



Online Safety Policy

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I. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers, and governors.
- Deliver an effective approach to online safety, which empowers us to protect and educate the whole school community in its use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as ‘mobile phones’).
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene, and escalate an incident, where appropriate.

I.1 The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children or young

adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial, or other purposes.

- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending, and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), and sharing other explicit images; and online bullying.
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, and/or financial scams.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and its advice for schools on:

- [Teaching online safety in schools](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) and [cyber-bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation](#)

It also refers to the DfE's guidance on [protecting children from radicalisation](#).

It reflects existing legislation, including, but not limited to, the [Education Act 1996](#) (as amended), the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), and the [Equality Act 2010](#). In addition, it reflects the [Education Act 2011](#), which has given teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by, if necessary, searching for and deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy and holding the headteacher to account for its implementation.

All governors will:

- Ensure that they have read and understand this policy.
- Agree and adhere to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet. See ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy [here](#).
- Ensure that, where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, is adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse, and some pupils with SEND because

of the importance of recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach may not be appropriate for all children in all situations, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may often be more suitable

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school.

3.3 The designated safeguarding lead

Details of the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies are set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy [here](#).

The DSL takes lead responsibility for online safety in school, in particular:

- Supporting the headteacher in ensuring that staff understand this policy and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Responsibility for online safety, including understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- Responsibility for appropriate staff online safety training providing an 'understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.'
- Work alongside the Deputy Head Academic to ensure age-appropriate coverage of Online Safety in the Personal Development and wider curriculum
- Working with the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher for Innovation and Technology, Network Manager, Head of Computing, and other staff, as necessary, to address any online safety issues or incidents.
- Managing all online safety issues and incidents in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy [here](#).
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.
- Liaising with other agencies and/or external services if necessary.
- Providing regular reports on online safety in school to the headteacher and/or governing board.

3.4 Deputy Head of Behaviour

- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy [here](#).

- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy [here](#).

3.5 The Network Manager

The Network Manager is responsible for:

- Putting in place an appropriate level of security protection procedures, such as filtering and monitoring systems, which are reviewed and updated on a regular basis to assess effectiveness and ensure pupils are kept safe from potentially harmful and inappropriate content and contact online while at school, including terrorist and extremist material.
- Ensuring that the school's ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware, and that such safety mechanisms are updated regularly.
- Ensuring that our external monitoring systems are fully operational at all times.
- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files.

3.5 All staff and volunteers

All staff, including contractors and agency staff, and volunteers are responsible for:

- Maintaining an understanding of this policy.
- Implementing this policy consistently.
- Agreeing and adhering to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet, and ensuring that pupils follow the school's terms on acceptable use. See ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy [here](#).
- Working with the DSL to ensure that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy [here](#).
- Responding appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or harassment, both online and offline, and maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

3.6 Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this policy.
- Ensure their child has read, understood, and agreed to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet. See ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy [here](#).

Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- What are the issues? – [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- Hot topics – [Childnet International](#)
- Parent resource sheet – [Childnet International](#)

3.7 Visitors and members of the community

Visitors and members of the community who use the school's ICT systems or internet will be made aware of this policy, when relevant, and expected to read and follow it. See ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy [here](#).

4. Educating pupils about online safety

Pupils will be taught about online safety as part of the curriculum. This is covered through a combination of Computing, Personal Development Curriculum (PDC), Flexible Learning Days (FLD) & Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG):

Pupils in **Years 7 & 8** will be taught to:

- Understand a range of ways to use technology safely, respectfully, responsibly, and securely, including protecting their online identity and privacy.
- Recognise inappropriate content, contact, and conduct, and know how to report concerns.
- Realise the significance of posting inappropriate content online that will affect their digital reputation in the future.

By the **end of Year 11**, pupils will know:

- To understand how changes in technology affect safety, including new ways to protect their online privacy and identity.
- How to report a range of concerns.
- Their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.

- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online, and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further, and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically sexually explicit material (e.g. pornography) presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others, and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared, and used online.
- How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in other subjects, where relevant. Where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, will be adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse, and some pupils with SEND. The above topics are also covered during Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for the Sixth Form.

5. Educating parents about online safety

The school will raise parents' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home. This policy will also be available to parents via the school website.

If parents have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised in the first instance with the headteacher and/or the DSL.

Concerns or queries about this policy can be raised with any member of staff or the headteacher.

6. Cyber-bullying

6.1 Definition

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps, or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one

person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

6.2 Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take, and what the consequences can be.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes Personal Development Curriculum (PDC), and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, governors, and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, and its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training.

The school also sends information to parents so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it, and how they can support children who may be affected.

