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# SALFORD

## e-Safety Practice Guidance for those who Work and Volunteer with, and have a Duty of Care to Safeguard Children and Young People

**January 2012**

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## Introduction

*Digital technology* has become an important part of everyday life and offers exciting opportunities. However the increasing number of cases where workplace practice has highlighted inappropriate use of technology, *grooming* behaviour and an inability to challenge colleagues has demonstrated the need for clear practice guidance for workers and organisations around safer working practice.




This Guidance provides some advice and guidance about safer working practice for anyone working or volunteering with children and young people. It is about **your** conduct and professionalism. It is about keeping **your** personal and professional lives separate, keeping **yourself** safe when using *digital media* and adopting responsible behaviour that should protect **you** from putting **yourself** and **your** career at risk. This Guidance does not cover advice on the safeguarding of children and young people – for this please look at the policies, processes and practices that are in place in your setting, and challenge anything that is not clear or up to date.

Having the use of the *internet* and *mobile technology* brings wonderful opportunities and for many a new way of communicating quickly and efficiently. However like most good things in life, there are risks and issues attached particularly when behaviour is neither appropriate nor responsible. Consider the activities of crossing the road and teaching children to swim. Activities like this have clear rules and guidelines for all concerned – using *digital technology* is no different!

**AUPs (Acceptable Use Policies)** define what behaviour is acceptable when using *digital technology*. Throughout this document, reference to '**AUPs**' also infers the need for you to check other relevant policies and codes of conduct that may exist in your organisation or the setting you are working in. These policies should be in place to help everyone understand all aspects of their duties when technology is involved, eg the use of *mobile phones*, sending *emails*, taking *images*, *social networking*, etc. It is essential that everyone takes care with information that is made available electronically. Remember that once a comment or *posting* is made, it may not be possible to take it back. All digital records should be considered to be permanent.

As someone who works with children and young people, or adults who are their parents and carers, whether in a voluntary or paid capacity, whenever you are operating in the digital world you must always have your professional role in mind and always consider how your behaviour could affect your professional reputation and employment.

Please use this Guidance to help you enjoy the benefits that digital technology can bring to your world, but do learn about:

- what is **right**  **DO**
- what you need to **be aware of** 
- and what **not** to do!  **DO NOT**

This guidance builds on the 'Safer Working Practice Guidance for adults working with children and their Families' issued by the Government Offices in England in 2007.

### General guidelines

#### **DO**

- Do inform your line manager about any encounters that worry you

#### **DO NOT**

- Do not behave in a way that could suggest that you are trying to develop a personal relationship with a child
- Do not use your own technology to photograph or communicate with a child, young person, or their parent/ carer

### PLEASE NOTE:

It should be the rule of thumb that any personal technology that you have access to **SHOULD NEVER** be used for professional reasons.

However, in the event that you have to, please check that there are appropriate AUPs in place to protect you which cover the exceptional or emergency use of your own personal technology!

### Acknowledgement

*Recognition and thanks go to Stockport LSCB whose document 'e-Safety Safer Working Practice Guidance' has been an inspiration for this Guidance.*

## ✓ DO

1. Set your *privacy settings* for any *social networking site*.
2. Ensure your *mobile phone* (any technological equipment) is *password/ PIN* protected.
3. Consider having separate personal and professional online *accounts/ identities* if you wish to have online contact with service users, their families and other professionals.
4. Make sure that all publicly available information about you is accurate and appropriate
5. Remember online conversations may be referred to as '*chat*' but they are written documents and should always be treated as such.
6. Make sure that you know the consequences of misuse of digital equipment.
7. If you are unsure who can view online material, assume that it is publicly available. Remember - once information is online you have relinquished control of it.
8. Switch off *Bluetooth*
9. When you receive any new equipment (personal or private) make sure that you know what features it has as standard and take appropriate action to disable/ protect.

