

Staying Safe Online

Transit Community Support CIC (TR-CS) and Transit Smart Skills & Consult Ltd (TR-SSC) recognises the importance of effectively using technology in learning and day to day tasks which enables all Learners to acquire digital, technical, and transferable skills. As a result, TR-SSC has set up a website and other online resources with the aim of informing current and prospective learners about TR-SSC activities and developments.

To create a positive online environment for apprentices and staff, you should adhere to the Staying Safe Online and Prevent Policy provided to you during your induction process. Please remember that any comments or content you post online should:

- **Be discreet**
- **Be respectful**
- **Be gracious**
- **Be accurate**

Do not post information, photos, or other items online that could reflect negatively on you, your family or TR-SSC.

Please note that any activity on TR-SSC' internal systems is monitored and recorded. Any external web activity is monitored, recorded, and filtered. The breach of the Staying Safe Online and Prevent Policy and any content that would adversely affect the organisation could result in a disciplinary action.

If you are concerned about any e-safety issues, please speak to your Trainer as soon as possible.

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Online Safety Protocols

Here are the Top 10 Internet safety rules to follow to help you avoid getting into trouble online (and offline).

1. Keep Personal Information Professional and Limited

Potential employers or customers don't need to know your personal relationship status or your home address. They do need to know about your expertise and professional background, and how to get in touch with you. You wouldn't hand purely personal information out to strangers individually—don't hand it out to millions of people online.

2. Keep Your Privacy Settings On

Marketers love to know all about you, and so do hackers. Both can learn a lot from your browsing and social media usage. But you can take charge of your information. As noted by Lifehacker, both web browsers and mobile operating systems have settings available to protect your privacy online. Major websites like Facebook also have privacy-enhancing settings available. These settings are sometimes (deliberately) hard to find because companies want your personal information for its marketing value. Make sure you have enabled these privacy safeguards and keep them enabled.

3. Practice Safe Browsing

You wouldn't choose to walk through a dangerous neighbourhood—don't visit dangerous neighbourhoods online. Cybercriminals use lurid content as bait. They know people are sometimes tempted by dubious

content and may let their guard down when searching for it. The Internet's demimonde is filled with hard-to-see pitfalls, where one careless click could expose personal data or infect your device with malware. By resisting the urge, you don't even give the hackers a chance.

4. Make Sure Your Internet Connection is Secure. Use a Secure VPN Connection

When you go online in a public place, for example by using a public WiFi connection, PCMag notes you have no direct control over its security. Corporate cybersecurity experts worry about "endpoints"—the places where a private network connects to the outside world. Your vulnerable endpoint is your local Internet connection. Make sure your device is secure, and when in doubt, wait for a better time (i.e., until you're able to connect to a secure Wi-Fi network) before providing information such as your bank account number.

To further improve your Internet browsing safety, use secure VPN connection (virtual private network). VPN enables you to have a secure connection between your device and an Internet server that no one can monitor or access the data that you're exchanging.

5. Be Careful What You Download

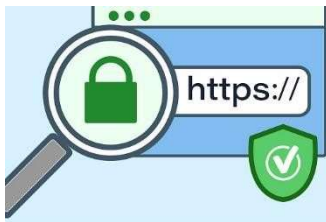
A top goal of cybercriminals is to trick you into downloading malware—programs or apps that carry malware or try to steal information. This malware can be disguised as an app: anything from a popular game to something that checks traffic or the weather. As PCWorld advises, don't download apps that look suspicious or come from a site you don't trust.

6. Choose Strong Passwords

Passwords are one of the biggest weak spots in the whole Internet security structure, but there's currently no way around them. And the problem with passwords is that people tend to choose easy ones to remember (such as "password" and "123456"), which are also easy for cyber thieves to guess. Select strong passwords that are harder for cybercriminals to demystify. Password manager software can help you to manage multiple passwords so that you don't forget them. A strong password is one that is unique and complex—at least 15 characters long, mixing letters, numbers, and special characters.



7. Make Online Purchases From Secure Sites



Any time you make a purchase online, you need to provide credit card or bank account information—just what cybercriminals are most eager to get their hands on. Only supply this information to sites that provide secure, encrypted connections. As Boston

University notes, you can identify secure sites by looking for an address that starts with *https:* (the S stands for *secure*) rather than simply *http:* They may also be marked by a padlock icon next to the address bar.

