



Policy Title: Online Safety Policy	Effective Date:	December 2025
LT Member Responsible: John Rumble	Review Date:	December 2026
Governors' Committee Responsible: Community and Culture		

1. 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
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate an incident, where appropriate

The 4 categories of risk:

- Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, Anti-Semitism, 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), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scam

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, and its advice for schools on:

[Teaching online safety in schools](#)

[Preventing and tackling bullying and cyber-bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)

[Relationships and sex education](#)

[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.

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.

The governing board will make sure all staff undergo online safety training as part of child protection and safeguarding training, and ensure staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring.

The governing board will also make sure all staff receive regular online safety updates (via email and staff meetings), as required and at least annually, to ensure they are continually provided with the relevant skills and knowledge to effectively safeguard children.

The governing board will co-ordinate regular meetings with appropriate staff to discuss online safety, and monitor online safety logs as provided by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The governor who oversees online safety is Carol Cradock as the Safeguarding Governor.

The governing board should ensure children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including keeping safe online. The governing board must ensure the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place on school devices and school networks, and will regularly review their effectiveness. The board will review the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discuss with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting the standards, which include:

- Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems;
- Reviewing filtering and monitoring provisions at least annually;
- Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning;
- Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.

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
- 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 Safeguard Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads are set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy as well as relevant job descriptions.

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
- Working with the headteacher and governing board to review this policy annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly
- Taking the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place on school devices and school networks
- Providing governors with assurance that filtering and monitoring systems are working effectively and reviewed regularly
- Working with the ICT Network Manager to make sure the appropriate systems and processes are in place
- Working with the headteacher, ICT Network Manager 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's child protection policy
- Responding to safeguarding concerns identified by filtering and monitoring
- 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 logged and dealt with appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy
- Updating and delivering staff training on online safety
- 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
- Undertaking annual risk assessments that consider and reflect the risks children face
- Providing regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety, to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately and assigned to the most appropriate staff in line with the school behaviour policy

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

3.4 The ICT Network Manager

The ICT Network Manager is responsible for:

- Putting in place appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, which are updated on a regular basis and keep pupils 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

- Conducting a full security check and monitoring the school's ICT systems on a monthly basis
- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

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
- Knowing that the DSL is responsible for the filtering and monitoring systems and processes, and being aware of how to report any incidents of those systems or processes failing by reporting via CPOMS
- Following the correct procedures by contacting ICT support if they need to bypass the filtering and monitoring systems for educational purposes
- 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 online-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy
- 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'

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

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

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 factsheet - Childnet International
- Healthy relationships – Disrespect Nobody

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. If appropriate, they will be expected to agree to the terms on acceptable use.

4. Educating pupils about online safety

Pupils will be taught about online safety as part of the curriculum:

It is also taken from the guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.

All Schools have to teach:

Relationships and sex education and health education in secondary schools

In **Key Stage 3**, pupils 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

Pupils in **Key Stage 4** will be taught:

- 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

By the **end of secondary school**, pupils will know:

- 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

5. Educating parents about online safety

The school will raise parents' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home, and in information via our website. This policy will also be shared with parents via our website.

The school is a member of the National Online Safety programme (www.nationalonlinesafety.com), which provides a comprehensive online safety programme for staff, parents/carers and children. Online safety will also be covered during parent information evenings.

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.

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. (See also the school behaviour policy).

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. Tutors will discuss cyber-bullying with their tutor groups as part of our tutor programme.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.

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

The school also shares information on cyber-bullying 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 behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

The DSL will report the incident and provide the relevant material to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that possessing that material is illegal. They will also work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

6.3 Examining electronic devices

The headteacher, DSL and any authorised staff can carry out a search and confiscate any electronic device that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- Poses a risk to staff or pupils, and/or
- Is identified in the school rules as a banned item for which a search can be carried out, and/or
- Is evidence in relation to an offence
- Before a search, if the authorised staff member is satisfied that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting any of the above, they will also:
 - Make an assessment of how urgent the search is, and consider the risk to other pupils and staff. If the search is not urgent, they will seek advice from the DSL, or headteacher.
 - Explain to the pupil why they are being searched, how the search will happen, and give them the opportunity to ask questions about it
 - Seek the pupil's co-operation Authorised staff members may examine, and in exceptional circumstances erase, any data or files on an electronic device that they have confiscated where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so. When deciding whether there is a 'good reason' to examine data or files on an electronic device, the staff member should reasonably suspect that the device has, or could be used to:
 - Cause harm, and/or
 - Undermine the safe environment of the school or disrupt teaching, and/or
 - Commit an offence

If inappropriate material is found on the device, it is up to the DLS and headteacher to decide on a suitable response. If there are images, data or files on the device that staff reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk, they will first consider the appropriate safeguarding response.

When deciding if there is a good reason to erase data or files from a device, staff members will consider if the material may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence. In these instances, they will not delete the material, and the device will be handed to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. If the material is not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, staff members may delete it if:

- They reasonably suspect that its continued existence is likely to cause harm to any person, and/or
- The pupil and/or the parent/carer refuses to delete the material themselves If a staff member suspects a device may contain an indecent image of a child (also known as a nude or semi-nude image), they will:
 - Not view the image
 - Confiscate the device and report the incident to the DSL (or equivalent) immediately, who will decide what to do next. The DSL will make the decision 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 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
 - Our positive behaviour policy Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices will be dealt with through the school complaints procedure

6.4 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Sheldon School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. This includes deepfake pornography: pornographic content created using AI to include someone's likeness. Sheldon School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils very seriously, in line with our school positive behaviour policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out a risk assessment where new AI tools are being used by the school, and where existing AI tools are used in cases which may pose a risk to all individuals that may be affected by it, including, but not limited to, pupils and staff.

Pupils will receive education through their ICT curriculum about the use of AI, and how to use it respectfully and responsibly.

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. 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.

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

More information is set out in the acceptable use agreements.

Pupils using mobile devices in school

Students may bring mobile devices into school, but they must be turned off and in their bags during the school day. Sixth Form students are allowed to use mobile devices in school but are not permitted to use them during:

- Lessons unless given express permission from the teacher to do so
- Tutor time unless given express permission to do so
- Clubs before or after school, or any other activities organised by the school unless given express permission to do so
- Around the school site during break and/or lunchtime or between lessons

Students are not permitted to record or capture images of other pupils on their mobile device. Any use of mobile devices in school by students may trigger disciplinary action in line with the school behaviour policy, which may result in the confiscation of their device.

8. 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 (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- 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 – 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, as set out in the Staff Acceptable Use Policy.

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 ICT Network Manager.

9. 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 behaviour and acceptable use policy. Any incident that is deemed a safeguarding concern will also be recorded on CPOMS. 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 Behaviour Policy. 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.

10. 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, staff briefing 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:
 - o Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages
 - o Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - o Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content

o 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 the risks up
- 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 DDSLs will undertake child protection and safeguarding training, which will include online safety, at least every 2 years. 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.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The DSL logs behaviour and safeguarding issues related to online safety.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Designated safeguarding Lead and ICT Network Manager. 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.

12. Links with other policies

This online safety policy is linked to our:

- o Child protection and safeguarding policy
- o Behaviour policy
- o Staff disciplinary procedures and Staff Behaviour Policy
- o Data protection policy and privacy notices
- o Complaints procedure
- o ICT and internet acceptable – Students
- o ICT and internet acceptable – Staff