## ✗ DO NOT

1. Give your *personal information* to service users -children/ young people, their parents/ carers. This includes *mobile phone* numbers, *social networking* accounts, *personal website/ blog URLs*, online *image* storage sites, *passwords* etc.
2. Use your personal *mobile phone* to communicate with service users. This includes phone calls, *texts, emails, social networking sites*, etc.
3. Use the *internet* or *web-based* communication to send personal messages to children/young people
4. Share your personal details with service users on a social network site
5. Add/allow a *service user* to join your contacts/friends list on personal *social networking profiles*.
6. Use your own digital camera/ video for work. This includes integral cameras on *mobile phones*.
7. Play *online games* with *service users*.

For fuller statements go to [Summary of good practice guidelines \(P16\)](#)

## Email

*Emails* (electronic mail) have been around for a long time and most people are very used to communicating using this method. However this is a method of communication where you must have different *email* accounts for your personal and professional use.

**❌ DO NOT**  
Don't use your personal *email* account to communicate with children/ young people, their parents/ carers

*This includes email via mobile phones or web based software*

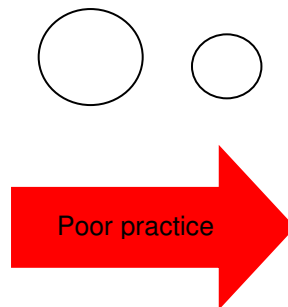


**✅ DO**  
Your organisation should provide an *email* account for you to use for professional communications

**Poor practice** blurs the professional boundaries and can make workers vulnerable to *bullying/ harassment/ allegations*. If it's a breach of the *AUP* then it may result in capability/ disciplinary/criminal proceedings



**⚠️**  
Check your organisation policy (*AUP*) regarding use of your work account for personal use e.g. shopping



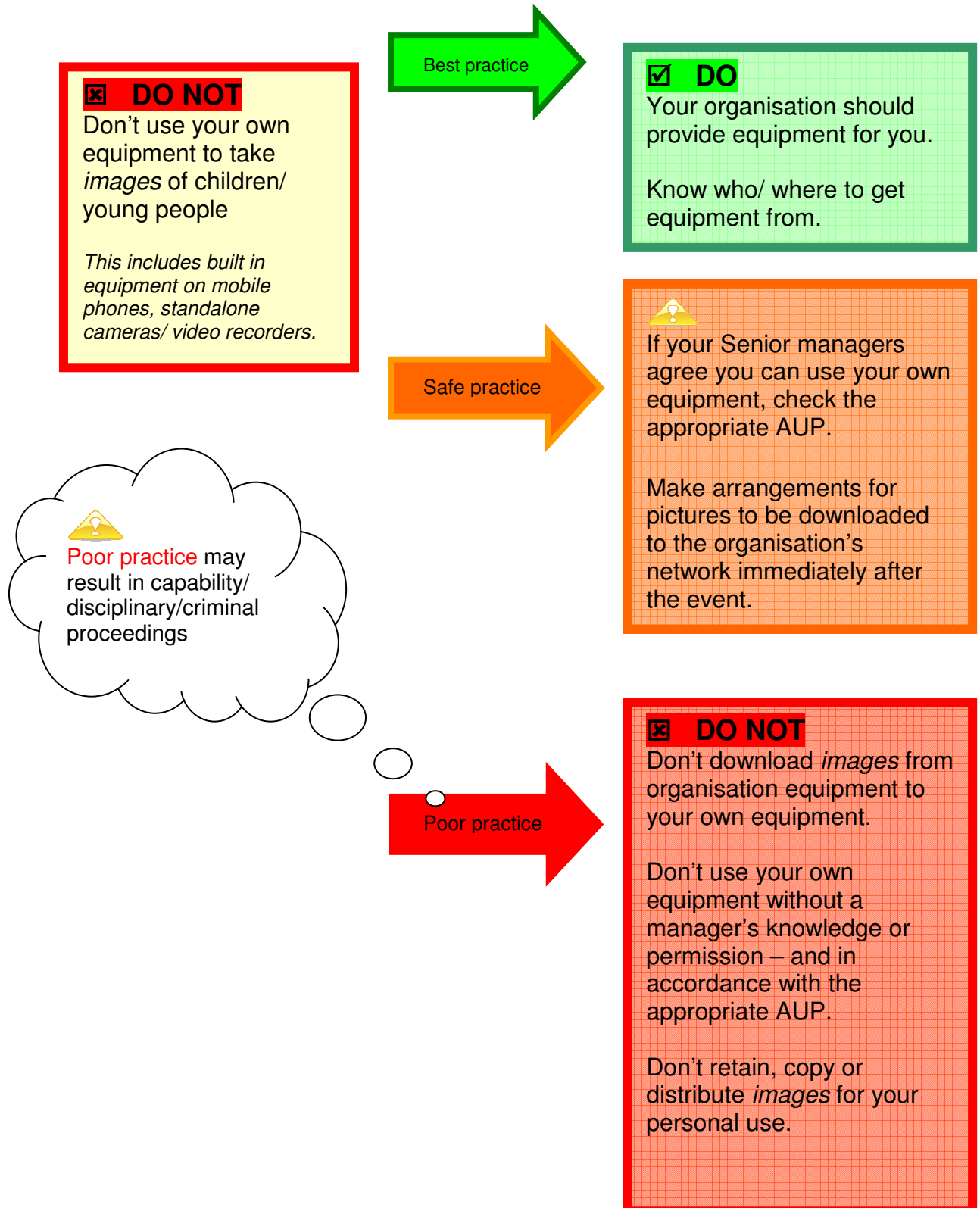
**❌ DO NOT**  
Don't use your personal *email* account to communicate with *service users* and their families without a manager's knowledge or permission – and in accordance with the appropriate *AUP*.

