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Civil and Commercial Professional Mediation Foundation Training Course

Online Safety Policy

Course: IMI CMTP – Civil & Commercial Mediation

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the VMA community, including: staff, trainers, coaches, and assessors, subcontractors and guest experts, all learners enrolled in the IMI Civil and Commercial Mediation Professional Foundation Course (CMTP).

It applies to all individuals granted access to VMA's digital systems, including email, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), video-conferencing platforms, assessment platforms, and remote access systems.

Covered digital environments include:

- VMA IT systems and cloud-based platforms
- Online teaching and assessment platforms (e.g. Zoom, VLE)
- Online role-plays, simulations, coaching, and assessment activities
- Professional online forums and moderated discussion spaces

Purpose of the Policy

Veritas Mediation Academy recognises its responsibility to provide a safe and secure online learning environment for adult learners, trainers, assessors, coaches, and staff engaged in professional mediation training.

This policy addresses safeguarding, online conduct, confidentiality, and data protection risks arising from the use of digital technologies, online platforms, video-conferencing, and virtual learning environments used in mediation training, coaching, and assessment.

VMA complies with relevant UK legislation and guidance, including UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance. Where learners are based outside the UK, equivalent data protection and online safety standards are applied insofar as reasonably practicable.

Policy Guidelines

Defining Online Incidents

An online incident refers to any situation in which digital technology enables behaviour that:

- compromises professional conduct
- breaches confidentiality
- causes harm, distress, or exclusion
- undermines psychological safety
- exposes VMA or its participants to reputational or legal risk

This includes inappropriate online communications, misuse of recordings, unauthorised sharing of role-play materials, or breaches of data protection.

Online Risks in Professional Mediation Training

Participants may encounter risks including:

- unauthorised recording or sharing of confidential role-plays or simulations
- inappropriate online communications
- data protection breaches involving commercially sensitive or personal information
- cybersecurity risks, including phishing and unauthorised access

Responsibilities of VMA

VMA ensures that:

- secure platforms are used for online teaching, coaching, and assessment
- clear expectations are set regarding confidentiality and professional online conduct
- learners receive guidance on online safety, data protection, and digital professionalism
- online safety supports the creation of psychologically safe learning environments necessary for mediation skills development

Standards and Expectations

IT Systems Management

VMA IT systems are configured to support professional online learning and assessment while maintaining appropriate security and data protection controls. System updates and digital tools are reviewed with due regard to UK GDPR and confidentiality requirements inherent in mediation training.

Filtering and Monitoring

Filtering and monitoring systems are used proportionately to protect users, systems, and data. Monitoring is focused on safeguarding, security, and professional standards rather than routine surveillance of adult learners.

Network Security

- Access rights are role-based and clearly defined
- Users are responsible for maintaining secure passwords
- Administrative access is restricted to authorised personnel
- Security measures are maintained to protect against malicious threats

Use of Images, Audio and Video

- Recording of online sessions, role-plays, or assessments is permitted only where explicitly authorised by VMA
- Participants must not record, store, or share any training, coaching, or assessment activities without written consent
- All media is managed in accordance with UK GDPR and confidentiality standards applicable to mediation practice

Data Protection

Personal data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and VMA's Data Protection Policy. Particular care is taken with materials arising from mediation simulations, assessments, and reflective discussions.

Social Media and External Platforms

Participants must not share course materials, recordings, or role-play content on social media or external platforms. Professional online conduct is expected at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Management and Quality Oversight

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for setting, monitoring, and reviewing online safety standards across all VMA programmes. An annual review of online safety risks is conducted.

Online Safety Coordinator

The Online Safety Coordinator:

- reports to the SMT
- oversees online safety strategy
- maintains an incident log
- advises staff and learners on online safety matters
- undertakes risk assessments for new digital tools

Staff, Trainers and Assessors

All staff and associates must:

- model professional online conduct
- protect confidentiality during online mediation training
- follow reporting procedures for online safety concerns
- complete online safety training as part of induction

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for managing and escalating serious online safety concerns, including cybercrime, harassment, or unlawful activity, to appropriate external bodies where necessary.

Learner Responsibilities

Learners must:

- engage professionally and respectfully online
- protect the confidentiality of role-plays and assessments
- use VMA platforms in accordance with acceptable use guidance
- report online safety concerns promptly

Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if required by changes in legislation, IMI requirements, or VMA delivery models.

