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Online Safety Policy

Westmorland Primary School

Autumn 2024

Review date: Autumn 2026
Ratified by:



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E Safety Policy

To help children stay safer in the online world, it's vital that that they are educated and empowered to navigate the online world.

As a school, we have a duty to teach children how to stay safe online. This will be covered through focused work in Computing and PHSE

Context

In 2018 national data showed that around 8-11 year olds spend over 11 hours a week online. 24% own a smartphone. 21% of 8-11 year olds have a social networking profile. 74% of 5-15 year olds have their own tablet.

New research shows that 38% of tweens use social media, including 18 percent of tweens who say they use it every day

Children like to play games, use social networks, share photos and socialise online. We need to help them minimize the risks and dangers and give them a way to help fix any problems.

Harmful content online

We need to be aware of the different ways children may interact online and consider the content/contact/conduct of online interactions.

Content – Children are at risk of being exposed to inappropriate content including sexual content, violent content, extreme opinions, biased content and commercial content.

Contact – Children will have a range of contact online which may include bullying, information harvesting, meeting strangers, grooming and being exposed to behaviour that is inappropriate and encourages injury eg self harm.

Conduct – Children need to be aware of the risks of creating or sharing explicit material, bullying, illegally downloading music or films or creating biased information.

If there is a negative experience online, children might deal with it in different ways. For example,

Fatalistic passive coping – Children ignore the problems and hope it goes away. They might stop using the internet for a bit,

Communicative coping – Children talk about their problems.

Pro-active coping – try to fix eg block sender/delete unwelcome messages

We need to equip children with the skills to deal with problems online in a positive way and be comfortable talking to adults about them. We also need to know how to access further help and signpost parents and carers.

Online Radicalisation and Extremism

'Safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm'
(Home Office, Prevent Strategy – June 2015)

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school. Our pupils see our school as a safe place where they can explore issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this – we have a duty to ensure this happens. As a school we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for pupils and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our pupils. Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive



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relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice and thereby limiting the life chances of young people. Education is a powerful weapon against this and we need to make sure our pupils are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

As part of our whole school e-safety programme we highlight the potential risks pupils may face in relation to on-line radicalisation and encourage students to report any concerns they may have to their teacher or appropriate adult.

Sharing and Sexting

Children need to be safe online and be aware that personal information should be kept to themselves. As a school, we encourage children to use the **billboard ideal** – would you be happy if the things you were sharing online were visible on a billboard at the side of the road?

During our PHSE sessions and specific e-safety lessons, we teach children to keep information private and to consider their options whilst understanding the pressures our children are under.

At the upper end of school, we are aware that children may be encouraged to participate in undesirable activities such as nude selfies and sexting. We promote positive self-image, feelings of worth and healthy relationships throughout school to prepare children for this.

Any incidences of inappropriate sharing will be dealt with by the Learning Mentors and Headteacher, alongside parents and carers.

Sexual Offending Against Children Online

Nowadays, children are at risk of being groomed online as well as accessing adult content. To protect staff and children, only school devices may be used to photograph and video children.

Secure web-blocking software is used to ensure that unsecure or inappropriate websites are blocked. Staff are encouraged to use a wide range of search engines including those with additional filters and to undertake searches – particularly images searches prior to lessons.

In PHSE and e-safety children are taught that some body parts are private and encouraged to think about appropriate and inappropriate touching. We want the children to understand that if they feel uncomfortable about something, they need to tell a trusted adult about it.

Online Bullying

This school believes that all people in our community have the right to teach and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We believe that every individual in school has a duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to another person.

A frequently used definition of cyberbullying is "an aggressive, intentional act or behaviour that is carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself."

Cyberbullying is often similar to traditional bullying, with some notable distinctions. Victims of cyberbullying may not know the identity of their bully, or why the bully is targeting them. The harassment can have wide-reaching effects on the victim, as the content used, can be spread and shared easily among many people and often remains accessible long after the initial incident.

The terms "cyberharassment" and "cyberbullying" are sometimes used interchangeably.



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Recent data shows that up to 50% of children have experienced online bullying.

Online bullying can occur across various platforms – social networks, apps, game playing, on forums, in chatrooms, through emails, via both computers and phones. It can include a variety of forms – including abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages, abusive comments, sharing humiliating videos or photos, spreading rumours, trolling, developing hate sites, prank calls or messages, exclusion online, anonymous messaging and encouraging or pressuring children into inappropriate behaviour. It can be inescapable, anonymous, widely shared and permanent.

At Westmorland, we take this bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. The pastoral team will deal with incidents and support children emotionally. If it is needed, children and parents will be signposted as to where to go to get content removed. In class, children will discuss what is and is not acceptable online and be encouraged to report potential incidents to trusted adults at home or school. All year groups follow the same strategies for being safe online. However some year groups may need to recover specific teaching points when problems arise.

Westmorland has:

- Information for parents on e-communication standards and practices in schools as well as what's being taught in the curriculum
- Support for parents and pupils if cyberbullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence.
- Teaching of Internet Safety across the school.

Three steps to stay out of harm's way

- Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
- If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.
- 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

Supporting Parents and Carers

We understand the concerns that parents and carers have and support them to identify strategies that they can use to protect their children online. We can share support and signpost adults to appropriate organisations.

Parents concerns vary and can include companies collecting information about online habits, children giving out personal details, downloading viruses, cyberbullying, inappropriate content, purchases online and being encouraged to self-harm.

Support can be accessed to help parents filter content, restrict access and manage the time spent online as well as discussing boundaries.

Useful Resources for Staff and Parents and Carers

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>



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<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

<https://www.o2.co.uk/help/nspcc>

<http://parentinfo.org/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>