**✅ DO**  
**What should be in place?**

- An *AUP* which should be explicit about the use of personal *email* accounts to communicate with *service users*.
- The *AUP* should be explicit about using work accounts for personal purposes.
- The *AUP* should include sanctions for breaching the policy.

## Images

We all love taking photos of children and young people to record and show off their achievements and experiences – particularly for sharing with those who cannot be there to witness the event in person. Do not be tempted to use your personal *mobile phone* or camera to do this.



**☑ DO**

**What should be in place?**

- Use of personal equipment should be made clear in the *AUP*
- Taking *images* of service users should be included in the *AUP*. Parental permission must be obtained which includes taking *images* and use of *images* e.g. on *website*, displays etc
- Workers should know where equipment is available from and the rules for returning it, who is responsible for *downloading* onto the organisation's storage media and deleting from the camera.



## Internet

The *internet* has totally changed our lives and given us quick access to information, *content* and people! But like any other part of our life we do need to learn what is good – and bad – about using it!




Be aware of the organisation policy for the use of the *internet* on your work computer.

Security software may mean that some sites are *blocked* or restrict access.




**DO**

Understand how to *search* safely online and how to report inappropriate *content* either via your organisation's ICT section or via the *CEOP* report button.



Be aware that the organisation's *monitoring software* will log your activity.

Be aware that *keystroke monitoring software* does just that. This means that if you are online shopping then your *passwords*, credit card numbers and security codes will all be visible to the monitoring technicians



Misuse of personal information may be a breach of the *AUP*. Workers may be vulnerable to allegations as well as capability/ disciplinary/ criminal process



**DO NOT**

Remember that accessing or *downloading* inappropriate or illegal material may result in criminal proceedings

Breach of the *AUP* may result in confiscation of equipment, closing of accounts and instigation of capability/ disciplinary processes

**DO**

**What should be in place?**

- The *AUP* makes explicit the consequences/ sanctions for inappropriate use of the *internet*

## Mobile phones

Mobile phones or smart phones as most are these days are a 'must have' for children and young people – it is how they expect to communicate and be communicated with! We all carry them around too although we probably don't understand or use all that they are capable of doing. However you use your phone do not use your personal phone for professional use.

**❌ DO NOT**  
Don't use your personal *mobile phone* to communicate with children/ young people, their parents/ carers


*This includes phone calls, text messages, email or web-based communications e.g. Twitter, BBM.*




**✅ DO**  
Your organisation should provide equipment for you.


Know who/ where to get equipment from.


Make sure you know about inbuilt software/ facilities and switch off if appropriate

  
Service users having your personal details may make you vulnerable to harassment or bullying



  
Senior managers agree you can use your own equipment.

  
Make sure you know how to employ safety measures like concealing your number by dialling 141 first.

