



ICT and internet acceptable use policy

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Version Control

Current Version	Previous Version	Summary of Changes
September 2025-26	September 2024-25	<p>Section 1 – introduction and aims: Clarified that the policy covers anyone who has access to the school's IT and communication systems Added sentence on the misuse of the system potentially damaging the school and its reputation</p> <p>Section 2 – relevant legislation and guidance: Added the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 to the list of legislation</p> <p>Section 4 – unacceptable use: Added a bullet point on accessing inappropriate material, and on internet chatrooms, message boards and blogs</p> <p>Section 5.1.1 - use of school supplied equipment additional section added</p> <p>Section 5.1.2 – use of phones and e-mail: Clarified that staff must make sure multi-factor authentication is enabled Clarified that email messages must be disclosed in response to subject access requests under the UK GDPR Clarified that email attachments should be encrypted using a strong, state-of-the-art encryption standard Clarified that in circumstances where staff are provided with phones, they must use these phones to conduct all work-related business</p> <p>Section 5.5 – monitoring and filtering of the school network Added paragraph on the school reserving the right to retrieve the contents of email messages</p> <p>Section 8.1 - passwords Clarified that all users must keep passwords confidential and change them regularly</p> <p>Section 8.2 – software updates Added paragraph stating that users shouldn't delete existing systems or data and that they must not download or install software without authorisation</p> <p>Section 9 – protection from cyber attacks Added more detail on what annual training all users will receive Added bullet point on effective cyber breach prevention measures</p> <p>Appendix 2 – acceptable use of internet agreement for parents and carers Specified that users will not use social media to complain about or try to resolve a school-related behaviour issue involving other children</p> <p>Appendix 4 – acceptable use agreement for staff, governors, volunteers and visitors Clarified in the first bullet point that users will not access or attempt to access any illegal material</p> <p>Appendix 5 – glossary of cyber security terminology Made some of the definitions clearer and more specific</p>

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1. Introduction and aims

Information and communications technology (ICT) is an integral part of the way Little Lever School works, and is a critical resource for pupils, staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors. It supports teaching and learning, and the pastoral and administrative functions of the school.

However, the ICT resources and facilities our school uses could also pose risks to data protection, online safety and safeguarding.

This policy aims to:

- Set guidelines and rules on the use of school ICT resources for staff, pupils, parents/carers and trustees
- Establish clear expectations for the way all members of the school community engage with each other online
- Support the school's policies on data protection, online safety and safeguarding
- Prevent disruption that could occur to the school through the misuse, or attempted misuse, of ICT systems
- Support the school in teaching pupils safe and effective internet and ICT use

This policy covers all users of our school's ICT facilities, including trustees, staff, pupils, volunteers, contractors and visitors, and anyone who has access to our IT and communication systems.

Misuse of IT and communications systems can damage our school and our reputation. Breaches of this policy may be dealt with under behaviour policy, disciplinary policy, code of conduct and in line with the Department for Education's [Teacher's Standards](#)

2. Relevant legislation and guidance

This policy refers to, and complies with, the following legislation and guidance:

- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) – the EU GDPR was incorporated into UK legislation, with some amendments, by [The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications \(Amendments etc\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [Data \(Use and Access\) Act 2025](#)
- [Computer Misuse Act 1990](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Telecommunications \(Lawful Business Practice\) \(Interception of Communications\) Regulations 2000](#)
- [Education Act 2011](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)
- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre \(NCSC\): Cyber Security for Schools](#)
- [Education and Training \(Welfare of Children\) Act 2021](#)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (et al.) guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#)

3. Definitions

- **ICT facilities:** all facilities, systems and services including, but not limited to, network infrastructure, desktop computers, laptops, tablets, phones, music players or hardware, software, websites, web applications or services, and any device system or service that may become available in the future which is provided as part of the school's ICT service
- **Users:** anyone authorised by the school to use the school's ICT facilities, including trustees, staff, pupils, volunteers, contractors and visitors
- **Personal use:** any use or activity not directly related to the users' employment, study or purpose agreed by an authorised user
- **Authorised personnel:** employees authorised by the school to perform systems administration and/or monitoring of the ICT facilities
- **Materials:** files and data created using the school's ICT facilities including but not limited to documents, photos, audio, video, printed output, web pages, social networking sites and blogs

See appendix 5 for a glossary of cyber security terminology.

