

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE IN THE TSR COMMUNITY

A GUIDE FOR OFFICIAL REPS

HOW WE SAFEGUARD THE TSR COMMUNITY

As the UK's largest online student community, we're dedicated to making sure our users feel safe and at home on our site. To do this, we have a number of processes in place.

SAFEGUARDING THE WELLBEING OF THE TSR COMMUNITY

Everyday on The Student Room (TSR) we see young people support each other through the challenges life can throw at them. We're proud that TSR is a place where these connections can happen, so it's important that all our members are able to receive the real-world support they might need, while at the same time safeguarding the rest of our community and any vulnerable users. We do this in a number of ways:

- We have a moderation policy, with specific processes for sensitive or controversial topics
- Where possible, we partner with health professionals to share valuable and authoritative advice with our community about their health and wellbeing
- We have a welfare and escalation policy which is activated in the event that a serious risk to a member of community is identified. All volunteers and TSR staff are trained in this policy to ensure the safety of our community is paramount.

YOUR ROLE IN SAFEGUARDING ON TSR

Official Reps play an important role in contributing to a safe and supportive environment on The Student Room. All institutions who sign up for Rep Account must have read and accepted the Terms and Conditions for Official Reps. As an official rep, you can support by:

- Reporting concerning content using the report functionality and according to the escalation process
- Don't send unsolicited private messages (if it is absolutely necessary to talk to someone in private, let them know you're going to do so on a public forum first)
- Keep conversations in casual but professional and don't ask for unnecessary personal information

DBS CHECKS + SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

We take online safety seriously. Every member of the staff and volunteer teams at TSR, is required to hold a current Enhanced DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) certificate (this includes a working with children check), and to renew it every three years. All members of the Community Team (staff) and Volunteer Team also hold safeguarding training certifications.

SPECIALIST TEAMS ON THE FORUMS

THE COMMUNITY TEAM

The Community Team (CT) (also known as Community Staff on TSR) look after The Student Room community on the forums. They are focused on making sure everyone on the site is finding it helpful and having the best experience possible. The CT line manages the TSR volunteers and includes an expert team of moderators who manage the report and moderation queue to ensure any issues are dealt with swiftly and safely. They also provide feedback to members who have broken site rules and deal with any complaints that are received in the site's private feedback forum, [Ask the Community Staff](#).

TSR GROUP STAFF

These are all the staff who work for The Student Room Group, within any of our companies (ie. The Student Room, Get Revising, TSR Insight). They might do all sorts of different job roles in different teams, and you might see them getting involved in discussions on TSR for a good old chat, or to support the community (eg. the development team helping solve problems, or the design team asking for feedback on some new ideas).

TSR VOLUNTEERS

There are a team of over 30 dedicated volunteers who work with us as the TSR Volunteer Team, to help keep our community super friendly and useful. Usually, these are young people themselves, who've also received help on TSR at some stage, and have stuck around to continuing supporting their peers. All volunteers can be recognised by their role user title underneath their avatars. There's a few different roles within our volunteer team:

- **Volunteer Team (VT)** – These brilliant members have normally been around TSR for over a year and have usually progressed to Volunteer Team from their roles as Forum Helpers. They are amazing at running various projects around the site, sharing their expertise, giving great advice, mentoring our FH team, and helping keep their sections helpful and productive. They have all gone through the safeguarding processes listed above.
- **Volunteer Section Leader (VSL)** – This team are the leaders of each section of TSR, and work with the TSR Community Team (in the office) to help look after the volunteer teams. They're really dedicated in making sure the TSR community has all the support it needs and making sure all the other volunteers are having a great time. Volunteer Section Leaders have been through all the safeguarding procedures listed above, been part of the TSR family for a considerable length of time and we've met them all in real life.

EXPERT COMMUNITY ADVICE

These teams are not members of TSR staff or volunteer teams. They are normal members of our community, who go above and beyond to provide support and advice to their peers by using their own personal experiences.

Clearing and Applications Advisors

This group is comprised of TSR community members (usually Forum Helpers) and TSR Volunteers, who are specifically trained by UCAS each year. They find out the most current information so that, come Results Day, they can provide outstanding one-to-one advice to community members, which is tailored to that individual's own situation. This team make sure that everyone who comes to TSR with a question on Results Day, gets the help they need.

Personal Statement Helpers

When applying to uni, many students come to TSR for help with their personal statement. This team is made up of community members and TSR Volunteers, who use their expertise in their subject areas to review personal statements, and give applicants helpful advice to support their personal statement. This team will also review final drafts of personal statements. Find out more about personal statement help [here](#).

Forum Helpers

Forum helpers are members of the TSR community, who provide great help and support in their favourite forums. They also help to keep those forums tidy and easy to use, and help make sure newbies get answers to their questions. These helpers are often young people themselves, or have particular experience in that area, so can provide some great peer-to-peer advice based on their own knowledge.

Official Representatives

Official Representatives (or 'Official Reps' as they're known) are experts from outside the TSR community, who come online to share their official advice and provide expert support. Sometimes this might be a university, charities, exam boards or support organisations. The people who run these accounts work for those organisations or might be students employed by those universities and can give authoritative answers to the TSR community.

