

Safeguarding in Writing

What is appropriate writing content?

We encourage our Young Pirates (YPs) to create stories they enjoy and to write freely (within the guidelines of the project). We want them to feel that they are in an inclusive and safe space where they can share their writing. As a result, YPs might include things in their writing that may be inappropriate to publish, and/or be highly sensitive and be a wellbeing/safeguarding concern.

In some cases, we might ask YPs to make adjustments in their writing, for example, tone down some violence or remove names of teachers. This is because our book/film/newspaper is for everyone, and will go out to schools, families and other YPs. For this reason, we need their writing to be family friendly and appropriate for everyone.

As a Crewmate, the best way to deal with concerns is the same, speak to the Session Leader. This document is designed to help you know what to look out for in writing and when to speak to us. **As always, if you have any concerns always come and speak to a member of staff.**

Here are some classic themes in writing where we might ask YPs to edit their work:

- **Violence**
 - We are less worried about cartoonish, game/film inspired violence, where there is a clear sense of genre. It needs to be family friendly but isn't really a safeguarding worry.
 - We are more worried about gratuitous violence, e.g. violence that is unnecessary and excessive. It is also important to notice anything that is very specific/could be inspired by a real-life situation. In these cases, please inform the session leader.
- **Politics**
 - We want YPs to be engaged as citizens and care about things, so we are happy when children express a view.
 - We may have to act if they criticise a government/large group and if sharing their work might compromise their safety (e.g. online backlash). We also need to consider the safety of others and check it's not against others in the group. We would raise a safeguarding concern if they were expressing views that they appeared to be picking up from other people/online (e.g. where children have adopted views expressed by Andrew Tate or Elon Musk).
- **School**
 - We want to promote independent voice and that means that sometimes children write about school in a negative way.





- We do need to ensure specific teachers and pupils are not identifiable and that no school is receiving writing that is negative about school from all their YPs.
- If you notice your YP is writing negatively about school, encourage them to think creatively rather than relying on school as a boring or negative place to write about.
- If a specific teacher is named in your YP's work, encourage them to change it to something cartoonish so it is less identifiable.
- **Other Young Pirates**
 - We generally avoid naming each other. Encourage your YPs not to mention each other in their work. If a YP feels strongly that they'd like to name another YP in their writing and are doing so with kind or neutral intentions, please let a member of staff know.

How to support Young Pirates with sensitive content

Some YPs might write, or allude in their writing, to sensitive personal experiences. We want to ensure that our YPs feel safe to share their experience and will be properly supported if they do. As always, if your YP expresses something highly sensitive or distressing, inform the Session Leader, so we can ensure the safety of that YP and others in the session.

If your YP writes about traumatic/sensitive content, you can address the situation with these guiding principles:

- **Safety**
 - Make sure they know they are in a safe space and will be supported whatever they say.
- **Listen**
 - If they would like to share, listen to them and allow them to speak without fear of judgement or opinion.
 - You can ask open questions to gather some more details, but allow them room to open up.
- **Speak to a SL**
 - You can speak to a SL at breaktime and let them know about a YPs writing.
 - Flag them down in session - if they are passing your table, you could say 'Hey *, we have some great writing going on at our table, would you read some of X's writing?'

Check in with Volunteer Team

- We know that safeguarding/wellbeing concerns can be difficult/triggering for Crewmates, so **please do reach out** to us if you would like to talk further about anything you encounter in sessions.
- Look after yourselves and don't suffer in silence! Speak to us, or, if you prefer, we can sign post you to an appropriate service.

