

Title	Virtual Lessons and Online Meetings Procedure
Cross References	Internal: 🍌 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 🍌 Online Safety Policy 🍌 Staff Code of Conduct 🍌 Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy 🍌 Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure 🍌 Strategies for Managing Behaviour in the Online Learning Environment 🍌 QA and Improvement Policy
Date	October 2026

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out Apricot Online Ltd's expectations for the safe and professional delivery of virtual lessons and online meetings. It should be read alongside Apricot's safeguarding, online safety, staff conduct, teaching and learning, behaviour and quality assurance arrangements.

Apricot's online systems are designed to support safe, purposeful interaction while maintaining clear professional boundaries. Staff must use approved platforms, follow access controls and report safeguarding or welfare concerns promptly.

2. Staff Training and Responsibilities

Staff involved in online teaching or meetings will receive appropriate induction and ongoing training relevant to their role. This includes safeguarding, online safety, professional boundaries and safe online teaching practice. Training requirements may change as guidance, technology and identified risks develop.

- use only Apricot-approved systems and accounts for work with students;
- maintain professional conduct and boundaries in all online communication;
- understand the controls available within the virtual classroom or meeting platform;
- protect passwords, meeting links and other access information;
- remain alert to safeguarding concerns that arise during lessons, messages or meetings; and
- follow Apricot reporting procedures rather than attempting to investigate concerns independently.

3. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns must never be kept by an individual member of staff. Any concern, disclosure, suspected abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issue must be reported as soon as possible through Apricot's safeguarding procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Jodie Phillips. Where the DSL is implicated, unavailable in circumstances requiring escalation, or there is a conflict of interest, the concern should be referred to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Amy Smith.

Relevant concerns will be recorded through Apricot's safeguarding system and shared with the commissioning safeguarding lead or other appropriate agency in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Urgent risk must be escalated without delay.

4. Adobe Connect Virtual Classroom - Teacher Procedure

Before and during a live lesson, teachers should:

- work from a quiet, appropriate environment and minimise avoidable background distraction;
- prepare the virtual classroom, resources and activities in advance;
- use professional, accessible and engaging lesson materials;
- share files and learning resources only through approved Apricot systems;
- check audio, internet connection and required classroom functions before teaching;
- dress and behave professionally and be ready to begin on time;
- greet students appropriately and establish a calm, purposeful learning environment;
- use classroom tools, layouts and activities to support appropriate interaction and pace;
- monitor chat, audio and whiteboard activity and intervene where behaviour or safeguarding concerns arise;
- avoid eating, smoking or other behaviour that would be inappropriate in a professional lesson;
- end the lesson at the agreed time unless there is a clear educational or safeguarding reason not to; and
- close the classroom/session at the end so students cannot remain in the live teaching space unsupervised.

5. Webcam and Video Arrangements in Student Lessons

Apricot's standard Adobe Connect student lessons do not use live webcams for students or teachers.

Webcam pods must not be added to these classrooms unless Apricot has formally changed the approved delivery model and issued updated safeguarding arrangements.

The no-webcam model supports safeguarding and privacy and can also reduce visual distraction and anxiety for some students. Students participate through approved functions such as audio, moderated chat, whiteboard tools and other classroom activities.

6. Student Access and Classroom Controls

- Students receive individual account credentials and must not share them with others.
- Students may only access courses and classrooms to which they have been enrolled.
- Teachers should admit only students who are expected and authorised to attend the lesson.
- Classrooms should be closed at the end of the live lesson to prevent unsupervised re-entry.
- Student-to-student private chat is not permitted within the classroom.
- Teachers are responsible for moderating available communication tools and applying behaviour controls where required.
- Students are expected to follow Apricot's acceptable-use, anti-bullying and conduct expectations when using online systems.

7. Messaging and Professional Boundaries

Communication outside live lessons must take place through approved Apricot systems. Staff must not communicate with students through personal email addresses, personal telephone numbers, personal social-media accounts or other unapproved channels.

Where a platform permits a student to send a private message to a teacher, the teacher must not enter into an informal or secret conversation. Any response should be limited to what is professionally necessary, including redirecting the student to an appropriate approved route.

Where a private communication raises a safeguarding, welfare, conduct or professional-boundary concern, the communication should be retained within the approved system where possible and reported in accordance with safeguarding procedures. Staff should not routinely copy student communications to personal devices.

8. Lesson Recording

Apricot live lessons may be recorded in accordance with Apricot's approved recording arrangements. Recordings support safeguarding, quality assurance, professional development and review of teaching practice. Staff and students should be informed of the applicable recording arrangements.

Recordings must be stored, accessed, retained and deleted in accordance with Apricot's data-protection, safeguarding and retention arrangements. Access should be limited to authorised purposes and authorised personnel.

Lesson recordings or extracts must not be used for marketing or publicity merely because they have been recorded for safeguarding or quality assurance. Any separate use for publicity or marketing must follow the appropriate consent, privacy and data-protection process.

9. Quality Assurance and Online Teaching Practice

Lesson recordings may support lesson review, quality assurance, coaching and professional development without requiring an additional observer to enter the live classroom. Quality assurance should focus on the quality and impact of teaching over time and should be undertaken in accordance with Apricot's QA and Teaching, Learning and Assessment arrangements.

Teachers remain responsible for creating purposeful interaction and using the online classroom effectively. Technical or platform issues that affect safe or effective delivery should be reported through the appropriate Apricot route.

10. Student Online Safety Education

Students will receive age- and stage-appropriate online safety information and education as part of Apricot's wider curriculum and induction arrangements. Apricot may use internal or external resources, but this procedure does not prescribe a particular commercial course so that provision can remain current as resources and risks change.

Students should know how to report bullying, harmful content, inappropriate contact or anything online that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

11. Online Meetings - General Procedure

Online meetings involving staff, commissioners, parents/carers, professionals or other participants may take place using approved platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other authorised services. Staff should:

- use an appropriate, quiet location and minimise background distractions;
- protect meeting links, passwords and invitations and send them only to intended participants;
- use waiting-room, lobby or admission controls where available and appropriate;
- provide an agenda or relevant information in advance where this supports the meeting;
- check audio, video and internet settings before the meeting;
- use a professional background or ensure the visible environment is appropriate and contains no confidential or personal material;
- be mindful that camera angles can change unexpectedly and pause video where privacy requires it;
- dress and behave professionally, introduce participants where appropriate and remain focused;
- use headphones where appropriate to protect confidentiality, particularly in shared environments;
- avoid unnecessary multitasking and do not expose unrelated confidential information while screen sharing;
- share only the intended window, tab, document or screen and close unrelated sensitive material beforehand;
- end the meeting appropriately and ensure confidential notes, recordings and files are stored only in approved locations.

12. Recording Online Meetings

Participants must be informed before a meeting is recorded. The purpose of recording should be clear and recording should only take place where there is an appropriate organisational reason and lawful basis.

Meeting recordings must not be stored on personal devices or shared beyond those who are authorised to receive them. Where a recording is not necessary, staff should use written notes or agreed records instead.

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Staff must take reasonable steps to prevent students, family members or other unauthorised people from seeing or hearing confidential information during online lessons or meetings. Sensitive documents should not be left visible on screen and notifications or unrelated applications should be closed where they could reveal personal information.

Personal data, lesson recordings, screenshots and meeting materials must be handled in accordance with Apricot's data-protection and safeguarding arrangements.

14. Technical Failure or Disruption

Where a lesson or meeting cannot continue safely or effectively because of technical failure, inappropriate access, serious disruption or another concern, the member of staff should end or suspend the session if necessary and report the issue through the appropriate Apricot route.

Teachers should record attendance and relevant disruption accurately and follow up with the commissioner or Apricot team where the interruption affects the student's education or raises a safeguarding concern.

15. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually and sooner where changes to Apricot's platforms, safeguarding arrangements, data-protection requirements or online operating model make this necessary.

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips Operations Director

Date: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027