Sherpa
Unlock your child's potential

Sherpa Online Tutor Code of Conduct

Last updated October 2026

Application Labs Limited, trading as Sherpa Online

Policy owner	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved by	Board of Directors, Application Labs Limited
Date of issue	October 2026
Review frequency	Annual, or sooner if law, guidance, or our operating model changes
Applies to	All tutors offering lessons on the Sherpa platform

1. Purpose and scope

Sherpa Online is an online-only tutoring marketplace. Tutors on Sherpa are self-employed and use the platform to offer tuition to families and adult learners. All lessons take place in the Sherpa online classroom.

This Code sets out the standards every tutor must meet when using Sherpa. It forms part of our Terms of Use and should be read alongside our Safeguarding Policy. Tutors confirm they have read it when they join the platform.

If a tutor breaches this Code, we may restrict, suspend or remove their profile or account. Where the law requires it, we will also refer the matter to the police, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), as set out in section 7 of our Safeguarding Policy.

2. Core principles

- The safety and welfare of students come first.
- Keep a professional relationship with students and families at all times and avoid any behaviour that would lead a reasonable person to question your intentions.
- Work openly. All lessons are recorded and may be reviewed.
- Apply the same professional standards to everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic.
- Never tutor while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any substance, including prescribed medication, that affects your ability to teach.

- Report every concern, however small. We would rather hear about something that turns out to be nothing.

Where this Code does not cover a situation, act in the student's best interests and ask the safeguarding team for advice at safeguarding@sherpa-online.com.

3. Position of trust

As a tutor you hold a position of trust and influence over the students you teach. The relationship is not one between equals, and you must never use it for personal advantage or gratification.

You must not:

- Use your position to obtain information for your own advantage, or to the detriment of a student or their family.
- Intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine a student.
- Flirt, make sexual comments or innuendo, or form or encourage any relationship with a student that is, or could become, sexual. This can be a form of grooming.

Tell us if you feel a student or anyone else in a lesson is flirting with you.

4. Confidentiality

- Use information about students and families only to deliver your lessons, never for your own or anyone else's advantage, or to embarrass or humiliate.
- Share information only on a strict need-to-know basis. Never discuss students or families in tutor groups or on social media.
- Keep any devices and records holding student information secure.
- If a student or parent tells you about abuse or harm, do not promise to keep it secret. Reassure them that it will be handled sensitively and report it (see section 10).

Data protection law allows information to be shared without consent where this is needed to protect someone at risk. If you are unsure whether to share something, ask the safeguarding team.

5. Account security and access

Your Sherpa account is for your use only. Families share their own and their children's information on the basis that only the tutor they have chosen will see it.

You must:

- Keep your login details confidential and never share your password with anyone.
- Never allow anyone else to log in to, use or act through your account for any reason, including reading or sending messages to students or parents on your behalf.

- Use a strong password that you do not use anywhere else, and log out of shared devices.
- Tell us straight away through our live chat or support email if you think someone else has accessed your account.

Sherpa staff will never ask for your password. If we believe someone other than you has accessed your account, we may suspend it while we investigate.

6. Communicating with students and families

- Communicate with students and families only through the Sherpa platform.
- Do not share your personal contact details, such as your full name, email address, phone number, social media accounts or external meeting links, and do not ask for theirs.
- Ask only for personal information you need to teach.
- Never arrange lessons or contact outside the platform.

If a student or parent contacts you outside the platform, do not reply. Tell them politely through the platform that this is not allowed and report it using our safeguarding concern form.

7. Your profile and appearance

Your profile photo must be a clear, good-quality headshot of you alone, with your face fully visible (no hats or sunglasses).

Dress professionally during introductions and lessons. Clothing must not be offensive, discriminatory or distracting, must not carry political or contentious slogans, and must not prevent you from being identified.

You may wear a face covering, but you must briefly show your face at the start of each session so the student can confirm who you are.

8. Conducting lessons

You must:

- Teach from a laptop or desktop computer, not a mobile phone.
- Confirm your identity on camera at the start of every session, and keep your camera on and stay fully visible throughout.
- Teach from a private, suitable space with a neutral background, using background blur where needed, and not from public places such as cafés, libraries or trains.
- Make sure no one else is present, or can see or hear the session.
- Close or minimise anything personal before sharing your screen.
- Use only age-appropriate resources.

