Emerson Park Academy

ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

Reviewed: November 2026

Next review: November 2028

Online Safety Policy – 2026- 2027

Introduction

Key people / dates

	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), with lead responsibility for filtering and monitoring	Miss Edwards
	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads / DSL Team Members	Ms Heatley Ms Blaize Ms Dolyak Ms Mallen
	Link governor for safeguarding and web filtering	Ms Munir
	Curriculum leads with relevance to online safeguarding and their role [e.g. PSHE/RSHE/RSE/Computing leads	Mr Oakins Miss Hampton Mr Abbas
	Network manager / other technical support	Mr Chowdhury
	Date this policy was reviewed and by whom	November 2026 Miss Edwards
	Date of next review and by whom	November 2028 Miss Edwards

What is this policy?

Online safety is an integral part of safeguarding and requires a whole school, cross-curricular approach and collaboration between key school leads. Accordingly, this policy is written in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE), 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools', statutory RSHE guidance and other statutory documents. It is cross-curricular (with relevance beyond Relationships, Health and Sex Education, Citizenship and Computing) and designed to sit alongside or be integrated into your school's statutory Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. Any issues and concerns with online safety must always follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Who is it for; when is it reviewed?

This policy is a living document, subject to full annual review and amended where necessary during the year in response to developments in the school and local area. Although many aspects will be informed by legislation and regulations, we will involve staff, governors, pupils and parents in writing and reviewing the policy and make sure the policy makes sense and is possible to follow in all respects. This will help all stakeholders to understand the rules that are in place, why they are, and how the policy affects day-to-day practice.

Who leads online safety?

KCSIE makes clear that "the Designated Safeguarding Lead should take **lead** responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place)." The DSL can delegate activities but not responsibility for this area, and whilst subject leads (e.g. for RSHE) will plan the curriculum for their area, it is important that this ties into a whole-school approach.

What were the main online safety risks in 2025/2026?

There are 4 types of online safety risks outlined in KCSIE:

> **CONTENT**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories,
>
> **CONTACT**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example: 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**: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying, and
>
> **COMMERCE**: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

It is the responsibility of all staff to understand the above, recognise when a child may be experiencing harm related to the above, and report to the DSL.

<u>Online Safeguarding Trends at Emerson Park Academy</u>

- In our school over the past year, we have noticed the following in terms of device use and abuse and types of online/device-based incidents which affect the wellbeing and safeguarding of our pupils. These are similar to National online safety trends. Children

turning to Gen AI platforms for advice – some of which is harmful and extremely worrying.
- Increased use of AI companions and chatbots which mimic human connection.

How will this policy be communicated?

This policy can only impact upon practice if it is a living document. It must be accessible to and understood by all stakeholders. It will be communicated in the following ways

- Posted on the school website
- Integral to safeguarding updates and training for all staff

Overview

Aims

This policy aims to promote a whole school approach to online safety by:

- Setting out expectations for all Emerson Park academy members' online behaviour, attitudes and activities and use of digital technology (including when devices are offline).
- Helping safeguarding and senior leadership teams to have a better understanding and awareness of all elements of online safeguarding through effective collaboration and communication with technical colleagues (e.g. for filtering and monitoring), curriculum leads (e.g. RSHE) and beyond.
- Helping all stakeholders to recognise that online/digital behaviour standards (including social media activity) must be upheld beyond the confines of the school gates and school day, regardless of device or platform, and that the same standards of behaviour apply online and offline.
- Facilitating the safe, responsible, respectful and positive use of technology to support teaching and learning, increase attainment and prepare children and young people for the risks and opportunities of today's and tomorrow's digital world, to survive and thrive online.
- Helping school staff working with children to understand their roles and responsibilities to work safely and responsibly with technology and the online world:
    - for the protection and benefit of the children and young people in their care, and
    - for their own protection, minimising misplaced or malicious allegations and to better understand their own standards and practice.
    - for the benefit of the school, supporting the school ethos, aims, and objectives, and protecting the reputation of the school and profession.