4. Unacceptable use

The following is considered unacceptable use of the school's ICT facilities. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary or behaviour proceedings (see section 4.2 below).

Unacceptable use of the school's ICT facilities includes:

- Using the school's ICT facilities to breach intellectual property rights or copyright
- Using the school's ICT facilities to bully or harass someone else, or to promote unlawful discrimination
- Breaching the school's policies or procedures
- Any illegal conduct, or statements which are deemed to be advocating illegal activity
- Online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams
- Accessing any web page or downloading any image, document, application, or file from the internet which could be regarded as illegal, offensive, discriminatory, in bad taste, or immoral
- Accessing, creating, storing, linking to or sending material that is pornographic, offensive, obscene or otherwise inappropriate or harmful
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos and/or livestreams
- Activity which defames or disparages the school, or risks bringing the school into disrepute
- Sharing confidential information about the school, its pupils, or other members of the school community
- Using the school's systems to participate in internet chat rooms, post on internet message boards or blogs, unless approved by authorised personnel
- Connecting any device to the school's ICT network without approval from authorised personnel
- Setting up any software, applications or web services on the school's network without approval by authorised personnel, or creating or using any programme, tool or item of software designed to interfere with the functioning of the school's ICT facilities, accounts or data
- Gaining, or attempting to gain, access to restricted areas of the network, or to any password-protected information, without approval from authorised personnel
- Allowing, encouraging or enabling others to gain (or attempt to gain) unauthorised access to the school's ICT facilities
- Causing intentional damage to the school's ICT facilities
- Removing, deleting or disposing of the school's ICT equipment, systems, programmes or information without permission from authorised personnel
- Causing a data breach by accessing, modifying, or sharing data (including personal data) to which a user is not permitted by authorised personnel to have access, or without authorisation
- Using inappropriate or offensive language
- Promoting a private business, unless that business is directly related to the school
- Using websites or mechanisms to bypass the school's filtering or monitoring mechanisms
- Engaging in content or conduct that is radicalised, extremist, racist, antisemitic or discriminatory in any other way
- Using AI tools and generative chatbots (such as ChatGPT and Google Bard) without attribution of such usage within presented work
- Using personal ICT devices in lessons or in areas of the school where students are present (for example, the corridor during the school day, canteen or on duties)
- For students, Little Lever School is a mobile phone free school and students must turn mobile phones off and place them within their bags during the school day. They may be removed when exiting the school at the end of the school day. The entry points and exits are designated by the blue line for this purpose.

This is not an exhaustive list. The school reserves the right to amend this list at any time. The Principal will use their professional judgement to determine whether any act or behaviour not on the list above is considered unacceptable use of the school's ICT facilities.

4.1 Exceptions from unacceptable use

Where the use of school ICT facilities (on the school premises and/or remotely) is required for a purpose that would otherwise be considered an unacceptable use, exemptions to the policy may be granted at the Principal's discretion. These should be requested to the School's Network Manager who will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead regarding the appropriateness of the exception. These will either be granted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or rejected. If staff wish to challenge the decision, this will be raised to the Principal.

The use of Artificial intelligence is acceptable only under the conditions set out in the schools AI policy.

4.2 Sanctions

Students and staff who engage in any of the unacceptable activities listed above may face disciplinary action in line with the school's Code of Conduct Policy for staff or Behaviour Policy for Students.

Prior to formal disciplinary measures, ICT access may be revoked with immediate effect until the issue is resolved.

5. Staff (including trustees, volunteers, and contractors)

5.1 Access to school ICT facilities and materials

The school's network manager manages access to the school's ICT facilities and materials for school staff. That includes, but is not limited to:

- Computers, tablets, mobile phones and other devices
- Access permissions for certain programmes or files

Staff will be provided with unique login/account information and passwords that they must use when accessing the school's ICT facilities.

Staff who have access to files that they are not authorised to view or edit, or who need their access permissions updated or changed, should contact the Network Manager through support@little-lever.bolton.sch.uk.