8. Be Careful What You Post

The Internet does not have a delete key, as that young candidate in New Hampshire found out. Any comment or image you post online may stay online forever because removing the original (say, from Twitter) does not remove any copies that other people made. There is no way for you to "take back" a remark you wish you hadn't made or get rid of that embarrassing selfie you took at a party. Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your mom or a prospective employer to see.

9. Be Careful Who You Meet Online

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People you meet online are not always who they claim to be. Indeed, they may not even be real. As InfoWorld reports, fake social media profiles are a popular way for hackers to cosy up to unwary Web users and pick their cyber pockets. Be as cautious and sensible in your online social life as you are in your in-person social life.

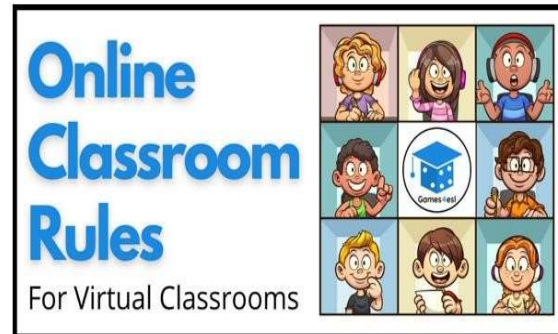
10. Keep Your Antivirus Program Up To Date

Internet security software cannot protect against every threat, but it will detect and remove most malware—though you should make sure it's to date. Be sure to stay current with your operating system's updates and updates to applications you use. They provide a vital layer of security. Keep these 10 basic Internet safety rules in mind and you'll avoid many of the nasty surprises that lurk online for the careless.



Online Classroom Rules

Training providers and colleges have switched to virtual classrooms in either pure online teaching or a blended approach. Hence, it's important to establish **online classroom rules** when teaching online. Although many of the normal classroom rules may apply when teaching online, there are many online classroom rules your learners/apprentices should be aware of. Below is a list of 12 essential online classroom rules to make your virtual class successful.



The Following Are Rules For Learners

1. Be On Time For Class

One of the most important online classroom rules is to be on time for class. Classes are relatively short and there's generally a lot of material to be covered. Starting on time not only shows respect for your classmates and the trainer, but it also frees up more time to ask questions or linger a little longer on more complicated subjects. learners may feel a little more relaxed or may sleep in a little later while learning from home but being late for class can be very disruptive to online classes. To make sure the class can start on time, log in a few minutes before the class begins. If you have issues logging in, that will leave you a bit of time to contact the trainer right away and solve your connection issues.

2. Dress Appropriately

A virtual classroom is still a classroom and so learners and trainers should dress just as they would when attending school. The virtual classroom is part of the school environment, the same dress code applies. Learners are to dress appropriately and things like pajamas,

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offensive t-shirts, tank tops, revealing clothing, or shirts with offensive print are inappropriate and are not allowed in the online classroom. Trainers will ensure that the rules of dress are carried out in the classroom.

3. Choose Your Study Space



The place where learner's desks/laptops should be while learning online is very important. Learners should set up their study space in a quiet place away from distractions by other family members, pets, background noises, or cell phones. For example, learners should not place their laptop in a place where their parents and other family members may be walking around and talking in the background. This can be very distracting for all learners in a virtual classroom.

4. One At A Time

An online class can get very noisy, very fast. If everyone is talking at once, it is very hard to hear and to be heard by other learners and the trainer. To make sure everyone can participate and be heard, learners should speak one at a time, and if another learner is talking, they should listen. If necessary, the trainer may ask learners to mute their microphones until it is their time to speak. Alternatively, as a host, the trainer may be able to mute learners' microphones until it's their turn to speak.

5. Be Prepared

Just like classes in a normal classroom, learners need to come prepared for class when learning online. This means being prepared with any textbooks required for class, a pencil and paper for taking notes, and any assignments/homework from previous lessons.

6. Mute your microphone and turn your camera on

Virtual classrooms can get noisy really quickly. Mute your microphone to keep the audio channel free of clutter and available to the speaker. Communication is also visual. Keep your camera turned on so your classmates and the trainer can read your visual cues. If needed, you can encourage each other with appropriate response emojis. Avoid distracting backgrounds.