- Establishing clear structures by which online misdemeanours will be treated, and procedures to follow where there are doubts or concerns (with reference to other school policies such as Behaviour Policy or Anti-Bullying Policy).

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Emerson Park Academy community (including teaching, supply and support staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, pupils, parents/carers, visitors and community users) who have access to our digital technology, networks and systems, whether on-site or remotely, and at any time, or who use technology in their school role.

Roles and responsibilities

This school is a community, and all members have a duty to behave respectfully online and offline, to use technology for teaching and learning, to prepare for life after school, and to immediately report any concerns or inappropriate behaviour, to protect staff, pupils, families and the school reputation. We learn together, make honest mistakes together and support each other in a world that is online and offline at the same time.

All members of the school community should **read the relevant section in Appendix A of this document** that describes individual roles and responsibilities. Please note that there is one for 'All Staff' that must be read by all staff, including those who have a named role in another section. There are also role descriptions in the Appendix A, e.g. pupil, governor, etc. All staff have a key role to play in feeding back on potential issues.

Education and curriculum

Despite the risks associated with being online, Emerson Park Academy recognises the opportunities and benefits for children too. Technology is a fundamental part of adult life and so developing the competencies to understand and use it, is critical to children's later positive outcomes. The choice to use technology in school will always be driven by pedagogy and inclusion.

As well as teaching about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help pupils navigate the online world responsibly, safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app, Teaching Online Safety in Schools recommends embedding teaching about online safety and harms through a whole school approach and provides an understanding of these risks to help tailor teaching and support to the specific needs of pupils, including vulnerable pupils.

The teaching of online safety, features in these particular areas of curriculum delivery:

- Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health (also known as RSHE or PSHE) [Please be aware that during the 2025/6 school year this will be subject to significant changes of scope and content]
- Computing
- Citizenship

However, it is the role of ALL staff to identify opportunities to thread online safety through all school activities, both outside the classroom and making the most of unexpected learning opportunities as they arise.

Whenever overseeing the use of technology in school or setting as homework tasks, all staff will encourage sensible use, monitor what pupils are doing and consider potential risks and the age appropriateness of tasks. This includes supporting them with search skills, reporting and accessing help, critical thinking (e.g. bias, disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories), access to age-appropriate materials and signposting, and legal issues such as copyright and data law. saferesources.lgfl.net has regularly updated theme-based resources, materials and signposting for teachers and parents.

Handling safeguarding concerns and incidents

Online safety concerns are safeguarding concerns. They must be handled in the same way as any other safeguarding concern. Safeguarding is often referred to as a jigsaw puzzle, so all stakeholders should speak to the safeguarding lead with any concerns (no matter how small they seem) to contribute to the overall picture or highlight what might not yet be a problem.

School procedures for dealing with recognition and response to online safety will be mostly detailed in the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy (including school sanctions)
- Acceptable Use Policies
- Data Protection Policy, agreements and other documentation (e.g. privacy statement and consent forms for data sharing, image use etc)

This school commits to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard pupils online, but the internet can never be 100% safe (as stated in KCSIE), and we recognise that incidents will occur both inside school and outside school.

Any suspected online risk or infringement should be reported to the DSL as soon as possible on the same day. The reporting member of staff will ensure that a record is made of the

concern on CPOMS- this includes any concerns raised by the filtering and monitoring systems (see section further on in this policy for more information).

Any concern/allegation about staff misuse is always (as per any safeguarding allegation) referred directly to the Headteacher, unless the concern is about the Headteacher, in which case the complaint is referred to the Chair of Governors and/or the LADO (Local Authority's Designated Officer).

The school will actively seek support from other agencies as needed (i.e. the local authority, LGfL, UK Safer Internet Centre's Professionals' Online Safety Helpline (POSH), NCA CEOP, Prevent Officer, Police, IWF and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service).

We will inform parents/carers of online safety incidents involving their children, Children's Services and the Police where staff or pupils engage in or are subject to behaviour which we consider is particularly concerning or breaks the law.

The following sub-sections provide details on managing particular types of concern.

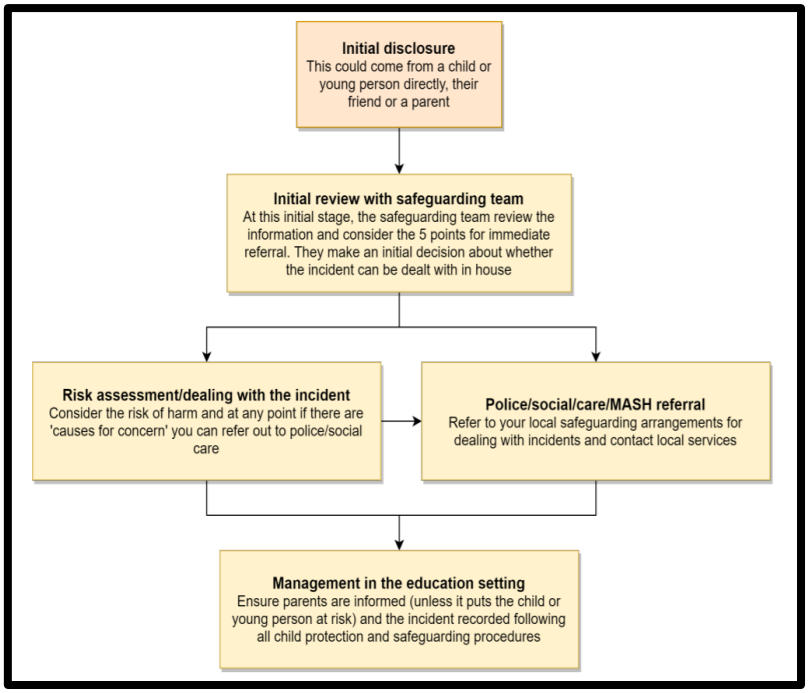
Nudes & Semi Nudes

All schools (regardless of phase) should refer to the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance - Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings.

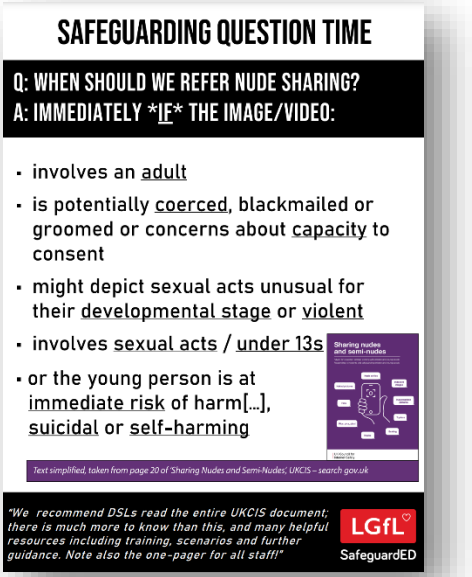
There is a one-page overview called Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident for all staff (not just classroom-based staff) to read, in recognition of the fact that it is mostly someone other than the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to first become aware of an incident, and it is vital that the correct steps are taken. **Staff other than the DSL must not attempt to view, share or delete the image or ask anyone else to do so, but go straight to the DSL**.

Everyone must understand that whilst the sharing of intimate or sexual images involving children (created via AI or otherwise) is illegal, pupils should be encouraged and supported to talk to members of staff if they have made a mistake or had a problem in this area. The UKCIS guidance seeks to avoid unnecessary criminalisation of children.

The school DSL will use the full guidance document, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes – advice for educational settings to decide next steps and whether other agencies need to be involved (see flow chart below from the UKCIS guidance) and next steps regarding liaising with parents and supporting pupils. The school will also make use of guidance from The Marie Collins Foundation with regards to supporting victims of Technology Assisted Child Sexual Abuse.



This LGfL document (available at nudes.lgfl.net) may also be helpful for DSLs in making their decision about whether to refer a concern about sharing of sexual imagery of children:



Priority Areas

E.G Upskirting

Everyone must understand that upskirting (taking a photo or video of someone under their clothing, not necessarily a skirt) is a criminal offence and constitutes a form of sexual harassment, as highlighted in Keeping Children Safe in Education. As with other forms of child-on-child abuse, pupils can come and talk to members of staff if they have made a mistake or had a problem in this area. Upskirting has become more prevalent due to the increased use of smart glasses and other discreet recording technology that can capture imagery without individuals knowing.

