



METHERINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policies, Procedures, Regulations and Guidance Online Safety

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2	January 2025	Online safety education amended to show that online safety training is termly
3	October 2025	Online behaviour and contact with parents and pupils
4	January 2026	AI use and links to policy

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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

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, 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; and
- **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](#), 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.

The policy also takes into account the National Curriculum computing programmes of study.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

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

All governors will:

- Ensure that they have read and understand this policy: Metheringham Primary School – Online Safety Policy
- Agree and adhere to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet (appendix 2)
- 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 DSL [and deputy/deputies] 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, ICT providers 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 policy
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged (see appendix 4) 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 (appendix 3 contains a self-audit for staff on online safety training needs) 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

This list is not exhaustive.

3.4 The SLT in partnership with our ICT provider

The SLT in partnership with our ICT provider (F1) 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 Conducting a full security check and monitoring the school's ICT systems on a regular basis
- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged (see appendix 4) 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 behaviour policy

This list is not 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 (appendix 2), ensuring that staff follow the guidance on online contact and behaviour (appendix 4) and ensuring that pupils follow the school's terms on acceptable use (appendix 1)
- Working with the DSL to ensure that any online safety incidents are logged using CPOMs 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 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'
- Following the school's AI policy and list of acceptable AI applications for teacher use

This list is not 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 (appendix 1)

- 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](#)
 - 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 (appendix 2).

4. Educating pupils about online safety

All pupils will be visited by an Online Safety practitioner to deliver explicit lessons on internet safety. Safer Internet Day will be celebrated to further raise awareness and all pupils will be taught about online safety termly as part of the curriculum:

In Key Stage 1, pupils will be taught to:

- Use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private
- Identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies

In Key Stage 2, pupils will be taught to:

- Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly
- Recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- Identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- How information and data is shared and used online
- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know

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

Where possible we will have annual training sessions delivered to parents to raise awareness of online safety. The school will raise parents' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home, and in information via our website. If parents have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised in the first instance with 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. Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyberbullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate. In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school Anti Bullying 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 consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

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

* Staff may also confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the police, if a pupil discloses that they are being abused and that this abuse includes an online element.

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

- The DfE's latest guidance on [screening, searching 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 (appendices 1-3).

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 in appendices 1, 2 and 3

8. Pupils using mobile devices in school

If a pupil needs to bring a mobile device to school, the following applies

- A parent/carer must complete a permission form
- The phone must be checked in/out at the school office
- The school cannot take any responsibility for loss or damage
- Any use of mobile devices in school by pupils must be in line with the acceptable use agreement (see appendices 1 and 2).

Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a pupil may trigger disciplinary action in line with the school behaviour policy, 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 (e.g. asterisk or currency symbol)
- Making sure the device is locked if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device among family or friends
- Staff members must not use the device in any way which would violate the school's terms of acceptable use, as set out in appendix 2.
- 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 school ICT provider.

10. Staff using AI

Staff may use AI tools to enhance productivity, learning, and efficiency; however, such use must always align with our standards for privacy, security, and ethical conduct. AI systems should only be used in ways that protect confidential information, respect intellectual property, and avoid bias or misuse. Staff must ensure that any data entered into AI tools complies with all data-handling requirements and does not include sensitive or personally identifiable information unless explicitly permitted. For specific guidance on which AI applications are approved for use and the conditions under which they may be used, staff should refer to the school's AI Policy.

11. 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. 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 and staff code of conduct. 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.

12. 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 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
- Be aware of their responsibilities in the appropriate use of AI

The DSL and deputies 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.

13. Staff online behaviour

Metheringham Primary School expects all staff to demonstrate the highest standards of professional conduct when communicating or engaging online. The way staff use technology and social media should reflect the same professionalism, integrity, and safeguarding commitment expected in all aspects of school life.

Staff must recognise that their online behaviour, both in and out of school, can affect their professional reputation and the reputation of the school. This section of the Acceptable Use Policy aligns with the Teachers' Standards (Part Two), the Metheringham Primary School Staff Code of Conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and Lincolnshire County Council's safeguarding and online safety guidance.

12.1 Professional Conduct Online

- Staff must always use school-approved systems (e.g. official email accounts, school learning platforms, or communication tools authorised by the school) for contact with pupils or parents/carers.