5.1.1 Use of school-supplied equipment

School-issued devices (including laptops, tablets and other digital devices) are provided to staff for the purpose of supporting teaching, learning and the efficient running of the school. All school-supplied equipment remains the property of the school and staff must return the equipment at the end of employment, or when it is no longer required. Staff must:

- Use equipment and devices primarily for school purposes and in line with the school's policies on safeguarding, data protection and confidentiality
- Store devices securely when not in use, particularly when travelling. Devices should not be left unattended in public places or in unsecured locations
- Be actively aware of data security and confidentiality and follow best practice when accessing the equipment away from school. E.g. when travelling on public transport, be aware that other passengers may be able to read any documents displayed on the screen of your device
- Lock devices with a password when unattended. Passwords must:
 - Not be shared with others and must be changed regularly
 - Be suitably strong, in accordance with the school's password policy (see section [8.1])
 - Not be reused across multiple accounts
- Update software, operating systems and applications when prompted, or as directed by the Network Manager

- Connect to the school network using approved and secure methods. When connecting to wi-fi networks outside of the school, staff must ensure connections are secure and avoid transmitting sensitive data over public or unsecured networks
- Report any loss, theft, damage or compromise of a school device promptly to the Network Manager, designated safeguarding lead and data protection officer

5.1.2 Use of phones and email

The school provides each member of staff with an email address.

This email account should be used for work purposes only. Staff should enable multi-factor authentication on their email account(s).

All work-related business should be conducted using the email address the school has provided.

Staff must not share their personal email addresses with parents/carers and pupils and must not send any work-related materials using their personal email account.

Staff must take care with the content of **all** email messages, as incorrect or improper statements can give rise to claims for discrimination, harassment, defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract.

Email messages are required to be disclosed in legal proceedings or in response to requests from individuals under the Data Protection Act 2018 in the same way as paper documents. Deletion from a user's inbox does not mean that an email cannot be recovered for the purposes of disclosure. All email messages should be treated as potentially retrievable.

Staff must take extra care when sending sensitive or confidential information by email. Any attachments containing sensitive or confidential information should be encrypted using strong, state-of-the-art encryption standard so that the information is only accessible by the intended recipient.

If staff receive an email in error, the sender should be informed and the email deleted. If the email contains sensitive or confidential information, the user must not make use of that information or disclose that information.

If staff send an email in error that contains the personal information of another person, they must inform the Network Manager and data protection officer immediately and follow our data breach procedure. The Network Manager will report all breaches to the school's Business Manager who will investigate incidents.

Staff must not give their personal phone number(s) to parents/carers or pupils. In circumstances where staff are provided with phones, these staff must use the phones provided by the school to conduct all work-related business.

School phones must not be used for personal matters.

Staff who are provided with mobile phones as equipment for their role must abide by the same rules for ICT acceptable use as set out in section 4.

The school records all incoming and outgoing phone conversations on the internal phone system.

All calls are recorded for safeguarding and training purposes. Access to recorded calls is restricted and protocols in place to prevent the misuse of this data, calls are stored on the system for one month.

5.2 Personal use

Staff are permitted to occasionally use school ICT facilities for personal use, subject to certain conditions set out below. This permission must not be overused or abused. The Network Manager may withdraw or restrict this permission at any time and at their discretion.

Personal use is permitted provided that such use:

- Does not take place during teaching or contact time with students
- Does not constitute 'unacceptable use', as defined in section 4
- Takes place when no pupils are present

- Does not interfere with their jobs, or prevent other staff or pupils from using the facilities for work or educational purposes

Staff may not use the school's ICT facilities to store personal, non-work-related information or materials (such as music, videos or photos).

Staff should be aware that use of the school's ICT facilities for personal use may put personal communications within the scope of the school's ICT monitoring activities (see section 5.5). Where breaches of this policy are found, disciplinary action may be taken.

Staff should be aware that personal use of ICT (even when not using school ICT facilities) can impact on their employment by, for instance, putting personal details in the public domain, where pupils and parents/carers could see them.

Staff should take care to follow the school's guidelines on use of social media and use of email (see section 5.1.2) to protect themselves online and avoid compromising their professional integrity.

5.2.1 Personal social media accounts

Members of staff should make sure their use of social media, either for work or personal purposes, is appropriate at all times.

It is recommended that social media accounts are private. If you have a social media account that is public (for example for business purposes) and are concerned it could breach this policy, advice should be taken from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

You must not allow requests from students, past or present, to access private social media accounts.