7. Pay attention

Class participation is mandatory. It will count towards your grade. Participation will ensure that the focus of the class is on the lesson and will help keep things organized and engaged. To be able to participate, you need to pay attention and listen so that you can respond appropriately when it's your turn to speak.

8. No Eating Or Drinking

Just like in the normal classroom, learners shouldn't engage in activities that don't contribute to the lesson. Eating and drinking is an obvious example. Learners may be tempted to roll out of bed and eat their breakfast during class, but this can be very distracting for learners. Also, learners are not going to be able to talk and participate if they've got a mouth full of cereal.



9. Don't play with your computer or other devices

Learners know that the trainer cannot see them fully during online class, so they may be tempted to use their phone or play with another toy or gadget off-camera. It's hard to work on a device that offers you a world of distraction and entertainment. But your computer should be entirely dedicated to the lesson at hand. You can't properly participate in class and check your social feed at the same time. Your trainer will set the online classroom rule that no phones can be used in class or any other devices that may be a distraction.

10. Raise Your Hand

When learning in a normal classroom, trainers probably ask learners to raise their hand when they want to speak, right? Your trainer will make this a rule for your online classroom, too. There are a number of ways this can be done. The trainer may simply ask learners to actually raise their hand, but this is a little difficult to see when teaching online, especially if there are many students. In some online platforms there's actually a 'raise your hand' function.

11. Respect And Encourage Each Other

Switching from learning in a classroom to virtual learning can be stressful for learners which can have a big impact on motivation. Use the 'raise hand' function when you want to speak. Listen to your trainer and classmates and only use the chat function when the trainer asks you to do so or if there is an issue with your connection. Refrain from using strong language or making offensive comments. Class environments are populated with people from all walks of life. Judgment won't enrich you, but you'll learn a lot from listening to others and trying to understand them. Your trainer will make it an online classroom rule for learners to listen, respect, and encourage other learners in the class. For example, if someone has a good answer or idea, learners can share a fun emoticon to cheer on their peers.

12. Have Fun and Be Creative

Learning online is a fantastic opportunity to play lots of online games that you might not get a chance to play in a normal classroom. If everyone follows the rules and contributes to the shared objective of all class members, virtual classrooms can be a fun and efficient way to learn. Make sure to approach it that way and be creative with the added possibilities that virtual classrooms and eLearning offer you.





Protocol For Online 1:1 Meetings

Trainers planning 1:1 meetings must adhere to the following:

Do:

- Ensure your safeguarding training is up to date.
- Ensure you have agreed the protocols and timing of all 1:1 online activity with under 18s or vulnerable adults with parents / carers prior to the 1:1 taking place, including appropriate location, dress, and conduct. The 1:1 must then take place only at the days / times agreed with parents. Parents and carers should be present in the home at the time. If at any time you feel



uncomfortable with something done or said during a 1:1 call, you should end the call as soon as possible and report any concerns to your line manager and / or safeguarding officer.

- Test your audio and video before a scheduled call.
- Record any live classes so that the video can be reviewed if any issues arise.
- Be punctual and courteous. Introduce yourself and take note of other attendees' names so you can address them by name. Turn off call tone on your phone. Treat this just like you would a face-to-face meeting with a learner, colleague, or other adult.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner throughout the call - you remain an employee of GST throughout the call.
- Conduct video calls to learners or colleagues from a desk or other appropriate location.
- Remind learner that all audio/video may be recorded, to safeguard both parties and this wouldn't routinely be shared.
- Make sure to have MS Teams on before scheduled calls. Test your audio and/or video before a scheduled call.
- Look at your screen, pay attention to others and when speaking make sure to look at your camera.
- Use the 'blur background option' to hide any background if needed.
- Picture in Picture is your best reference; you can see yourself and your surroundings just as others on the call can.
- Make sure you have good light. Adjust lighting or use a portable light source to make sure you have good lighting on you from the front without having to look directly into a harsh light, eg: by pointing a strong desk lamp at the wall you're facing.

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- Ensure you are appropriately dressed; ‘business casual’ at all times.
- Mute your microphone when not needing to talk to avoid background noise.
- Keep sessions to a reasonable length to avoid interfering with family activity.
- Consider posting your comments/questions on completion of the online conversation, in the Team Chat window.

