

Capa First Response**Online safeguarding policy and procedures****Dated February 2026****Review Date February 2027**

Purpose

This policy and procedure sets out the safe set-up and management of all Capa First Response online services.

It ensures clear guidelines around safeguarding while working with families on line and ensures a consistent and clear approach across:

- Drop-In Q&A sessions
- Advice and Support (A&S) sessions
- Closed online groups
- Private 1:1 online sessions
- Workshops
- Other online service Capa provides

Our aim is to create spaces that are:

- Safe
- Contained
- Confidential
- Clear for both families and practitioner

Core Principles Across All Online Services

All online work at Capa First Response must follow these principles:

- Safety first: Access is controlled and monitored.
- Confidentiality: Information shared in sessions is treated with respect and care.
- Clear practitioner roles: Each session has a named facilitator and clear support structure.
- New links for each service:
 - Links are not reused across sessions or groups.
- Accurate records: Practitioner notes remain the primary record. AI summaries may support practitioner notes.

1. Online Safeguarding, Boundaries and Risk Management During Sessions

Capa recognises that online work takes place within family homes and practitioners may observe, hear or become aware of distress, conflict, dysregulation or safeguarding concerns during sessions.

Practitioners must balance relational support with clear professional boundaries and safeguarding responsibilities at all times.

Children and Young People Present During Sessions

Advice & Support sessions, parent/carer groups and private practitioner sessions are designed as reflective spaces for parents and carers.

Where possible:

- children and young people should not be present during sessions
- parents/carers should access sessions from a confidential and safe space
- headphones are encouraged where appropriate

Families should be informed during appointment booking and confirmation emails that sessions are not designed for children to attend or overhear sensitive discussions.

Wording used for booking confirmations:

“These sessions are intended as a safe reflective space for parents and carers.

Wherever possible, we ask that children and young people are not present or able to overhear conversations during the session.”

Practitioners recognise this may not always be possible due to caring responsibilities, emotional distress or family circumstances and should respond sensitively and flexibly.

If a Child or Young Person Appears During a Session

If a child or young person enters the space briefly:

- practitioners should remain calm and non-judgemental
- avoid discussing sensitive or escalatory content

- support the parent/carer to re-establish privacy where possible

If the child remains present for a sustained period and the practitioner believes the session can no longer safely or appropriately continue:

- the practitioner should pause or redirect the conversation
- explain calmly and respectfully why the session may need to stop or be rearranged
- avoid language that could increase shame, blame or escalation

Suggested wording:

"I'm mindful this conversation may no longer feel safe or appropriate with your child present. I think it may be better for us to pause here and rearrange so we can properly support you."

Responding to Escalation, Distress or Anger On Screen

If a child or young person becomes distressed, dysregulated or angry during an online session, practitioners should:

- remain calm
- avoid escalating language or confrontation
- lower tone and pace of communication
- encourage safety and emotional regulation
- avoid attempting to "manage" or discipline the child directly
- support the parent/carer to prioritise safety over strategy

Practitioners should focus on:

- de-escalation
- emotional containment
- safety
- reducing shame and blame

Where appropriate, practitioners may suggest:

- pausing the session
- taking space

- reducing stimulation
- returning to the session later
- ending the session early if safety concerns remain

Ending or Pausing a Session Due to Concerns

Practitioners may end or pause a session if:

- the environment becomes emotionally or physically unsafe
- there are safeguarding concerns
- there is significant escalation or aggression occurring
- confidentiality can no longer be maintained
- the practitioner believes continuing could increase harm or distress

If a session is ended:

- this should be done calmly and respectfully
- practitioners should explain the reason in a non-blaming way
- the parent/carer should be informed of next steps where possible

Following the session:

- concerns must be recorded in case notes
- safeguarding procedures followed where appropriate
- the practitioner should discuss concerns with the safeguarding lead, or their manager if required
- a follow-up contact should be considered where appropriate

2.Procedures for Online services

2.1 Drop-In Q&A Procedure

Staffing

Each session must be facilitated by:

- 2 practitioners or 1 practitioner + 1 other Capa staff member



Participant Access and Safety

- Eventbrite sign-up closes at 9:00am on the day of the session.
- This becomes the final register.

