EduConnect Zimbabwe

OTHER

Child Safeguarding Policy

How we protect children who learn on EduConnect.

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> **What changed:** First version

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EduConnect Zimbabwe is committed to protecting children who use EduConnect Zimbabwe. This policy applies to everyone who works with or around children through the service: teachers, institutions and their staff, our own team, parents and guardians, and other users. A "child" means anyone under 18. It forms part of the Terms and Conditions and works together with the Code of Conduct.

1. Our commitments

- The welfare of the child comes first, always.
- Every child has the right to be safe from harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect, whatever their background.
- Everyone who works with children is checked, trained to know the rules, and held to them.
- Concerns are taken seriously, handled promptly and in confidence, and reported to the right authorities.

2. Who can have an account

- A child below 13 can use EduConnect Zimbabwe only through a parent or guardian. The child, or someone for them, sends a consent request; it is approved by the parent or guardian in their own account or confirmed by our team contacting the guardian. Only then is the child's login created and linked to the guardian.

- A guardian may give a child their own login with **full access** (the child manages and pays for lessons) or **partial access** (the child can book, but only the guardian can pay). The guardian can see the child's activity in both cases.
- Students under 18 do not have a free-text "about me" profile, so a child cannot publish their school, address or phone number there.

3. Who can teach children

- Teachers and institutions must be verified before they can accept bookings. Verification can include proof of identity, a passport photo, qualifications, registration with an examination board and, for physical lessons, **police clearance**.
- Teachers, institutions and their staff must agree to the Code of Conduct and this policy when they apply. We record when they agreed and which version. When we publish a new version they must agree again before they can carry on.
- We may refuse, restrict or remove anyone, at any time, whose behaviour or background raises a safeguarding concern.

4. Lessons

- **Online lessons** happen inside the app, not on outside video apps. Standard lessons use audio and screen sharing. Join links are private and must not be shared. No one may record a lesson without everyone's permission and, for a child, their guardian's.
- **Physical lessons.** A child below 13 can take a physical lesson only after a parent or guardian has approved it; the teacher is not asked until then. If the child has no parent account on the service, a physical lesson cannot be booked for them. Lessons are held at a partnered institution's venue; home lessons are available only where we have allowed them and the guardian has chosen the location.
- Teachers and staff must not be alone with a child out of sight of others, give lifts, exchange gifts, or contact a child outside the platform.
- Learners can report a problem or a no-show after a lesson. Reports about behaviour are handled under section 7.

5. Messaging and community

- By default, messaging between a learner and a teacher or institution opens only after a booking exists. We may apply a stricter rule for under-18s than for adults.
- Attachments in messages can be switched off, and are off unless we choose otherwise.
- Community posts, replies and any files or videos attached may be reviewed before or after they appear. Anyone can report content. Users can block other users.
- No one may ask a child for private contact details or photographs, or try to move a conversation to another app.

6. Information about children

We collect the minimum needed, limit what other users can see, and keep children's information secure, as set out in our Privacy Policy. Parents and guardians can ask to see, correct or delete their child's information.

7. If you are worried about a child

- **If a child is in immediate danger,** contact the police or emergency services first.
- Report any concern to us by email at support@educonnect.ac.zw or through the report tools in the app. You do not need proof, only a genuine concern. You may report anonymously by email, though that can make it harder to follow up.
- We acknowledge reports, assess the risk, and may immediately restrict or suspend the person concerned, remove content or cancel bookings while we look into it.
- Where a child may have been harmed or is at risk, we will report to the appropriate authorities, such as the police and child protection services, and work with them. We will inform the child's parent or guardian unless doing so would put the child at greater risk.
- We keep a confidential record of every report and what was done, and limit who can see it.
- Nobody who makes a report in good faith will be penalised for it.

8. Consequences

Breaking this policy can lead to removal from the service, cancellation of bookings, withholding of payments, a report to the police and other authorities, and legal action. Some conduct is a crime and will be reported whatever the person says.

9. Review and responsibility

We review this policy regularly and after any serious incident. Each version has a number and an effective date; people who work with children must agree to each new version. Safeguarding questions: support@educonnect.ac.zw. This policy is governed by the laws of Zimbabwe.