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour policy ([here](#)). Where illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

6.3 Examining electronic devices

School staff have the specific power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which has been increased by the Education Act 2011) to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices, including mobile phones, iPads, and other tablet devices, where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine or erase data or files on an electronic device, staff must reasonably suspect that the data or file in question has been, or could be, used to:

- Cause harm or offence.
- Disrupt teaching.
- Break any of the school rules.

If inappropriate material is found on the device, it is up to the staff member, in conjunction with the DSL or other member of the senior leadership team, to decide whether they should:

- Delete the material.
- Retain it as evidence (of a possible criminal offence* or a breach of school discipline), and/or
- Report it to the police**.

* If a staff member believes a device may contain a nude or semi-nude image or an image that it's a criminal offence to possess, they will not view the image but will report this to the DSL (or equivalent) immediately, who will decide what to do next. The DSL will make the decision based on our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which is in line with the DfE's latest guidance on [screening, searching and confiscation](#) and the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

** Staff will also confiscate the device to give to the police, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence.

Any searching of pupils will be carried out in line with:

- The DfE's latest guidance on [searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- UKCIS guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices will be dealt with through the school complaints procedure.

7. Acceptable use of the internet in school

All pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and governors are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet ([here](#)). Visitors will be expected to read and agree to the school's terms on acceptable use, if relevant.

Use of the school's internet must be for educational purposes only, or for the purpose of fulfilling the duties of an individual's role. Staff may use the internet for personal use (within the guidelines of this document) outside of directed time.

We will monitor the websites visited by pupils, staff, volunteers, governors, and visitors (where relevant) to ensure they comply with the above.

8. Pupils using mobile devices in school

Pupils may bring mobile devices into school, but are not permitted to use them during:

- Lessons, unless specifically at the discretion of the class teacher for a particular purpose.
- Clubs before or after school, or any other activities organised by the school.

Any use of mobile devices in school by pupils must be in line with the acceptable use agreement ([here](#)).

Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a pupil may trigger disciplinary action in line with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour policy ([here](#)), which may result in the confiscation of their device.

9. Staff using work devices outside school

All staff members will take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password-protected – strong passwords are at least 8 characters, with a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers, and special characters.
- Ensuring their hard drive is encrypted – this means if the device is lost or stolen, no one can access the files stored on the hard drive by attaching it to a new device.
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time.
- Not sharing the device among family or friends.
- Installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software.
- Keeping operating systems up to date by always install the latest updates.

Staff members must not use the device in any way which would violate the school's terms of acceptable use. Staff may use work devices for personal use outside of directed time.

~~Work devices must be used solely for work activities.~~

If staff have any concerns over the security of their device, they must seek advice from the Network Manager.

10. How the school will respond to issues of misuse

Where a pupil misuses the school's ICT systems or internet, we will follow the procedures set out in our policies on Promoting Positive Behaviour, and ICT and Internet Acceptable Use ([here](#)). The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature, and seriousness of the specific incident, and will be proportionate.

Where a staff member misuses the school's ICT systems or the internet, or misuses a personal device where the action constitutes misconduct, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the staff disciplinary procedures. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature, and seriousness of the specific incident.

The school will consider whether incidents which involve illegal activity or content, or otherwise serious incidents, should be reported to the police.

11. Training

All new staff members will receive training, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues, including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation.

All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year as part of safeguarding training, as well as relevant updates as required (for example, through emails, e-bulletins, and staff meetings).

By way of this training, all staff will be made aware that:

- Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of online abuse.
- Children can abuse their peers online through:
 - Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages.
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups.
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.
- Physical abuse, sexual violence, and initiation/hazing type violence can all contain an online element.

Training will also help staff:

- Develop better awareness to assist in spotting the signs and symptoms of online abuse.
- Develop the ability to ensure pupils can recognise dangers and risks in online activity and can weigh up the risks.
- Develop the ability to influence pupils to make the healthiest long-term choices, and keep them safe from harm in the short term.

The DSL and deputies will undertake refresher child protection and safeguarding training, which will include online safety, every year. They will also update their knowledge and skills on the subject of online safety at regular intervals, and at least annually.

Governors will receive training on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues as part of their safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training and updates, if applicable.

More information about safeguarding training is set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The DSL monitors behaviour and safeguarding issues related to online safety via CPOMs.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Assistant Headteacher for Innovation and Technology. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board. The review will be supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks pupils face online. This is important because technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly.

13. Links with other policies

This online safety policy is linked to the following policies available ([here](#)):

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Antibullying and Hate Policy
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Complaints procedure
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy