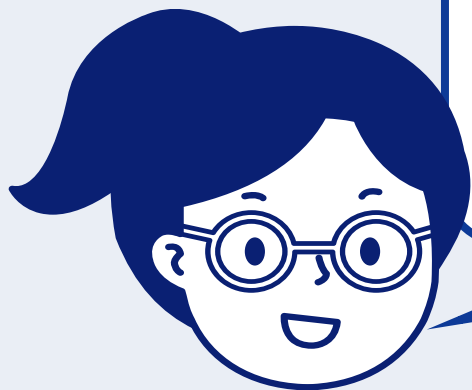
Online Child Safety for After School Programmes

[during COVID-19 and after]

by

Cassandra Carels and The Learning Trust

The Importance of Child Protection

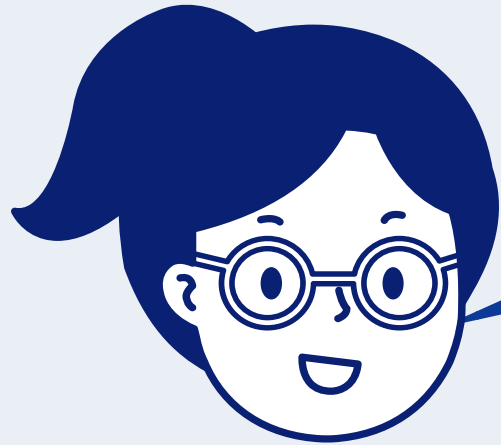


Irrespective of age, the **South African Schools Act** identifies any person going to school as a child.



Whether in the family, at school, or even **online**, children should be **fully protected** so they can be safe in order to grow, learn, and develop to their fullest potential.





SA is not entirely equipped to deal with the **rapid influx** of children moving to online platforms.



Children now are more at **risk of being exposed** to cyber bullying, social media hackers, sexual & violent content, human trafficking poachers, and so on, even in the comfort of their homes.





In the time of **COVID-19**, a number of organisations in the After School sector have transitioned to **continue programmes through online platforms**. As practitioners who have direct contact with children outside of their parents and teachers, it becomes even more important to ensure children remain **safe and protected**.



The following slides provide **important considerations** for using **online platforms** to engage with children in your programmes.

PREPARATION



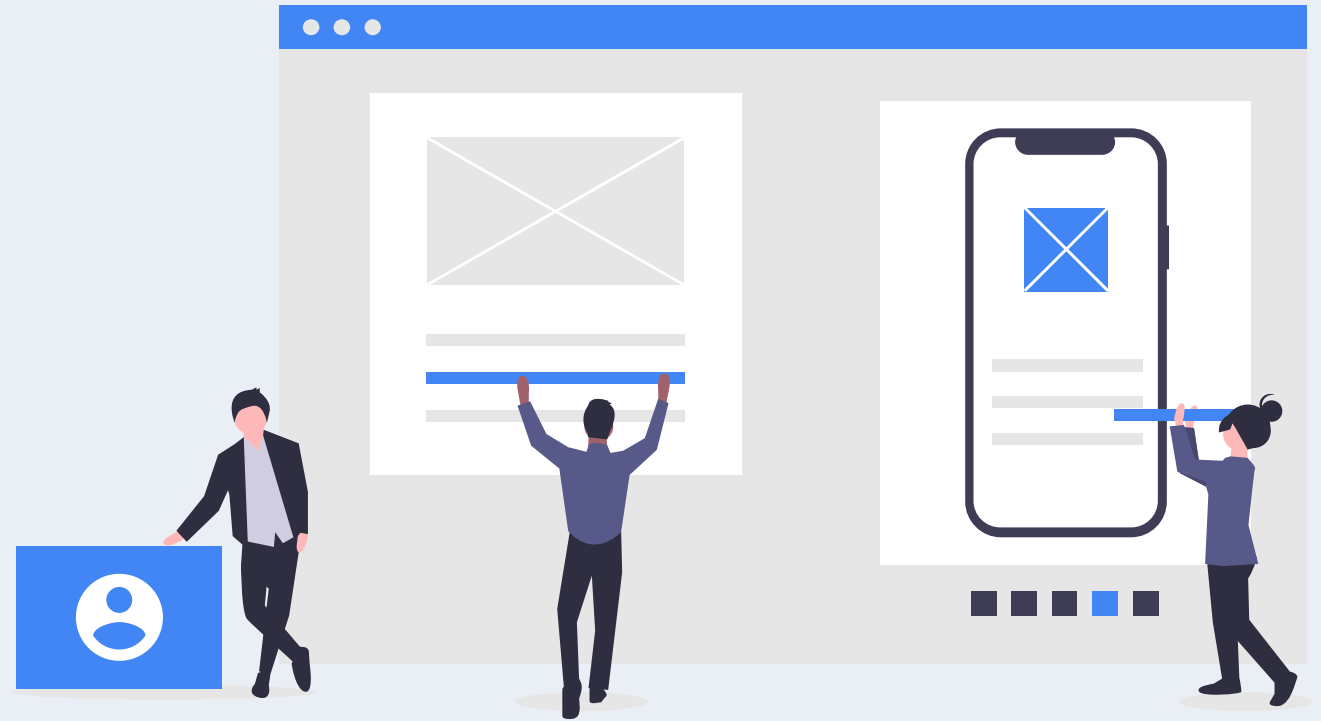
Practitioners must be **well equipped** for the online platform they are working on, including an understanding of,

1. the actual **navigation and features** of platform,
2. **privacy and security settings**,
3. **limitations** of the platform (e.g. does it allow for media sharing), and
4. **access** options of the platform (e.g. does it require subscription).