The school has guidelines for staff on appropriate security settings for social media accounts (see appendix 1).

Social media usage must not bring either Little Lever School or the teaching profession into disrepute. Where concerns are raised, an investigation will look at social media usage in line with the Department for Education's [Teacher's Standards](#). Where this is breached, staff will face disciplinary measures.

5.3 Remote access

We allow staff to access the school's ICT facilities and materials remotely. They should dial in using a virtual private network (VPN).

We use two remote access systems.

1. Microsoft Remote Desktop systems (RDS)

RD Web utilizes robust authentication mechanisms to ensure that only authorized users can access remote resources. This includes integrating with Active Directory for user authentication, which provides a secure and centralized way to manage user credentials and access rights. In addition, two-factor authentication (2FA) is enabled for an additional layer of security, requiring users to provide two forms of identification before gaining access. Access to Microsoft RDS is also limited to USA and European countries.

All communication between the client's web browser and the RD Web Access server is encrypted using industry-standard protocols. This includes the use of TLS (Transport Layer Security) to secure the connection and prevent data interception or tampering. By encrypting the data, RD Web ensures that sensitive information remains confidential and secure from unauthorized access.

Staff can request access the RDS systems once they have logged in internally and setup secondary authentication methods which include Microsoft Authenticator App, TXT message to a verified phone or email to a verified personal Email.

RDS is updated regularly by the onsite support teams as recommended by Microsoft. Secondary support supplied by Novus

2. Sophos firewall VPN

Sophos VPN access is via the Sophos VPN connection APP, downloadable once the user has an account with 2FA enabled and setup. It uses industry standard SSL and open VPN protocols to secure the end-to-end encryption.

All users must have a unique logon name (not linked to the Domain) with 2FA authentication initially set up with a one-time token.

The VPN Connection is then via a downloadable program, username, password and 2fa authentication by an industry standard authenticator app.

Access to internal systems is restricted to requested services and systems.

Users must send request to the support department specifying name, company reason and the system they require access to before an account can be provided.

This is mainly used for external support companies and finance to access limited specified internal systems.

Security is maintained via the onsite team in regard to Sophos security update cycle.

Staff accessing the school's ICT facilities and materials remotely must abide by the same rules as those accessing the facilities and materials on site. Staff must be particularly vigilant if they use the school's ICT facilities outside the school and must take such precautions as the Network Manager advises to prevent importing viruses or compromising system security.

Our ICT facilities contain information which is confidential and/or subject to data protection legislation. Such information must be treated with extreme care and in accordance with our data protection policy.

5.4 School social media accounts

The school has an official social media account, managed by the Marketing and Communications Lead. Staff members who have not been authorised to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, the account.

Those who are authorised to manage, or post to, the account must make sure they do not make any posts which may bring individuals, the school or the teaching profession into disrepute.

5.5 Monitoring and filtering of the school network and use of ICT facilities

To comply with Department for Education (DfE) guidance on [meeting digital and technology standards](#), and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment to learn, the school reserves the right to filter and monitor the use of its ICT facilities and network. This includes, but is not limited to, the filtering and monitoring of:

- › Internet sites visited
- › Bandwidth usage
- › Email accounts
- › Telephone calls
- › User activity/access logs
- › Any other electronic communications

Only authorised ICT personnel may filter, inspect, monitor, intercept, assess, record and disclose the above, to the extent permitted by law. Little Lever School uses Lightspeed to filter the internet usage within school.

The school reserves the right to retrieve the contents of email messages or to check internet usage (including pages visited and searches made) as reasonably necessary in the interests of the school, including for the following purposes:

- › To monitor whether the use of the email system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this policy
- › To find lost messages or retrieve messages lost due to computer failure
- › To help in the investigation of alleged wrongdoing
- › To comply with any legal obligation

The list above is not exhaustive.

The school monitors ICT use in order to:

- › Obtain information related to school business
- › Investigate compliance with school policies, procedures and standards
- › Ensure effective school and ICT operation
- › Conduct training or quality control exercises
- › Prevent or detect crime
- › Comply with a subject access request, Freedom of Information Act request, or any other legal obligation

Little Lever School uses Impero and lightspeed are used to monitor the internet usage within school and school owned equipment. The Network Manager, DEEP Support team, and Safeguarding Team have access to monitor student internet usage within school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Network Manager have access to monitor staff internet usage within school.