  
Misuse of personal information may be a breach of the AUP. Workers may be vulnerable to allegations as well as capability/ disciplinary/criminal process



**❌ DO NOT**  
Don't use your own equipment without a manager's knowledge or permission – and in accordance with the appropriate AUP.

Don't retain *service user* contact details for your personal use.

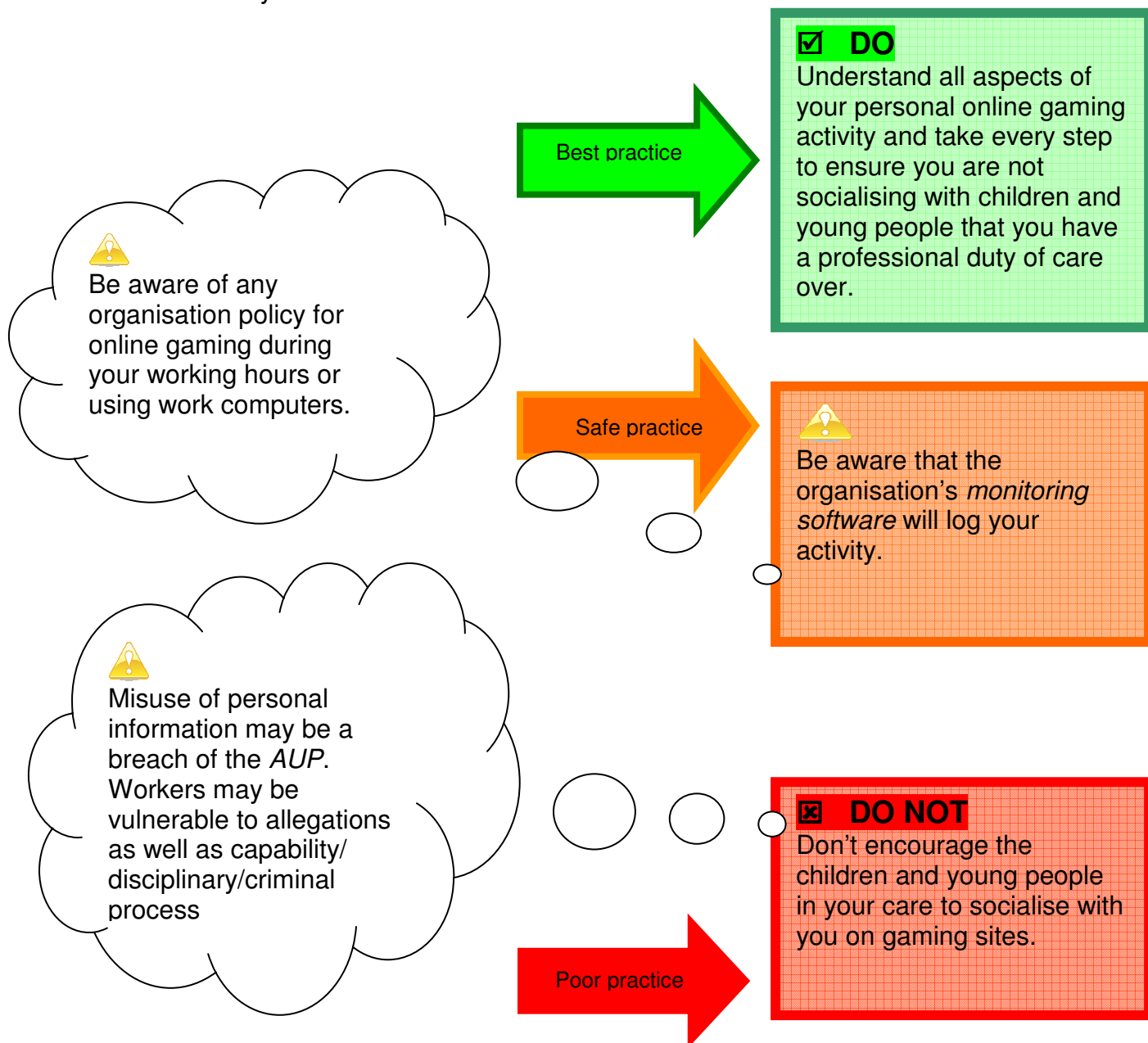
**DO**

**What should be in place?**

- Use of personal equipment should be made clear in the *AUP*
- If the need for a *mobile phone* is for a one-off situation e.g. a trip out then workers know where the equipment is available from and the rules for returning it, making sure that it is fully charged and has sufficient credit.
- If the phone is to be used abroad then check that the phone has *network roaming access*.