PREPARATION



Practitioners must be informed & trained into the **online procedures**, including information on **policies** and **potential risk-guides**.



Practitioners must understand that **professional boundaries** still apply online, and must have clear **communication channels** should problems arise.

CONSENT



Request consent from parents/guardians when working with their kids online, either **digitally** or **telephonically** (and then record on form).



Consent form should state which **mobile or web-applications** your programme needs to connect with the learner and how.

CONSENT



Parents should be aware of children's **online activity**, including,

- ✓ When you will have **contact** with the child
- ✓ **Assurance** that your sessions will not impact on a child's other activities
- ✓ Which **facilitator/tutor** will be dealing with the child
- ✓ **Contact details** of organisation should any complaints or questions arise
- ✓ Contact **boundaries**, session **times**, **content** outline, etc.

MODERATION



All group sessions should include at least one **member of staff** (besides tutor or volunteer), and record learner **attendance** consistently.



Learners and tutors/volunteers should not chat one-on-one outside of a staff or practitioner's **supervision**, in order to **safeguard** learners.

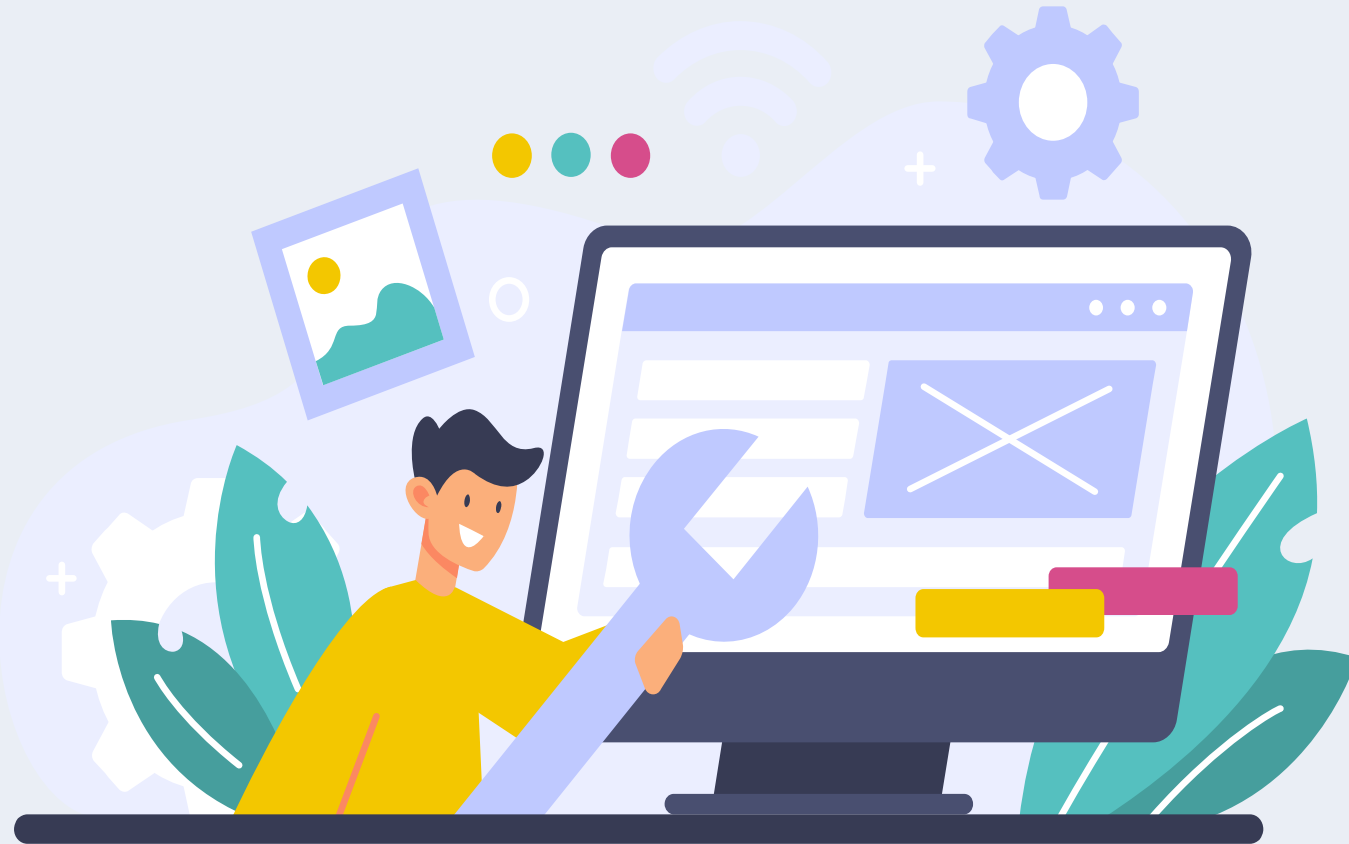
COMMUNICATION



Rules of engagement should be established early. Sessions should be **monitored** for inappropriate language and conduct regularly.

