



# Age-Appropriate Narrative and Games Content Policy

## The Odyssey Hub Ltd

### 1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how Odyssey Hub ensures that all narrative, game-based, and creative content used within sessions is age-appropriate, developmentally suitable, and safeguarding-informed for learners aged 11–25.

Odyssey Hub delivers creative, therapeutic, and educational alternative provision. Narrative engagement may include tabletop role-play, storytelling, world-building, digital games, and facilitated imaginative play. Content is often co-created live with learners and may evolve over time.

This policy applies to all staff, associates, and volunteers involved in the planning or delivery of sessions.

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### 2. Core Principles

Odyssey Hub's approach to age-appropriate content is guided by the following principles:

- **Safeguarding first:** All content decisions prioritise emotional safety and wellbeing.
  - **Proportionality:** Content is matched to the learner's developmental stage, not just chronological age.
  - **Professional judgement:** Staff actively assess and moderate content in real time.
  - **Engagement through narrative:** Story, metaphor, and play are used to support learning and emotional expression.
  - **Transparency:** Parents/carers and commissioning bodies are informed about the nature of narrative-based provision.
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### 3. Understanding Age-Appropriate Content (Ages 11–25)

Age-appropriateness at Odyssey Hub is not determined solely by formal age ratings (e.g. PEGI or BBFC). Such ratings may be used as reference points, but are not treated as automatic permissions.



Content decisions take account of:

- Chronological age
- Emotional and social maturity
- Neurodivergence and communication needs
- SEMH profiles, anxiety, or trauma history
- Lived experience and resilience
- The context and purpose of the session

A learner aged 17 may, for example, require gentler narrative handling than a younger peer, depending on need.

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#### **4. Narrative Content and Emerging Themes**

Odyssey Hub frequently works with symbolic and fictional narratives. Within these, themes may emerge that include:

- Conflict or danger
- Fear or suspense
- Loss, grief, or separation
- Moral choice and consequence
- Power, control, or responsibility
- Justice, injustice, or societal structures

Such themes are:

- Introduced carefully and proportionately
- Framed symbolically rather than graphically
- Adjusted in tone, intensity, and pacing according to learner response

Explicit or graphic depictions of violence, sexual activity, or abuse are not introduced as part of narrative engagement. However, for older learners and those with appropriate emotional maturity, narrative descriptions of non-graphic fantasy violence may occur as part of established game systems (such as tabletop role-playing games). Such descriptions are verbal, non-visual, proportionate, and carefully moderated by staff, with attention to tone, intensity, and learner response.

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#### **5. Use of Games and Digital Media**



Games and digital tools may be used to support engagement, learning, and social interaction.

Odyssey Hub:

- Does not rely solely on commercial age ratings when determining suitability
- Selects or adapts games to ensure content is appropriate to the learner group
- Uses games as facilitated tools, not unmoderated entertainment

Where a learner or parent/carer requests engagement with a specific game or narrative:

- Staff assess suitability using professional judgement
  - Consent is discussed openly
  - Odyssey Hub reserves the right to adapt, redirect, or decline use of content if concerns arise
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## **6. Professional Judgement and Boundaries**

Staff retain professional responsibility for content decisions at all times.

This includes the right to:

- Adapt narrative direction
- De-escalate or simplify themes
- Pause or stop a session
- Redirect play toward safer or more appropriate material

This applies even where parental consent has been given, if safeguarding or wellbeing concerns are identified.

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## **7. Parental and Carer Involvement (Under 18s)**

For learners under 18:

- Parents/carers are informed about the nature of narrative and game-based provision
- Consent is obtained for participation
- Consent is understood as ongoing, not one-off

Significant changes in tone, theme, or content are communicated where appropriate.



For learners aged 18–25, engagement reflects increased autonomy while maintaining safeguarding responsibilities.

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## **8. Responding to Distress or Concerns**

If a learner shows signs of distress or discomfort during narrative engagement:

- Content is adjusted immediately
- The learner is supported to regulate and reflect
- The incident is recorded where appropriate
- Parents/carers and/or commissioning bodies are informed if required

Concerns are escalated in line with Odyssey Hub's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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## **9. Supervision, Reflection, and Oversight**

Odyssey Hub recognises the importance of external professional oversight when working with complex narrative material and emotionally sensitive content.

To support safe and reflective practice, Odyssey Hub retains access to appropriately qualified psychologists, therapists, or other mental health professionals to provide regular supervision and consultation. This supervision supports:

- Reflection on narrative content and thematic intensity
- Consideration of age-appropriateness and emotional impact
- Review of emerging patterns or concerns across sessions
- Ongoing development of safe, ethical practice

Supervision is used to:

- Support staff judgement and decision-making
- Identify where narrative approaches may need adjustment
- Ensure content inclusion remains proportionate, appropriate, and safeguarding-informed

This external oversight complements, but does not replace, internal safeguarding responsibilities and procedures.

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## 10. Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if:

- A significant safeguarding or content-related concern arises
  - Delivery models or age ranges change
  - New statutory or sector guidance is issued
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**This policy should be read alongside:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
  - Online Safety Policy
  - Code of Conduct for Staff and Associates
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**Organisation:** The Odyssey Hub

**Contact:** info@odysseyhub.co.uk | 01473 875127

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**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Alexandra Mery

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