

Communication with children - (including the use of technology)

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, cadets need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. Online risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Leaders should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to Local and National guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used. Communication with cadets both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries.

This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Leaders should not request or respond to any personal information from cadets other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'. Where possible the use of the Marshall Volunteer Portal should be used for all communications with cadets.

Leaders should not give their personal contact details to cadets for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities. If cadets locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the leader, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their named person responsible for safeguarding. The cadet should be firmly, and politely be informed that this is **not** acceptable.

Leaders should always follow the **Code of Conduct**, policies, including those with regard to communication with parents/carers and the information they share when using the internet.

We have provided additional guidance in relation to conducting virtual VPC which can be found here.

Any mobile phone contact should be via a works mobile phone and whenever possible to the parent or carers phone not the young person.