## Online Gaming

Online Gaming is an activity that can be considered purely personal. However this is another means of interacting socially with others – very often anonymous users but who may in fact be children and young people that you have a duty of care for.



**DO**  
**What should be in place?**

- The *AUP* makes explicit the consequences/ sanctions for inappropriate use of the *internet* and using online gaming in work-time.

## Social networking (Facebook/ Twitter)

*Social networking* is software that enables people to stay in touch online via the *internet*. It provides support for sharing information, *images* and making contact with people who may share a common interest. It is very beguiling. Social networking providers alter their functionality and rules for use on a frequent basis so it is very important to stay alert and check privacy settings.

*Facebook* and *Twitter* are the most well known ones.



**❌ DO NOT**

Don't use your personal *Facebook/ Twitter* profile to:

- communicate with
- share *images*
- take images of children/ young people and their parents/ carers

*Whether using your personal or organisational equipment*

Don't accept children and young people/ parents and carers as *friends* on your personal *page*.

**✅ DO**

Consider creating a professional *profile* in agreement with your manager/ organisation.

*Young people may have several profiles themselves (personal and one for parents to see) so will appreciate this approach.*

Make sure that you don't have links to your personal *profile* because this defeats the object!

Regularly check all settings and make sure your security settings are not open access.

Ask your family and friends to protect your professional status and not post *tagged images* of you on their open access *profiles*

**⚠️**

May affect your relationship with *service users*.  
May affect professional status through professional body concerns about bringing the profession into disrepute





**⚠️**

Make sure your security settings are not open access but set to family and friends only

Don't accept people you don't know as *friends* – they could be *service users*. Go for quality not quantity.

Be aware that belonging to a 'group' can be a 'back door' into your *profile*.

 Remember that posting certain bad/negative comments can sometimes be treated by the police as offences!

 Breach of AUP. May make you vulnerable to harassment, *bullying* or allegations. Disciplinary/capability/criminal processes may be instigated.



### DO NOT

Don't have an open access *profile* that includes inappropriate personal information and *images* eg holiday snaps, hen/stag nights.

Don't accept *service users* as friends on your personal *profile*.

Don't accept *service users* as *friends* once the work with them is completed. This means that other *service users* may gain access to your *profile*.

Don't accept ex-service users as *friends*.

Don't collect '*friends*' including people you don't know in real life.

Don't use your personal *profile* to communicate with service users without your manager's knowledge or permission.

Don't write inappropriate/ indiscrete posts about colleagues or service users.