Before the session:

- A new Zoom link is created by the designated lead drop-in practitioner.
- Download the Attendees spreadsheet from Eventbrite and save in the drive.
- The link is sent on the morning of the session, to only those on the register, using a template email. [EMAIL TEMPLATE FOR WEEKLY DROP IN](#)
- Any attendees listed as 'info requested' or with suspicious email addresses/names should be highlighted in red.
- Send template invitations to attendees in blocks of no more than 5 recipients using bcc.
- On downloaded drive copy of attendees, add a column next to participants names titled ATTENDED. Use this to check off parent/carers names as they arrive at the drop in.
- All those attending should be reminded they have to sign up for each Drop In they want to attend as there is a new link each meeting
- Before opening the Zoom meeting, go to Host Tools and disable all options for participants except 'chat'. Ensure that 'Hide profile pictures' is enabled (in the top three options)

During entry:

- Only host to let in participants including co facilitator
- Host to make co-facilitator co host once in
- Participant screen names must match their registration name
- Participants are messaged in the waiting room to confirm this.
- Participants are messaged in the waiting room prompting them to name themselves, if they have not already done so.
- Cameras and microphones remain inactive for all participants.

If a participant:

- changes screen name to something suspicious or concerning



- Overrides any 'Host Tools' settings
- Raises a concern

They can be placed in a breakout room, where:

- A practitioner joins them
- Checks in privately
- Ensures safety and clarity

We will use a breakout room if we have a concern about a participant. This could be either for their own wellbeing or we have concerns about the safety of the group (if we suspect they may try to do something to sabotage the group).

Drop-In Welcome and Confidentiality Statement

This must be read at the start of each session:

- *Welcome to Capa First Response's virtual drop-in space. We're really glad you're here. This is a safe and supportive space for parents and carers to ask questions and talk through concerns with specialist practitioners. Everything discussed here is confidential. We ask all participants to respect each other's privacy and not share anything discussed outside this session. Practitioners will not share your personal information unless we have a safeguarding concern and are required to act to keep someone safe. For safeguarding reasons, cameras are off and audio is muted. Please use the chat to share questions or comments. We respond in general ways rather than discussing individual situations in detail. By staying in this session, you agree to respect everyone's confidentiality. We will use AI to create a session summary for internal reflection. This will not capture individual names.*

2.2 Advice and Support (A&S) Sessions

- Offered telephone support in the first instance.
- Zoom or other online platform offered for accessibility and flexibility

If online (Zoom or Google Meet)

Administrator responsibilities:

- Create the meeting link.



- Send to a practitioner.
- Follow platform safety settings.

For Google Meet:

1. Open the event.
2. Go to Host controls.
3. Turn OFF:
 - "Host must join before anyone else"
 - "Restrict who can join"
4. Ensure Quick access is ON.
5. Resend the same link.

AI Use

- AI companion tools are not used by default.
- May only be used if requested by the client.

If used:

1. Practitioner reviews and edits the summary.
2. Ensure it accurately reflects the session.
3. Save a copy in case notes.
4. Send to the client only after practitioner approval.

2.3 Closed Online Groups

Platform

- Zoom is used.
- A new link is created for each group.

Access control

- Only names matching the group registration are admitted.

Camera and audio

- Cameras and audio may be activated.
- This is a closed, supportive space.

Zoom safety measures

The following must be enabled:

- Waiting room on
- Only host admits participants
- Screen sharing set to host only
- Chat monitored by practitioner
- Recording only if agreed and necessary

AI summaries:

- May be used for fuller session records.
- Does not replace practitioner notes

2.4 Private 1:1 Online Sessions

These sessions can be held over the telephone or on a digital platform:

When using a digital platform:

Link creation

- Practitioners create their own meeting link.
- Platform:
 - Google Meet
 - Zoom

Safety measures

Practitioners must ensure:

- A waiting room or controlled entry is enabled.
- Only the invited participant is admitted.
- Screen sharing is restricted where possible.
- No session is recorded without consent.

3.0 Safeguarding Concerns Witnessed Online

If practitioners witness or become aware of:

- threats of harm
- physical aggression
- significant emotional distress
- unsafe environments
- safeguarding concerns involving a child or adult

they must follow Capa safeguarding procedures immediately.

This may include:

- consultation with safeguarding lead
- risk assessment
- welfare follow-up
- contacting emergency services where immediate risk is identified
- referrals to appropriate agencies

Practitioners should record:

- what was observed or disclosed
- actions taken
- rationale for decisions
- follow-up arrangements

Practitioner Wellbeing and Debrief

Online work involving high levels of distress or conflict can impact practitioners emotionally. Following difficult or concerning sessions practitioners should:

- access reflective discussion with colleagues or managers
- seek safeguarding support where required
- access supervision and debrief opportunities
- ensure accurate recording and follow-up

Capa recognises practitioner wellbeing as an important part of safe service delivery.

This procedure should be read alongside:

- Capa Safeguarding Policy
- Lone Working Procedures

- Confidentiality Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

All practitioners remain responsible for safeguarding and professional accountability during online service delivery.

Governance and Responsibility

- CEO: overall governance and sign-off.
- Service leads/practitioners: follow procedures.
- Administrators: responsible for link creation and access management.
- All staff: responsible for confidentiality and safeguarding.

End.