Our board of Trustees is responsible for making sure that:

- › The school meets the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards
- › Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place
- › Staff are aware of those systems and trained in their related roles and responsibilities
 - For the leadership team and relevant staff, this will include how to manage the processes and systems effectively and how to escalate concerns
- › It regularly reviews the effectiveness of the school's monitoring and filtering systems

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Network manager will review the Filtering and Monitoring arrangement annually at a minimum to ensure they are relevant to current concerns.

Where appropriate, staff may raise concerns about monitored activity with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Network Manager, as appropriate.

6. Students

6.1 Access to ICT facilities

Students have access to a range of ICT equipment within school. The following conditions apply when using ICT equipment within school:

- › Students will be provided with an account for use within school. Students must only use the account they are provided and must not share their account details with others
- › Where an account is seen to have breached the Acceptable Use Policy, the person who holds the account will be held responsible. As such, computers must not be left unlocked nor passwords shared.
- › Computers and equipment in the school's ICT suite are available to pupils only under the supervision of staff

- Specialist ICT equipment, such as that used for music, or design and technology, must only be used under the supervision of staff

6.2 Search and deletion

Under the Education Act 2011, the Principal, and any member of staff authorised to do so by the Principal, can search pupils and confiscate their mobile phones, computers or other devices that the authorised staff member has reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- Poses a risk to staff or pupils,
and/or
- Is identified within [Searching, Screening and Confiscation – Advice for schools \(2022\)](#)
and/or
- Is evidence in relation to an offence

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Pornography
- Abusive messages, images or videos
- Indecent images of children
- Evidence of suspected criminal behaviour (such as threats of violence or assault)

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 Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Explain to the pupil why they are being searched, and how and where the search will happen, and give them the opportunity to ask questions about it
- Seek the pupil's co-operation (though failure to cooperate does preclude a search being carried out of required in the above criteria)

The authorised staff member should:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) of any searching incidents where they had reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of a banned item. This must be done through the CPOMS reporting tool
- Involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) without delay if they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk

Authorised staff members may examine, and in exceptional circumstances erase, any data or files on a 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 a device, the staff member should only do so if they reasonably suspect that the data has been, 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 in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Principal 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 whether there is a good reason to erase data or files from a device, staff members will consider whether 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 is 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 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
- **Not** copy, print, share, store or save the image
- Confiscate the device and report the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) immediately, who will decide what to do next. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make the decision in line with the DfE's latest guidance on [searching, screening and confiscation](#) and the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) et al.'s 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 et al.'s guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- Our behaviour policy / searches and confiscation will follow [Searching, Screening and Confiscation – Advice for schools \(2022\)](#)

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

6.3 Unacceptable use of ICT and the internet outside of school

The school will sanction pupils, in line with the behaviour policy, if a pupil engages in any of the following **at any time** (even if they are not on school premises):

- Using ICT or the internet to breach intellectual property rights or copyright
- Using ICT or the internet to bully or harass someone else, or to promote unlawful discrimination
- Breaching the school's policies or procedures
- Any illegal conduct, or making statements which are deemed to be advocating illegal activity
- Accessing, creating, storing, linking to or sending material that is pornographic, offensive, obscene or otherwise inappropriate
- Consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos and/or livestreams (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Activity which defames or disparages the school, or risks bringing the school into disrepute
- Sharing confidential information about the school, other pupils, or other members of the school community
- Gaining or attempting to gain access to restricted areas of the network, or to any password-protected information, without approval from authorised personnel
- Allowing, encouraging, or enabling others to gain (or attempt to gain) unauthorised access to the school's ICT facilities

- Causing intentional damage to the school's ICT facilities or materials
- Causing a data breach by accessing, modifying, or sharing data (including personal data) to which a user and/or those they share it with are not supposed to have access, or without authorisation
- Using inappropriate or offensive language

7. Parents/carers

7.1 Access to ICT facilities and materials

Parents/carers do not have access to the school's ICT facilities as a matter of course.

However, parents/carers working for, or with, the school in an official capacity (for instance, as a volunteer or as a member of the PTA) may be granted an appropriate level of access, or be permitted to use the school's facilities at the Principal's discretion.

