

Bedford High School

A Specialist Business and Enterprise College

Work Hard Be Respectful Take Responsibility



Online Safety Policy

School Address	Manchester Road Leigh WN7 2LU
School Contact Number	01942 909009

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Author/reviewer:	R. Ramsden
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Changes History

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08/01/2025	Updated KCSIE link	2
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08/01/2025	Updated wording regarding examining electrical devices	8
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10/02/2026	Policy updated in line with The DfE has updated its <u>relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) guidance</u> , which comes into effect in September 2026.	7
10/02/2026	Updated AI guidance for staff	12

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1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and governors
- Identify and support groups of students that are potentially at greater risk of harm than others.
- 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, 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), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

➤ **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's) statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and its advice for schools on:

- [Teaching online safety](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) and [cyber-bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health 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.

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

[The named safeguarding governor who also has responsibility for online safety is: Lynn Hayes](#)

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, e-bulletins and staff meetings), to ensure they are continually provided with the relevant skills and knowledge to effectively safeguard children.

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 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
- Adhere to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet
- Ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme while devising and implementing their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and/or procedures
- Ensure that, where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, is adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some students 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

Headteacher: Paul McCaffery

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Rebecca Ramsden (AHT)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Paul McCaffery (HT), Bridget Moss (DHT) & Nikkie Quinn

Details of the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies are set out in our Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy.

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.
- Taking the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place on school devices and school networks.
- 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.
- Working with the headteacher, ICT 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 Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy.
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged on CPOMS 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. This includes providing regular safeguarding and child protection updates, to all staff, in order to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively.
- 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.

3.4 The ICT manager

[ICT Manager: Richard Tonge](#)

The ICT 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 students 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 weekly 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 on 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, Rewards and Antbullying policy.
- Ensuring the senior leadership team are aware of the security systems in place and have an appropriate level of understanding.

3.5 All staff, agency staff and volunteers

All staff, 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 students follow the school's terms on acceptable use (appendices 1 and 2).

- Working with the DSL to ensure that any online safety incidents are logged on 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, Rewards and Antbullying 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'.

3.6 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers 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 (appendices 1 and 2) and the mobile phone policy.

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

- What are the issues? – [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- Help and advice for parents/carers – [Childnet](#)
- Parents and carers resource sheet – [Childnet](#)
- Bedford High School's monthly safeguarding newsletter for parents

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 students about online safety

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

The text below is taken from the [National Curriculum computing programmes of study](#) and the government's [guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education \(for introduction 1 September 2026\)](#).

All schools have to teach [Relationships and sex education and health education](#) in secondary schools

In **KS3**, 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 **KS4** 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:

- › Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- › Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues
- › The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online
- › Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images
- › That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI-generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime
- › What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online
- › About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them
- › That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong

- › That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice
- › How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns
- › That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it
- › How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
- › That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising)
- › That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion
- › That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk

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.

4.2 Pupils will be taught practical cyber security skills

The following items come from the DfE's [non-statutory cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#).

All pupils will receive age-appropriate training on safe internet use, including:

- › Methods that hackers use to trick people into disclosing personal information
- › Password security
- › Social engineering
- › The risks of removable storage devices (e.g. USBs)
- › Multi-factor authentication
- › How to report a cyber incident or attack
- › How to report a personal data breach

Pupils will also receive age-appropriate education on safeguarding issues such as cyberbullying and the risks of online radicalisation.

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, emails, monthly newsletters, parent events and parent meetings. This policy is available on the school website.

The school will let parents know:

- What systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use
- What their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from the school (if anyone) their child will be interacting with online

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 1 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 students understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that students 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 students, 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 and Ethics (PDE), and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support students, as part of safeguarding training. The school also sends information/leaflets 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, Rewards and Antibullying Policy'. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among students, 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, and any member of staff authorised to do so by the headteacher can carry out a search and confiscate any electronic device that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- Cause harm / Poses a risk to staff and/or students
- Disrupt teaching
- Break any of the school rules / is identified as a banned item
- Is evidence in relation to a suspected 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 students and staff. If the search is not urgent, they will seek advice from [the headteacher / DH / DSL].
- Explain to the student why they are being searched, how the search will happen, and give them the opportunity to ask questions about it.
- Seek the student'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 DSL and/or headteacher or other member of the senior leadership team 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 student 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 students 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](#)
- Other related school policies.

Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on students' 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, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Bedford High School recognises that AI has many uses to help students 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.

The school will treat any use of AI to bully students in line with our Behaviour, Rewards and Antibullying policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while 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 them, including, but not limited to, pupils and staff.

7. Acceptable use of the internet in school

All students, parents, staff, volunteers and governors are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet. 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 students, staff, volunteers, governors and visitors to ensure they comply with the above.

8. Students using mobile devices in school

Mobile phone usage is not permitted whilst on the school site. Any breach of the Mobile Phone Policy by a student will trigger disciplinary action in line with school policies and procedures.

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

- Ensuring their hard drive is encrypted
- Making sure the device locks if left inactive for a period of time
- Not sharing the device used for work among family or friends
- 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. 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 Manager.

10. How the school will respond to issues of misuse

Where a student misuses the school's ICT systems or internet, we will follow the procedures set out in our policies on behaviour and ICT and internet 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 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.

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 (e.g. 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

Misuse of online gaming

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 students can recognise dangers and risks in online activity
- develop the ability to influence students to make the healthiest long-term choices and keep them safe from harm in the short term

The DSL will undertake 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.

12. Monitoring arrangements

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

This policy will be reviewed every year by the DSL. At every review, the policy will be shared with the headteacher and governing board. The review will be supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks students face online.

13. Links with other policies

This online safety policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy
- Behaviour, Rewards & Antibullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