Don’t:

- Conduct a video call if it would be inappropriate to meet face-to-face.
- Multi-task; your learners will be aware.
- Shout; learners will tell you if they cannot hear.



○ Click your pen, tap on your desk or anything else annoying or distracting.

- Eat or drink, other than water, tea / coffee
- Position yourself with other people or pets in view; what’s around and behind you can be seen.
- Leave multiple applications open during the call as it may affect the quality.
- Wear stripes or heavy patterns creating pixelation of images.

Online Etiquette:

14 “Netiquette” Rules Online Learners Should Know

Most people are familiar with the term etiquette and what it carries. From a young age, we are taught to behave properly and have good manners. Now, with many parts of our lives moving online, including even education, a need has arisen for a set of specific online etiquette guidelines that apply to cyber behaviour.

Netiquette guidelines are a set of rules that dictate what tasteful and respectful online behaviour is. How to speak respectfully without taking part in disrespect or bullying is among the main reasons why we need these rules.

These rules tend to change over time due to the changing nature of the online space. For online learners, all of the communication takes place online which is why these rules are especially important to them. Here are a few ground netiquette rules for online classes that students should be aware of.

Why Is Online Etiquette Important?

More and more classes are being held online nowadays, so it is important for participants to have an understanding of the rules of online etiquette. These rules help to keep discussions focused, on track, and respectful. Without online etiquette rules, conversations and debates can quickly disintegrate into misunderstanding, and rude language and behaviour, which destroys the chance of smooth communication and maintaining healthy relationships.

1. Be Careful With Your Tone

While an online conversation with friends doesn't necessarily require much thought, the same doesn't go for when you are having a conversation with trainers. You should be careful with capitalization, as

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writing in ALL-CAPS can oftentimes be interpreted as YELLING! and will be viewed as impolite. Similarly, a joke can oftentimes be perceived as a rude remark. This is why you have to make sure that your point doesn't get lost in translation.

Apart from texting, it is also advisable to be aware of your tone in online classes that use audio or video forms. However, this is where the rules of general etiquette apply more. For instance, not talking over someone, listening carefully, actively participating in class, etc.

2. Be Accurate and Factual



The internet is a vast place with information coming from all sorts of sources. This is why you should be careful when providing information. It's important to fact-check everything you read and possibly include sources when giving advice or information.

When doing your assignment, you should be careful to include credible sources in all your papers and when you help your classmates by providing information on a subject. Likewise, you should be cautious about what you choose to believe on the internet and what you share with others. For instance, if you're unsure how to go about it, stick to official sites that are known for credibility.

3. Search First, Then Ask

If you get stuck with a question on a certain assignment, it's better to search for it before you ask your classmates or the trainer. It's possible that you might find your answer fast, and there will be no need to include third parties.

The same goes for questions regarding class structure. You may find your answers in the syllabus or the university website. Of course, if you fail to find your answer after some time spent searching, you should turn to your trainers or peers for help.

4. Don't Use Sarcasm Freely

While in person, we communicate with the help of facial expressions and gestures. Conveying the same message online can prove more challenging. This is especially true when it comes to sarcastic humour, as it usually isn't possible to transmit the tone of voice when using text. A light-hearted joke can be viewed differently in the text. You will need to be careful about making the intent behind your words as clear as possible, which is why sarcasm is off-limits most times.

But many people love jokes (including many of our trainers), so just make sure that it is clear that you are being funny, and not rude. Emoticons and smileys can be helpful when conveying sarcasm or humour.

5. Be as Polite as You Are In Person

Being polite on the internet should be as common as in real life. Unfortunately, that is not the case in many situations. A significant number of people tend to use the internet as a cover and their display as a shield, which leads to them writing what they would never say in public.



A key part of netiquette is only typing what you would be comfortable with saying to someone's face. Hence being respectful and polite to others should be part of your communications online. Remember, if you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online either.

6. Use Proper Grammar and Punctuation

Many people tend to forget the rules that apply to writing when communicating online. However, resorting to proper grammar and punctuation can make the message seem more professional and thought

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out. Not only does it make your text more readable, but it can also prepare you for professional writing that you might do in the future. Think about what you would like to read yourself. It should be easy to read and comprehensible. That way, you will save precious time for someone reading your email, message, comment, or post.

So, remember to keep your written communication formal and professional, and save shortcuts and textspeak for your friends.