If a learner is consistently **disengaged**, a follow-up should be conducted with the parents/care-givers to determine any **obstacles**.

ACCESS



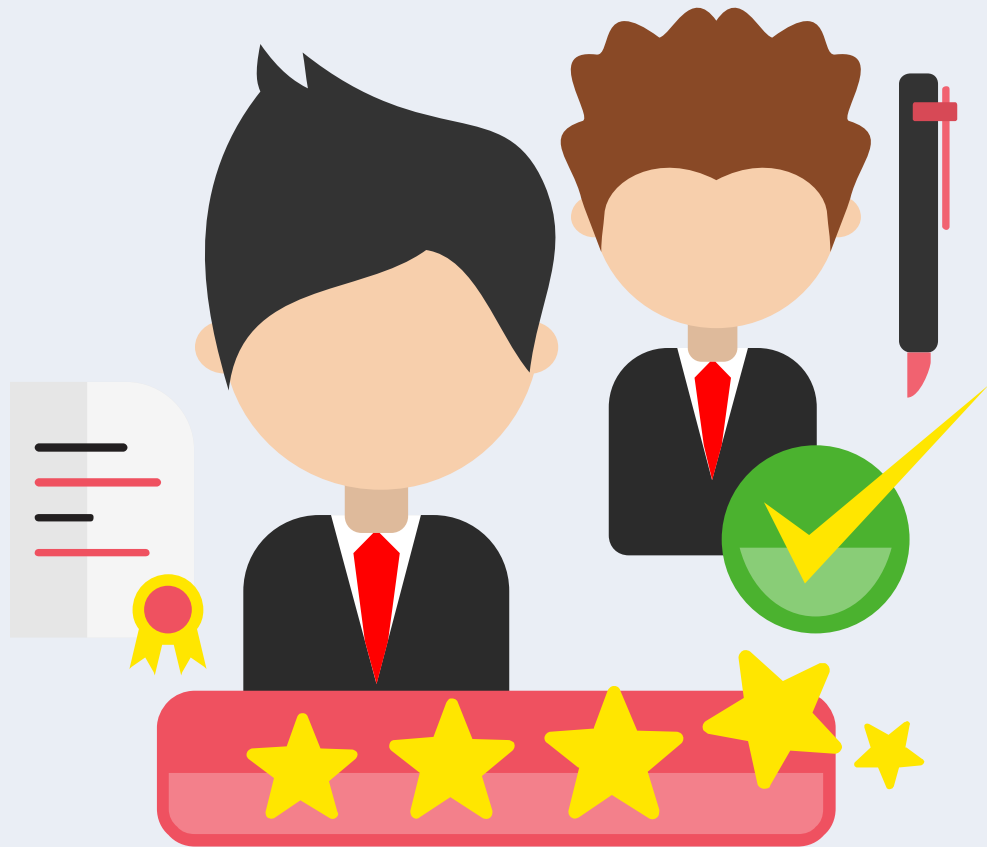
Ensure that all your learners have **functional access** to the platforms they'll be using, including,

1. **Data** to go online or download material (if relevant)
2. **Good network connection**
3. **Security settings** (login details)
4. Meeting **age requirements** (e.g. only certain age groups can subscribe to Facebook)



There are other **important considerations** from **existing policies** within an organisations that should still be in effect in this time to **guide** staff.

CHILD PROTECTION



The Child Protection policy should be readily **available** to all staff and detail clear **procedures** to be taken should a **violation** occur.

CODE OF CONDUCT



The Code of Conduct must be linked to the **disciplinary procedure**. It should outline how **violations** would be addressed and **timeframes**.

HR - DISCIPLINARY CODE



Ensure your policy includes **consequences** for violating **Child Protection** and **Code of Conduct**. Staff must be well **trained** in **HR policies**.

TRAININGS



Trainings need to be given to staff for **all existing and revised policies**. Staff should sign a register to indicate **participation** and **accountability**.



If you'd like more information on implementing **Child Safety and Protection** measures in your organisation, contact Cassandra via email on, cass@schoolofhardknocks.co.za



The Learning Trust promotes engaging children in **diverse learning activities** including drawing, puzzles, indoor sports, creative writing, and performance. Visit our [Treasure Box](#) to explore these and more.



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