Hebburn Comprehensive School

Online Safety Policy

Statement of Intent

Hebburn Comprehensive School recognises that technology is an essential part of daily life and learning for pupils and staff. However, we also recognise the associated risks, including exposure to harmful content, grooming, exploitation, cyberbullying, and online abuse. This policy outlines our approach to educating pupils, supporting staff, and safeguarding the school community from online harms.

We are committed to ensuring that all members of our school community use digital technologies safely, responsibly, and respectfully, in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed by:

- Education Act 2002 – Duty to safeguard and promote welfare of pupils.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 – Powers to regulate online conduct.
- Children Act 1989 and 2004 – Duty to protect children from harm.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2023) – Online safety within safeguarding.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 – Protection of personal data online.
- UKCIS "Education for a Connected World" (2018) and "Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff" (2017).
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools (DfE 2019).

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

- To educate pupils to use technology safely and responsibly.
- To support staff in recognising and responding to online safety concerns.
- To ensure that online risks are mitigated through technical and procedural measures.
- To promote digital resilience and critical thinking in an increasingly connected world.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher and Governing Board:

- Ensure compliance with the Prevent Duty and KCSiE.
- Oversee the implementation and review of this policy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Acts as the point of contact for all online safety concerns.
- Ensures appropriate referral, record-keeping, and response.

ICT/Network Manager:

- Maintains secure systems, firewalls, and filtering.
- Reviews and monitors activity logs in accordance with DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards.

Staff:

- Must read and follow the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Complete regular online safety and safeguarding training.
- Report concerns to the DSL immediately.

Pupils:

- Are expected to follow the school's AUP.
- Are taught to report anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Parents/Carers:

- Are informed of school expectations for safe online use.
- Are encouraged to support the school's online safety education at home.

5. Education and Curriculum:

- Online safety is embedded throughout the curriculum via:
- PSHE and RSE programmes
- Computing lessons
- Assemblies and theme days (e.g. Safer Internet Day)

Pupils are taught:

- Online safety and privacy
- Consent and data sharing
- Online relationships and digital wellbeing
- Recognising manipulation, misinformation, and grooming

Filtering, Monitoring, and Technical Measures

The school employs robust filtering and monitoring systems to:

- Block harmful websites and inappropriate content
- Track and audit network activity in line with legal requirements
- Alert DSLs to concerning search terms or behaviours

Systems are reviewed regularly to reflect evolving risks, in line with DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2023).

Responding to Online Safety Concerns

- All concerns about online behaviour, harmful content, or cyberbullying are treated as safeguarding issues and recorded via school systems.
- Incidents are investigated by the DSL or appropriate pastoral staff.
- Support is provided to victims, and action is taken with perpetrators.
- Referrals to police, CEOP, or social care may be made if appropriate.
- The school follows UKCIS guidance when managing incidents involving nude/semi-nude images.

Staff Training and Conduct

- All staff complete safeguarding and online safety training annually.
- Staff must not engage with pupils on personal social media or via unauthorised channels.
- Personal use of school devices and systems is subject to monitoring.

Use of Devices, Social Media, and Remote Learning

- Pupils and staff must adhere to AUPs when using school and personal devices.
- The school provides guidance on the safe use of social media.
- Remote learning platforms are secured and monitored in line with DfE guidance.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or in response to significant updates in statutory guidance or technological risk. Implementation is overseen by the DSL and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Board.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs S Burdis

Signed:

Head Teacher: Mr D R Thompson

Chair of Governors: Mr G Thompson
Ratification Date: 02/10/2025
Date of Next Review: Autumn Term 2026