Please note: all specialist teams on The Student Room are subject to website terms and conditions, and community guidelines. If you see any posts, threads or PMs from any member of these groups which you believe to be against the community guidelines, please use the report button as normal.

MODERATION POLICY

On The Student Room, we operate a community-based moderation system. Every thread, post and private message feature a 'Report' button, and we rely on the community to let us know when content isn't okay. We also have a number of automatic triggers, where our system automatically reports certain content which looks like it could be in breach of our community guidelines.

Once something is reported, our professional moderation team reviews the content in line with both our community guidelines and moderation policies. If the content is found to be in breach of community guidelines, it might be edited or removed, and the person who posted it may be given a warning as part of our moderation carding system. In any circumstances where it is identified that a member is in serious breach of our guidelines, or the law, they may be banned and/or reported to the relevant authorities.

HOW IS THE SITE MODERATED?

In order to safeguard the community, we have a combined moderation system which involves the use of technology and human moderation. Our moderation team read and aim to act upon all inappropriate content reported to us within 24 hours. It is their role to ensure the [community guidelines](#) are upheld and to help the community when required. Rule breaking content is identified in two ways - our automated filter system, and our community.

Our automated system works by identifying certain terms or phrases to be reviewed by our moderators (for example, 'suicide' or anything that looks like spam). We also use a self-activating swear filter. Additionally, we rely heavily on our members to report content that could be deemed inappropriate, or which breaks our community guidelines by bringing it to the attention of the Community Team.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

User reporting: By using the report system, you make it easier for our moderators to remove inappropriate comments, ensuring a better forum experience for other users. You can find the report button in the top right of all threads, posts and private messages.

Set a good example: Help keep TSR friendly by using the site appropriately, being friendly, polite and helping out other people. Show people how to behave by being a useful member and contributing positively to the community.

USERS' AGREEMENT WITH US

Each member that uses the site is required to accept our [Terms & Conditions](#) and the site rules and guidelines (this includes Official Reps). These have been created to ensure that we provide the best platform for students wishing to use the site. All users have a community record and we utilise a [warning card system](#) to let users know if they've done the wrong thing. However, we always reserve the right to end someone's membership without warning if we believe you have broken our Terms & Conditions and site rules.

OVERVIEW OF SITE GUIDELINES

- No personal attacks or inflammatory behaviour.
- Post in the correct forum and stay on topic.
- No cheating.
- No advertising or inappropriate links.

- Post in the English language unless in an area where it is acceptable to do otherwise. No text speak.
- Respect the privacy of other users.
- Do not condone or encourage illegal activity.

This list is a simple overview of the rules on The Student Room. To read the rules in more detail, please [click here](#).

SENSITIVE TOPICS

The Student Room aims to be a place where young people can discuss the things that are important to them, within a safe and supportive environment, and without driving these conversations underground. Moderation decisions on topics like the ones listed below are made on a case by case basis, always with the best interests of young people at heart.

Suicide and self-harm

TSR wants to ensure that the health and well-being of the users that make up our community are a priority and users should not feel afraid to speak openly about topics of mental health. We work in partnership with relevant charities to ensure we are providing the best support to the community.

Posts containing self-harm or suicidal content will be flagged and removed from the public site. This is to both protect the original poster (OP) from unpleasant trolling or unsupportive content but to also support those who may find the content triggering. The OP will receive a PM explaining what has happened to their post and signposting them to relevant services. The post may be moved back either with a little bit of editing or in its entirety. If your post cannot be made safe for the forum, then it will be removed from the public forums. If you come across any content that you feel is harmful, please report it under 'mentions self-harm/suicide' the way you would normally. Don't worry, this isn't going to result in any sort of punishment for the OP. We do not allow content depicting, promoting or glorifying activities that could lead to suicide, self-harm, or eating disorders. We also do not permit users to share content depicting them partaking in, or encouraging others to partake in, dangerous activities that may lead to serious injury or death.

Illegal substances or misuse of controlled substances

It's important there's a safe place for young people to talk about things like drugs, so this sort of discussion is not prohibited on The Student Room. It's okay to ask questions about people's experiences with drugs, side effects, and the risks involved. However, any discussions encouraging the use of illegal drugs or the misuse of controlled substances (like ['study drugs'](#)), or recommending where to buy them, will be subject to moderation and the poster warned appropriately.

Sex and sexual practices

It's normal for young people to want to ask questions and talk about sex. In TSR's health and relationships forums, users can post anonymously and ask the questions they might not be comfortable in real life. Please remember, if a user is asking about a medical concern, they should consult their doctor. Please avoid posting any medical advice. If you see anything that concerns you, please report to our moderation team who will review and act accordingly.

Gender, sexuality, race and religion

It's okay to share your opinion respectfully. However, it's never okay to make mean or discriminatory comments, taunt, intimidate or use inflammatory language. If you see anything which is against our community guidelines, please do not respond, just report to our moderation team who will make a judgement