



Forwards Centre Online Safety Policy

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1. Aims

The Forwards Centre aims to:

- › Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- › Identify and support groups of pupils that are potentially at greater risk of harm online 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 in schools](#)
- › [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) and [cyber-bullying: advice for Academy Leads and school staff](#)
- › [Relationships and sex 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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local governing body and trust board

The local governing body has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy and holding the Academy Lead to account for its implementation. The Vice Principal of the trust will also monitor this policy and keep the trust board updated on its implementation

The governors 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.
- make sure all staff receive regular online safety updates (via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required and at least annually, to ensure they are continually provided with the relevant skills and knowledge to effectively safeguard children.
- co-ordinate regular meetings with appropriate staff to discuss online safety, requirements for training, and monitor online safety logs as provided by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).
- should ensure children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including keeping safe online.
- ensure the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place on school devices and school networks, and will regularly review their effectiveness. They 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 those 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.

The governor who oversees online safety is Liz Douglas.

All governors will:

- › Ensure they have read and understand this policy
- › Agree and adhere to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet (appendix 3)
- › Ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme while devising and implementing their whole-school 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 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is 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 Academy Lead

The Academy lead 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 designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and 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 Academy Lead in ensuring that staff understand this policy and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school
- › Working with the Academy Lead and local governing body to review this policy annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly
- › Taking the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place on school devices and school networks
- › Working with the ICT manager to make sure the appropriate systems and processes are in place

- › Working with the Academy Lead, 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's child protection policy
- › Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged (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 (appendix 4 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 Academy Lead, local governing body, Vice Principle and the Trust Board as required
- › Undertaking annual risk assessments that consider and reflect the risks children face
- › 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

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

3.4 Schools ICT

At the Forwards Centre we use Bolton Schools ICT service, they are responsible for:

- › Putting in place an appropriate level of security protection procedures, such as filtering and monitoring systems on school devices and school networks, which are reviewed and updated at least annually 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
- › Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files
- › Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged 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 intended to be 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 (see Trust Acceptable Use policy), and ensuring that pupils follow the school's terms on acceptable use (appendices 1)
- › Knowing that the DSL is responsible for the filtering and monitoring systems and processes, and being aware of how to report any incidents of those systems or processes failing
- › Following the correct procedures if they need to bypass the filtering and monitoring systems for educational purposes

- › Working with the DSL to ensure that any online safety incidents are logged (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'

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Notify a member of staff or the Academy Lead 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/carers 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](#)

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 (see Trust Acceptable Use policy).

4. Educating pupils about online safety

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

In **Key Stage (KS) 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

Pupils in **Key Stage (KS) 2** 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/carers about online safety

The Forwards Centre will raise parents/carers' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home, and in information via our website. This policy will also be shared with parents/carers.

The school will let parents/carers know:

- › What systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use (see acceptable use of ICT policy)
- › 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/carers have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised in the first instance with the Academy Lead and/or the DSL.

Concerns or queries about this policy can be raised with any member of staff, the Academy Lead or the trust Vice Principle.

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.

At the Forwards Centre we will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be. Teachers and learning mentors will discuss cyber-bullying with their pupils.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, governors and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training (see section 11 for more detail).

Information on cyber-bullying for parents/carers will be available on the website 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, we will follow the processes set out in the school behaviour 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 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 Academy Lead, and any member of staff authorised to do so by the Academy Lead (as set out in the behaviour policy), can carry out a search and confiscate any electronic device that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- › Poses a risk to staff or pupils, and/or
- › Is identified in the school rules as a banned item for which a search can be carried out, and/or
- › Is evidence in relation to an 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 pupils and staff. If the search is not urgent, they will seek advice from the DSL
- › Explain to the pupil why they are being searched, how the search will happen, and give them the opportunity to ask questions about it
- › Seek the pupil'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 staff member in conjunction with the DSL 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 pupil 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 pupils 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](#)
- › The Forwards Centre behaviour policy

Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices will be dealt with through the trusts complaints procedure.

6.4 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

The Forwards Centre recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils 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.

The Forwards Centre will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our behaviour policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out a risk assessment where new AI tools are being used by the school.

7. Acceptable use of the internet in school

All pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet (appendix 1). 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 and restrict access through filtering systems where appropriate.

More information is set out in the acceptable use agreements in appendix 1 and the Trust's acceptable use of ICT policy.

8. Pupils using mobile devices in school

Pupils may bring mobile devices into school for use on transport only. All devices are to be handed to a staff member on arrival, in line with the mobile phone policy.

9. Staff using work devices outside school

Staff members using a work device outside school must not install any unauthorised software on the device and must not use the device in any way which would violate the trust's terms of acceptable use, as set out in trust policy

Staff must ensure that their work device is secure and password-protected, and that they do not share their password with others. Device locks must be active if the device is left inactive for a period of time. Staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure the security of their work device when using it outside school. Any devices containing data relating to the school must be encrypted.

If staff have any concerns over the security of their device, they must seek advice from schools ICT

Work devices must be used solely for work activities, and not be shared among family and friends

For more detail please read the Acceptable use of ICT policy.

10. 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 Acceptable use of ICT and Social media Policy. 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 Disciplinary Policy, Code of Conduct Policy and Grievance Bullying and Harassment policy. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature and seriousness of the specific incident.

The Trust and its academies 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 (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 up the risks
- Develop the ability to influence pupils to make the healthiest long-term choices and keep them safe from harm in the short term

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.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training and updates, if applicable.

More information about safeguarding training is set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The DSL logs behaviour and safeguarding issues related to online safety using the school CPOMs system and reports on these termly.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Vice Principle and Academy Lead.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the local governing body. The review will be supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks pupils face online. This is important because technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly.

13. 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

- Social media Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Grievance, bullying and harassment policy

Appendix 1: Forwards Centre acceptable use agreement (pupils)

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 systems (like computers) and get onto the internet in school I will:

- Always use the school's ICT systems and the internet responsibly and for educational purposes only
- Only use them when a teacher is present, or with a teacher's permission
- Keep my usernames and passwords safe and not share these with others
- Keep my private information safe at all times and not give my name, address or telephone number to anyone without the permission of my teacher or parent/carer
- Tell a teacher (or sensible adult) immediately if I find any material which might upset, distress or harm me or others
- Always log off or shut down a computer when I've finished working on it

I will not:

- Access any inappropriate websites including: social networking sites, chat rooms and gaming sites unless my teacher has expressly allowed this as part of a learning activity
- Open any attachments in emails, or follow any links in emails, without first checking with a teacher
- Use any inappropriate language when communicating online, including in emails
- Log in to the school's network using someone else's details
- Arrange to meet anyone offline without first consulting my parent/carer, or without adult supervision

I agree that the school will monitor the websites I visit and that there will be consequences if I don't follow the rules.

Signed (pupil):

Date:

Parent/carer's 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 for using personal electronic devices in school, and will make sure my child understands these.

Signed (parent/carer):

Date:

Appendix 2: online safety training needs – self-audit for staff

ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING NEEDS AUDIT	
Name of staff member/volunteer:	Date:
Question	Yes/No (add comments if necessary)
Do you know the name of the person who has lead responsibility for online safety in school?	
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/carers?	
Do you regularly change your password for accessing the school's ICT systems?	
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?	