### DO

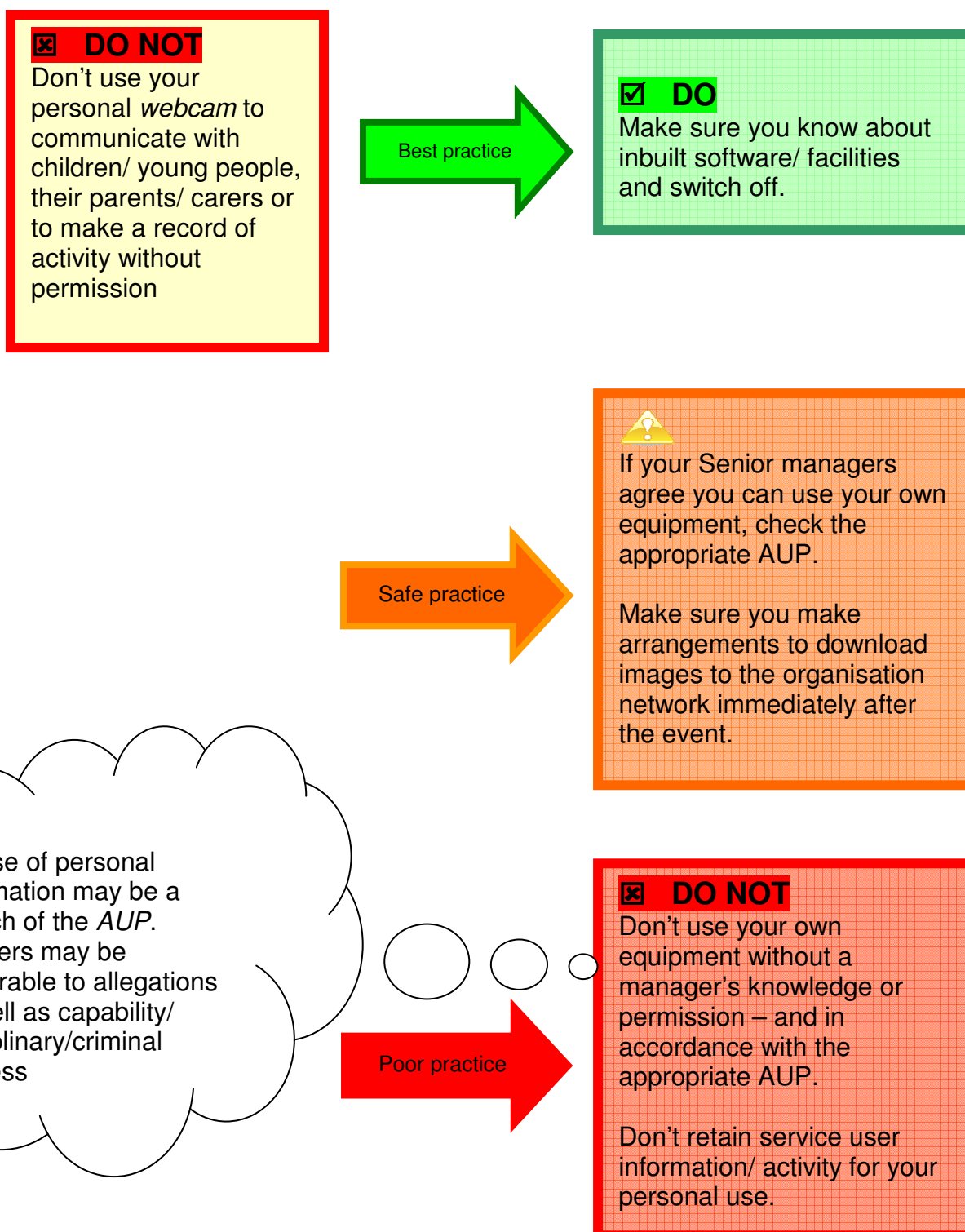
#### What should be in place?

- The AUP should explicitly state that children/ young people and their parents/ carers should not be accepted as *friends* and include the sanctions for the breach of this policy.
- The AUP for the organisation should include guidelines for creating/ monitoring a separate professional *profile* if this is considered an appropriate way of working.
- The use of the CEOP\* *report* button should be promoted
- The AUP is part of the induction process and includes advice about the need for a professional online presence

\*Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre

## Webcams

Webcams are small digital cameras that are either added to computers or are built in. They are a fantastic way of 2-way communicating between family and friends using communication technologies like *Skype*, and *video-conferencing* for work colleagues who are physically separated. Great as they are there are some good practices to consider.



**DO**

**What should be in place?**

- Use of personal equipment including *webcams* should be made clear in the *AUP*
- If the need to use a *webcam* is for a one-off situation e.g. project, then appropriate organisational safeguards need to be in place
- Arrangements must be made for storing the work on the organisation's network immediately following the activity