7. Stay on Topic

When there is a discussion happening, it's crucial that everyone stays on topic. It's easy to stray off the initial conversation, especially when there are many people participating in it. Filling the conversation with unnecessary information can lose precious time and make it hard for someone to understand what the discussion is really about.

So, make sure that you understand what the discussion is about and only reply with things relevant to it. This can prove helpful to both you and the others.

8. Remember That Nothing Is Private Online

Online privacy is something you should keep in mind when typing anything. Most things you post, and share are probably going to be there for a long time. This means that you should stay away from anything considered inappropriate and rude.



And never forward personal emails or photos without the permission of those involved in the communication. Be careful when sharing information, and never share anything about a learner or a trainer without their consent.

Remember that we live in a day and age where many things take place

online, and building an online presence is just as important as the real-life one. That being said, there is no ‘real privacy’ on the internet, and you should handle what you share wisely.

9. Make Clear and Brief Points

Unlike face-to-face interactions, taking too long to get to a point can result in the message getting lost in the text. Hence it is best to use short and clear sentences when trying to explain something. It gets the point across more effectively and leaves less room for misunderstandings.

Don’t let your point get lost in translation by typing too many unnecessary words. However, make sure that all the information you want to present is still there.

10. Respect People’s Privacy



Treat others’ privacy the same way you would want some to handle your private information. You shouldn’t give the personal information of your classmates and trainers online to anyone.

This means being careful with passwords, whereabouts, private conversations, and pictures. The same goes for both your and others’ information, as it can be dangerous to distribute any of it without caution.

11. Use Your Trainer’s Proper Titles

Although using the proper title for your trainer should be understood, many people tend to forget it once classes are online. As a result, a certain amount of formality is a vital part of netiquette guidelines for learners. Unless the trainer states otherwise, you should always refer to them professionally.

Apart from using their proper title, you should always be careful to be respectful towards them in all forms of online communication. You should act the same as you would in a traditional classroom.

| Mr | Mrs | Miss | Ms |
|---|---|--|---|
| Mister | Missus | Miss | Mizz |
| Example: Mr. Jones | Example: Mrs Jones | Example: Miss May | Example: Ms. Ann |
| Doesn't tell us the marital status. | Refers to a married woman. | Refers to an unmarried woman. | Doesn't tell us the marital status. |
|  |  |  |  |

12. Respect Others' Opinions



**RESPECT
OTHER OPINIONS**

You should be aware that you're not always going to agree with the opinions of your classmates or trainers. However, keep in mind that you should always be respectful in discussions. You can disagree with someone and respect their opinions at the same time.

Although online learning carries a level of anonymity and distance which traditional classes don't, that shouldn't serve as a reason to not be kind to

someone. Remember that an online classroom is still a classroom.

So, respect others' views and refrain from belittling opinions that are different from yours. You can disagree or discuss with someone, of course, but be sensitive and do that respectfully.

13. Don't Overuse the Chat Box

Many online classes come with chat boxes to help learners communicate. They serve as a way of letting learners communicate with

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each other and ask questions related to what they are learning. However, if not used carefully they can turn into a distraction box.

You should know to only use the chatbox when your text is going to be relevant to the topic you're discussing in class. It's not advisable to use it as a tool for chatting with fellow learners about irrelevant matters. So instead, use the chat box to ask relevant questions, participate in discussions, or answer when the trainer asks.

14. Submit Assignments Carefully

Being mindful of how to submit online assignments to trainers should be something every learner knows how to do. Since there is no face-to-face interaction, if you fail to put your name on it or mess up the subject line, your assignment can easily be lost in a pile of emails.

Another thing to be careful with when submitting assignments online is attachments. You shouldn't attach files for which you are not sure if the other person will be able to open. Additionally, you should follow specific instructions your trainer gives about assignments.

The online community has its own set of rules that are referred to as netiquette. There are many things that online learners should keep in mind, such as tone of voice, accuracy, proper grammar, privacy, etc. Being familiar with the unwritten rules of the internet and guidelines for interacting online can prove helpful with any online communication you have. For the most part, you should remember to be respectful and factcheck your information.



Useful Further Guidance:

<https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-10safeguarding-rules-teachers-home>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-childrensafe/online-safety/internet-connected-devices/>