- Personal accounts, personal email addresses, or private messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) must not be used for any form of school-related communication.
- Staff must not 'friend', 'follow', or otherwise connect with current pupils or their family members (unless established relationships within the context of the school village already exist) on personal social media accounts.
- All online behaviour must be professional, respectful, and in keeping with the school's ethos. Posts, comments, or images that could bring the school, colleagues, pupils, or the wider profession into disrepute are strictly prohibited.
- Staff should ensure privacy settings on personal social media accounts are appropriately restrictive and reviewed regularly.

12.2 Communication with Pupils

- All digital communication with pupils must be transparent, professional, and take place only through approved school systems.
- Staff should not engage in one-to-one online conversations with pupils unless through a monitored, school-authorised platform and for legitimate educational purposes.
- The tone, content, and language of any digital communication with pupils must always be professional and appropriate.
- If a pupil attempts to contact a member of staff through a personal social media or messaging account, the staff member must not respond and should report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

12.3. Communication with Parents and Carers

- Communication with parents and carers must take place only through official school channels (e.g. school email or school telephone systems).
- Staff must not use personal social media accounts, personal email addresses, or messaging apps to communicate with parents or carers about school. We understand that within the context of the village that staff may have established relationships and connections with some parents. Professionalism regarding school must be maintained at all times.
- All written and verbal communication must be professional, factual, and courteous, maintaining clear professional boundaries at all times.
- Any concerns or complaints raised online by parents should be referred to the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team and not addressed personally via social media or other public platforms.

12.4. Safeguarding and Reporting

- Staff must report any safeguarding concerns arising from online communication or contact with pupils or parents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL immediately.
- Concerns may include inappropriate or excessive communication, online disclosures, or any indication that a pupil is at risk of harm.
- Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, in line with the school's Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, and Lincolnshire County Council's disciplinary procedures.

13. Monitoring arrangements

Metheringham Primary School uses the filtering systems in line with Lincolnshire County Council. Filtering checks are carried out regularly to ensure the system is compliant.

Monitoring software is not installed as children do not use school computers unless under adult supervision and with shared log ins, it is difficult to monitor individual's behaviour or traffic online.

Our monitoring strategy pick up incidents urgently (through alerts or observations), so we can take prompt action and record the outcome.

Monitoring of pupils at Metheringham Primary School:

- Staff physically monitoring by watching users' screens
- Live supervision by staff on a console with device management software
- Network monitoring using log files of internet traffic and web access (IT provider)

The DSL takes lead responsibility for any safeguarding and child protection matters picked up through monitoring.

The monitoring of devices is managed by our IT providers – they:

- Make sure monitoring systems are working as expected
- Provide reports on pupil device activity
- Receive safeguarding training, including online safety
- Record and report safeguarding concerns to the DSL
- Make sure you receive data in a format you can understand
- Make sure users are identifiable, so you can trace concerns to an individual, including guest accounts

Since monitoring can't stop unsafe activity, staff:

- Provide effective supervision
- Take steps to maintain awareness of how devices are being used by pupils
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL

The DSL logs behaviour and safeguarding issues related to online safety. An incident report log should be made on CPOMS and the DSL should be tagged in this to alert them to the incident. A verbal alert should also be given

14. Links with other policies

This online safety policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Complaints procedure
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- AI Policy

Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement (pupils and parents/carers)

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE SCHOOL'S ICT SYSTEMS AND INTERNET:
AGREEMENT FOR PUPILS AND PARENTS/CARERS

Name of Pupil:

When I use the school's ICT system, devices and the internet in school I will:

- Ask a teacher or adult if I can do so before using them
- Only use websites that a teacher or adult has told me or allowed me to use
- Tell my teacher immediately if:
 - I click on a website by mistake
 - I receive messages from people I don't know
 - I find anything that may upset or harm me or my friends
- Use school computers for school work only
- Be kind to others and not upset or be rude to them
- Look after the school ICT equipment and tell a teacher straight away if something is broken or not working properly
- Only use the username and password I have been given
- Try my hardest to remember my username and password
- Never share my password with anyone, including my friends.
- Never give my personal information (my name, address or telephone numbers) to anyone without the permission of my teacher or parent/carer
- Save my work on safely where I have been instructed by my teacher
- Check with my teacher before I print anything
- Log off or shut down a computer when I have finished using it

Signed (pupil):

Date:

Parent/carer agreement:

I agree that my child can use the school's ICT systems and internet when appropriately supervised by a member of school staff. I agree to the conditions set out above for pupils using the school's ICT systems and internet, and will make sure my child understands these.