## Summary of good practice guidelines

### DO

1. Set your *privacy settings* for any *social networking site* to ensure only the people you want have sight/ access to the *contents*. Keep these updated. The default settings for most *social networking sites* are set to open access where anyone can see everything.
2. Ensure your *mobile phone* (any technological equipment) is *password/ PIN* protected. This will ensure that other people can't use your equipment and get you into trouble.
3. Consider having separate personal and professional online identities/ *accounts* if you wish to have online contact with *service users* i.e. children and young people, their families and other professionals. Ensure that your manager is aware of your professional online persona.
4. Make sure that all information about you that is publicly available is accurate and appropriate – think particularly about whether photographs/ stories that you may have *posted* in your personal life are appropriate for a person with a professional life and a reputation to lose. If you don't want it to be public, don't put it online.
5. Remember that online conversations may be referred to as '*chat*' but they are written documents and should always be treated as such. Be mindful about how you present yourself when you are publishing information about yourself or having 'conversations' on-line.
6. Make sure that you are aware of your organisation's policy regarding the use of both organisational and personal digital equipment and the consequences of misuse. Breach of the policy can result in capability/ disciplinary actions by your employer, professional body and criminal proceedings by the police.
7. Err on the side of caution. If you are unsure who can view online material, assume that it is publicly available. Remember - once information is online you have relinquished control of it. Other people may choose to copy it, to edit it, to pass it on and to save it.
8. Switch off any *Bluetooth* capability any device may have installed as standard. *Bluetooth* allows another person to have access to your equipment – they can then pretend to be you.
9. Always be aware that technology is constantly upgrading and improving. You may have access to *websites* via a work-provided *smart phone* that are blocked by your computer. Mobile phones come with *locator software*. Cameras can be a feature of *games consoles*. When you receive any new equipment (personal or private) make sure that you know what features it has as standard and take appropriate action to disable/ protect.

## **⊗ DO NOT**

1. Give your personal information to *service users* i.e. children/ young people, their parents/ carers. This includes personal *mobile phone* numbers, *social networking* accounts, personal *website/ blog URLs*, online *image* storage sites, *passwords/ PIN* numbers etc.
2. Use your personal *mobile phone* to communicate with *service users* i.e. children/young people or parents/carers either by phone call, *text, email, social networking site*.
3. Use the *internet* or web-based communication to send personal messages to *service users* i.e. children/young people, parents/ carers.
4. Share your personal details on a *social network site* with *service users* i.e. children/young people, their parents or carers. This includes accepting them as *friends*. Be aware that belonging to a 'group' may give 'back door' access to your page even though you have set your *privacy settings* to family and friends only.
5. Add/allow *service users* i.e. a child/young person, their parents/ carers to join your contacts/friends list on personal *social networking profiles*.
6. Use your own digital camera/ video for work. This includes integral cameras on *mobile phones*.
7. Play *online games* with *service users* i.e. children, young people, their parents or carers. This can be difficult when the culture is to play with 'randoms'. Check out before you play online with someone you don't know.

## Next Steps

### *Should an issue or incident arise know what to do and who to contact:*

- Be fully aware of the AUPs that cover the duty of care with children and young people that you are responsible for
- Make sure there is an Incident Management flowchart or at least a named person or people that you need to contact depending on the seriousness of the incident
- If in doubt immediately alert your line manager

All reports or enquiries concerning the welfare or safety of a child must go straight to the Referral and Initial Assessment Team (RIAT) on **0161 603 4500** as the first port of call. This applies to reports from the public, council staff, partners and outside agencies. The email address is [worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk](mailto:worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk).

If your concern is about the behaviour of an adult who works or volunteers with children contact your line manager and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (email: [roisin.rafferty@salford.gov.uk](mailto:roisin.rafferty@salford.gov.uk), [patsy.molloy@salford.gov.uk](mailto:patsy.molloy@salford.gov.uk), telephone: **0161 603 4328/4445**).

If a child is in immediate danger of being harmed or is home alone, call the police on **999**.

<http://www.partnersinsalford.org/sscb/> provides further information on Salford Safeguarding Children's Board.

### *Get informed about the AUPs in your organisation*

There are likely to be a number of safeguarding policies and AUPs relating to your work with children and young people. You may have been consulted or been provided with training/awareness about these:

- Know what the Safeguarding policies are and particularly those AUPs relating to e-Safety
- Ensure your colleagues know about them
- Ensure the children and young people in your care are aware of the AUPs they need to know about and that they understand them
- Ensure that the parents/carers of the children and young people in your care are aware of the AUPS they need to know about and that they understand them

***Get more informed about the topics covered in this Guidance:***

There is a lot of more information and advice available that supports the content in this Guidance. Please follow this link to Salford's City Council website where up to date information is signposted  
<http://intranet.salford.gov.uk/ict-policies>.

**Thank you!!**