

NEWS DECODER

Young people informed, connected, empowered

Child Safeguarding Policy

Updated 2025.04.18

Introduction

News Decoder is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for children and young people who engage with our program services delivered both online and in person, including webinars, drafting and editing news articles, classroom experiences and tutoring. This Child Safeguarding Policy outlines our commitment to protecting children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation while they participate in our programs.

The purpose of this guidance note is to ensure that communication by our correspondents, school partners and affiliated contractors or staff members with children is safe for children by promoting awareness and mitigating the risks of or actual harm that children may face by these volunteers and service providers and others. Keeping children safe online is a shared responsibility.

Scope

This policy applies to all interactions, communications, and activities involving children and young people under the age of 18 within the context of News Decoder's tutoring services. It encompasses:

- a. Direct online interactions between adults and children, including but not limited to email exchanges, video conferences and virtual tutoring sessions.
- b. Indirect interactions, such as online content, social media engagement and educational materials targeting children.
- c. Physical and digital spaces where interactions with children take place, including virtual classrooms, online forums and communication platforms.

Guiding Principles

- a. The welfare and safety of children are paramount, and every child has the right to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- b. All adults associated with News Decoder must act in the best interests of children, prioritizing their safety, well-being and rights at all times.

- c. We promote a culture of respect, inclusivity and sensitivity towards children's diverse backgrounds, abilities and needs.
- d. Zero tolerance towards any form of abuse, discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behavior towards children is upheld within our organization.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors: The Board is responsible for providing oversight, guidance and support in implementing and monitoring this Child Safeguarding Policy.

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Maria Krasinski, our designated safeguarding officer, is responsible for coordinating safeguarding efforts, responding to concerns and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and standards.

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors: All individuals engaged in News Decoder's activities must familiarize themselves with this policy, undergo appropriate training and adhere to its provisions regarding child safeguarding.

Recruitment, Screening, and Training

- a. Criminal background checks, including reference verifications, will be conducted for all adults (staff, volunteers, contractors) working directly or indirectly with children.
- b. Training on child safeguarding policies, procedures, and best practices will be provided to all personnel before commencing their roles and periodically thereafter to ensure ongoing awareness and compliance. Personnel must sign that they have read and understood this child safeguarding policy.

Code of Conduct

All adults interacting with children must adhere to a professional code of conduct that includes:

- i. Respecting children's rights, privacy and personal boundaries.
- ii. Maintaining appropriate physical distance and touch, with physical contact limited to instances where necessary and culturally appropriate.
- iii. Using respectful and age-appropriate language, avoiding any form of demeaning, abusive or discriminatory language.
- iv. Ensuring online interactions are conducted in safe, secure environments, with clear guidelines on acceptable online behavior.

- v. Ensuring any private, one-on-one interactions with children have received prior consent by school administration and have appropriate supervision. This holds independent of whether interactions happen via email, social media, video call, phone, chat message – or via any medium or in-person. All emails with students will include faculty in copy and all faculty will be made aware of and invited to virtual and in-person meetings.
- vi. Refraining from engaging in any form of abuse, exploitation, grooming or misconduct towards children, whether in person or online.

Communication and Reporting Procedures

- a. Clear channels for reporting safeguarding concerns, incidents or suspicions must be established and communicated to all stakeholders. All concerns will be directed to Managing Director Maria Krasinski at maria.krasinski@news-decoder.com with News Decoder's Board President in copy, boardpresident@news-decoder.com.
- b. Any individual who suspects or becomes aware of a safeguarding issue involving a child must immediately report it to the designated safeguarding officer using the designated reporting channels.
- c. Confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for the rights of all parties involved will be maintained throughout the reporting, investigation, and resolution process.
- d. Prompt and appropriate actions will be taken in response to safeguarding reports, including but not limited to conducting investigations, providing support to affected children and families and taking disciplinary or legal measures as necessary.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

- a. Regular risk assessments will be conducted to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities related to child safeguarding within our programs and activities.
- b. Mitigation strategies, including preventive measures, safety protocols and crisis response plans, will be implemented to minimize risks and ensure a safe environment for children.

Collaboration and Partnership

- a. News Decoder will collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, child protection organizations, schools and communities, to strengthen child safeguarding practices, share resources and promote child rights advocacy.

- b. Partnerships with external service providers, platforms or vendors involved in delivering our programs will be established based on their commitment to child safeguarding principles and standards.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

- a. Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be in place to assess the effectiveness of our child safeguarding policies, procedures and interventions.
- b. Feedback from children, parents, caregivers, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders will be sought and considered to improve safeguarding practices and address emerging challenges.
- c. This Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect changes in legislation, best practices and organizational requirements.

Child Participation and Empowerment

- a. News Decoder recognizes the importance of empowering children as active participants in their safety and well-being.
- b. Children will be encouraged to express their views, concerns and feedback regarding safeguarding matters, and their input will be valued and taken into account in decision-making processes that affect them.

By adhering to this comprehensive Child Safeguarding Guidance, News Decoder reaffirms its commitment to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where children can learn, grow and thrive without fear of harm or exploitation.