- Contact our tech support through the live chat if you have technical problems.

You must not:

- Take, record or keep images or recordings of students on your own equipment.
- Continue a session if the student or anyone else on camera is undressed or partly undressed.

9. Inappropriate and indecent images

It is a criminal offence to take, make, possess, view or share an indecent image of anyone under 18, including an image a young person has taken of themselves. Sharing sexual images of an adult without their consent is also an offence.

You must not:

- Display any sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate material.
- Share images of students without the consent of a parent (and the student, where appropriate).

If a student tells you that a nude image of them has been shared, do not ask to see it, view it or download it. Report it to us.

If an indecent image of a child, or any pornographic material, is shown in a lesson:

- End the session straight away, explaining why.
- Do not screenshot, save, forward or delete anything.
- Report it to us immediately using the safeguarding concern form, so we can preserve the recording and refer the matter to the police.

If you come across indecent images of children anywhere else, do not open, copy or delete them. Report them to the police.

10. Reporting concerns

Report any safeguarding concern using our safeguarding concern form or by emailing safeguarding@sherpa-online.com. Say what happened, when, who was involved and the session ID. Report suspicious or offensive messages using the “Report Conversation” button on the conversation page.

If anyone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 first, then tell us. Do not delay contacting the emergency services for any internal process.

Inappropriate language or behaviour in a lesson

Ask the student or other person politely to stop. If it continues, explain that you are ending the session and do so. Report it to us, and have no further contact with the student unless we agree otherwise. Report any unsolicited contact that follows.

Disclosures of abuse or harm

Listen calmly, reassure the student, and do not ask leading questions or try to investigate. Report it to us straight away. The safeguarding team will decide whether to refer the matter to the police or another authority.

If a student starts to share other sensitive personal information, gently discourage them. If it continues, decide whether to end the session, and report it to us.

Telling us about changes in your circumstances

Tell us immediately if you receive a caution, conviction or relevant court order, are charged with a criminal offence, or are placed on a DBS barred list.

11. Protecting yourself from scams

Sherpa will never:

- Ask for your bank details, which are held securely by our payment provider, Stripe.
- Ask for your password.
- Contact you about your account through the Messages page. Messages there always come from a student or parent account.

We contact tutors only through:

- The live chat in the bottom right-hand corner of our website.
- Email from an @sherpa-online.com address.
- Our phone number, +44 1628 337 590.
- Our SMS number, +44 7830 356 842, or the no-reply sender “Sherpa SMS”.

Treat any other approach claiming to be from Sherpa with caution. Sherpa is not liable for losses resulting from tutors voluntarily sharing personal or financial information.

12. Quality standards

- You must have taught each subject you offer consistently for at least two years.
- Teach actively and personally throughout each lesson. Videos, articles and other materials may support your teaching but must not replace it.
- Attend the lessons you have booked. You are responsible for arranging, rescheduling and cancelling your own lessons, and for handling refunds, through the platform.

We review lessons and feedback. Where tuition falls below an acceptable standard, for example where a tutor is not actively teaching, relies on pre-recorded content, lacks subject knowledge, or receives feedback indicating inadequate teaching, we may halt tuition, deduct funds from the tutor's earnings to refund families, and suspend or remove the tutor's profile.

We also monitor tutor performance on an ongoing basis. Tutors are measured on areas such as attendance, punctuality, cancelled lessons and late changes to lessons, alongside the quality of their lessons and their communication with parents. We reserve the right to remove any tutor from the platform if our standards are not met.

13. Copyright and materials

Use only materials you have created or have permission to use. If you use someone else's work without the right to do so, you are responsible for any resulting claim, and you agree to cover any costs or losses this causes Application Labs Limited.

14. Monitoring

All lessons are video and audio recorded and retained securely for 12 months, or longer where a recording is needed for an investigation. Session audio is transcribed and screened for safeguarding concerns, and our team spot-checks introductions and lessons. Recordings are held in line with our Privacy Policy.

15. Whistleblowing

If you have concerns about safeguarding practice at Sherpa, including how a matter is being handled, raise them with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or any director. Other routes, including the NSPCC, are set out in section 13 of our Safeguarding Policy.

16. Review

This Code is reviewed at least annually alongside our Safeguarding Policy, and any changes are approved by the Board.