Signed (parent/ carer):

Date:

Appendix 2: acceptable use agreement (staff, governors, volunteers and visitors)

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE SCHOOL'S ICT SYSTEMS AND INTERNET:
AGREEMENT FOR STAFF, GOVERNORS, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Name of staff member/governor/volunteer/visitor:

When using the school's ICT systems and accessing the internet in school, or outside school on a work device (if applicable), I will not:

- Access, or attempt to access inappropriate material, including but not limited to material of a violent, criminal or pornographic nature (or create, share, link to or send such material)
- Use them in any way which could harm the school's reputation
- Access social networking sites or chat rooms
- Use any improper language when communicating online, including in emails or other messaging services
- Install any unauthorised software, or connect unauthorised hardware or devices to the school's network
- Share my password with others or log in to the school's network using someone else's details
- Share confidential information about the school, its pupils or staff, or other members of the community
- Access, modify or share data I'm not authorised to access, modify or share
- Promote private businesses, unless that business is directly related to the school
- Display or engage in any behaviours listed in Appendix 4 in relation to staff online behaviour
- Breach the school's AI policy

I will only use the school's ICT systems and access the internet in school, or outside school on a work device, for educational purposes or for the purpose of fulfilling the duties of my role.

I agree that the school will monitor the websites I visit and my use of the school's ICT facilities and systems.

I will take all reasonable steps to ensure that work devices are secure and password-protected when using them outside school, and keep all data securely stored in accordance with this policy and the school's data protection policy.

I will let the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and computing lead know if a pupil informs me they have found any material which might upset, distress or harm them or others, and will also do so if I encounter any such material.

I will always use the school's ICT systems and internet responsibly, and ensure that pupils in my care do so too.

I will follow the guidance issued in appendix 4 on staff online behaviour and communication

I will follow the school's AI policy and the list of acceptable AI applications for this school

Signed (staff member/governor/volunteer/visitor):

Date:

Appendix 3: online safety training needs – self audit for staff

ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING NEEDS AUDIT	
Name of staff member/volunteer:	Date:
Question:	Yes/ No: (Comments if necessary)
Do you know the name of the person who has lead responsibility for online safety in school?	
Are you aware of the ways pupils can abuse their peers online?	
Do you know what you must do if a pupil approaches you with a concern or issue?	
Are you familiar with the school's acceptable use agreement for staff, volunteers, governors and visitors?	
Are you familiar with the school's acceptable use agreement for pupils and parents?	
Are you familiar with the school's approach to tackling cyber-bullying?	
Are there any areas of online safety in which you would like training/further training?	

Appendix 4: Staff Standards of Behaviour Online

12.2 Professional Conduct Online

- Staff must always use school-approved systems (e.g. official email accounts, school learning platforms, or communication tools authorised by the school) for contact with pupils or parents/carers.
- Personal accounts, personal email addresses, or private messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) must not be used for any form of school-related communication.
- Staff must not 'friend', 'follow', or otherwise connect with current pupils or their family members (unless established relationships within the context of the school village already exist) on personal social media accounts.
- All online behaviour must be professional, respectful, and in keeping with the school's ethos. Posts, comments, or images that could bring the school, colleagues, pupils, or the wider profession into disrepute are strictly prohibited.
- Staff should ensure privacy settings on personal social media accounts are appropriately restrictive and reviewed regularly.

12.2 Communication with Pupils

- All digital communication with pupils must be transparent, professional, and take place only through approved school systems.
- Staff should not engage in one-to-one online conversations with pupils unless through a monitored, school-authorised platform and for legitimate educational purposes.
- The tone, content, and language of any digital communication with pupils must always be professional and appropriate.
- If a pupil attempts to contact a member of staff through a personal social media or messaging account, the staff member must not respond and should report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

12.3. Communication with Parents and Carers

- Communication with parents and carers must take place only through official school channels (e.g. school email or school telephone systems).
- Staff must not use personal social media accounts, personal email addresses, or messaging apps to communicate with parents or carers about school. We understand that within the context of the village that staff may have established relationships and connections with some parents. Professionalism regarding school must be maintained at all times.
- All written and verbal communication must be professional, factual, and courteous, maintaining clear professional boundaries at all times.
- Any concerns or complaints raised online by parents should be referred to the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team and not addressed personally via social media or other public platforms.