E.G Bullying

Materials to support teaching about bullying and useful Department for Education guidance and case studies are at bullying.lgfl.net

Misuse of school technology (devices, systems, networks or platforms)

Clear and well communicated rules and procedures are essential to govern pupil and adult use of school networks, connections, internet connectivity and devices, cloud platforms and social media (both when on school site and outside of school).

These are defined in the relevant Acceptable Use Policy as well as in this document, for example, in the sections relating to the professional and personal use of school platforms/networks/clouds, devices and other technology.

Where pupils contravene these rules, the school behaviour policy will be applied; where adults contravene these rules, action will be taken as outlined in the staff code of conduct/handbook.

It will be necessary to reinforce these as usual at the beginning of any school year, but also to remind pupils that the same applies to any home learning that may take place.

Further to these steps, the school reserves the right to withdraw – temporarily or permanently – any or all access to such technology, or the right to bring devices onto school property.

Social media incidents

Where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the school community (e.g. parent or visitor), Emerson Park Academy will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly. The police may need to be contacted if an offence is committed.

Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the school may report it to the platform it is hosted on, and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline, POSH, (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for support or help to accelerate this process.

Extremism

The school has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty Staff must not support or promote extremist organisations, messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the school, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature. We ask for parents' support in this also, especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be easily accessed and highly prevalent on mainstream platforms.

Appropriate filtering and monitoring

The DSL has lead responsibility for filtering and monitoring, and works closely with our IT Team.

We provide 'appropriate filtering and monitoring' (as outlined in KCSIE) in our school.

Our filtering system is called Smoothwall.

Staff will be reminded of the systems in place and their responsibilities at induction and start of year safeguarding, as well as via AUPs and regular training reminders in the light of the annual review and regular checks that will be carried out. We ensure all staff are aware of their responsibility in feeding back about areas of concern, potential for pupils to bypass systems and any potential overblocking.

Technical and safeguarding colleagues work together closely to carry out an annual review and regular checks of filtering and monitoring, and to ensure that the school responds to issues.

Where staff use Gen AI, they must be pre-approved by the school

The DSL checks filtering reports and notifications monthly and takes any necessary action as a result

At Emerson Park Academy, we use Smoothwall for monitoring.

Monitoring alerts are checked daily and we may get phone calls for the more serious alerts.

Messaging/commenting systems (incl. email, learning platforms & more)

Authorised systems

- **Pupils** at this school communicate with each other and with staff using google classroom and google mail.
- S**taff, governors and trustees** at this school use the email system provided by LgFl for all school emails. They never use a personal/private email account (or other messaging platforms) to communicate with children or parents, or to colleagues when relating to school/child data, using a non-school-administered system.

Behaviour/usage principles of messaging/commenting systems

- More detail for all the points below is given in the school's Acceptable Use Agreements, Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Appropriate behaviour is expected at all times by all users, and the system should not be used to send inappropriate materials or language which is or could be construed as bullying, aggressive, rude, insulting, illegal or otherwise inappropriate, or which (for staff) might bring the school into disrepute or compromise the professionalism of staff.
- Data protection principles will be followed at all times when it comes to all school communications, in line with the school Data Protection Policy and only using the authorised systems mentioned above.

Pupils and staff are allowed to use the email system for reasonable (not excessive, not during lessons) personal use, but should be aware that all use is monitored, their emails may be read, and the same rules of appropriate behaviour apply at all times. Emails using inappropriate language, images, malware or to adult sites may be blocked and not arrive at their intended destination (and will be dealt with according to the appropriate policy and procedure).

Trips / events away from school

For school trips/events away from school, teachers will be issued a school duty phone, and this number will be used for any authorised or emergency communications with pupils and parents. Any deviation from this policy (e.g. by mistake or because the school phone will not work) will be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Teachers using their personal phone in an emergency will ensure the number is hidden to avoid a parent or pupil accessing a teacher's private phone number.