Where parents/carers are granted access in this way, they must abide by this policy.

7.2 Communicating with or about the school online

We believe it is important to model for pupils, and help them learn, how to communicate respectfully with, and about, others online.

Parents/carers play a vital role in helping model this behaviour for their children, especially when communicating with the school through our website and social media channels.

We ask parents/carers to sign the agreement in appendix 2.

7.3 Communicating with parents/carers about pupil activity

The school will ensure that parents and carers are made aware of any online activity that their children are being asked to carry out.

When we ask pupils to use websites or engage in online activity, we will communicate the details of this to parents/carers in the same way that information about homework tasks is shared.

In particular, staff will let parents/carers know which (if any) person or people from the school pupils will be interacting with online, including the purpose of the interaction.

Parents/carers may seek any support and advice from the school to ensure a safe online environment is established for their child.

8. Data security

The school is responsible for making sure it has the appropriate level of security protection and procedures in place to safeguard its systems, staff and learners. It therefore takes steps to protect the security of its computing resources, data and user accounts. The effectiveness of these procedures is reviewed periodically to keep up with evolving cyber crime technologies.

Staff, pupils, parents/carers and others who use the school's ICT facilities should use safe computing practices at all times. We aim to meet the cyber security standards recommended by the Department for Education's guidance on [digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#), including the use of:

- Firewalls
- Security features
- User authentication and multi-factor authentication
- Anti-malware software

8.1 Passwords

All users of the school's ICT facilities should set strong passwords for their accounts and keep these passwords secure.

Users are responsible for the security of their passwords and accounts, and for setting permissions for accounts and files they control. You must keep these passwords confidential and change them regularly.

Members of staff or pupils who disclose account or password information may face disciplinary action. Parents, visitors or volunteers who disclose account or password information may have their access rights revoked.

All staff will use the password manager required by the Network Manager to help them store their passwords securely. Teachers will generate passwords for pupils using the required password manager or generator and keep these in a secure location in case pupils lose or forget their passwords.

8.2 Software updates, firewalls and anti-virus software

All of the school's ICT devices that support software updates, security updates and anti-virus products will have these installed and be configured to perform such updates regularly or automatically.

Users should not delete, destroy or modify existing systems, programs, information or data. Users must not download or install software from external sources without authorisation from the Network Manager.

Users must not circumvent or make any attempt to circumvent the administrative, physical and technical safeguards we implement and maintain to protect personal data and the school's ICT facilities.

Incoming files are checked using the following Microsoft defender, Sophos AV (set to move to Watchguard End point protection (EPP) and Endpoint Detection Response EDR Summer 2026). Emails have the default file protection policy.

Any personal devices using the school's network must all be configured in this way.

8.3 Data protection

All personal data must be processed and stored in line with data protection regulations and the school's data protection policy.

8.4 Access to facilities and materials

All users of the school's ICT facilities will have clearly defined access rights to school systems, files and devices.

These access rights are managed by the Network Manager.

Users should not access, or attempt to access, systems, files or devices to which they have not been granted access. If access is provided in error, or if something a user should not have access to is shared with them, they should alert the Network Manager immediately.

Users should always log out of systems and lock their equipment when they are not in use to avoid any unauthorised access. Equipment and systems should always be logged out of and shut down completely at the end of each working day.

8.5 Encryption

The school makes sure that its devices and systems have an appropriate level of encryption.

School staff may only use personal devices (including computers and USB drives) to access school data, work remotely, or take personal data (such as pupil information) out of school if they have been specifically authorised to do so by the Network Manager.

Use of such personal devices will only be authorised if the devices have appropriate levels of security and encryption, as defined by the Network Manager.

9. Protection from cyber attacks

Please see the glossary (appendix 5) to help you understand cyber security terminology.

The school will:

- Work with trustees and the IT department to make sure cyber security is given the time and resources it needs to make the school secure
- Provide annual training for all users, including staff, pupils and governors (and include this training in any induction for new starters, if they join outside of the school's annual training window) on the basics of cyber security, including:
 - The methods hackers use for tricking people into disclosing personal information, including phishing
 - Online safety and password security
 - Social engineering, including not using websites that host unsuitable material, and could also contain malware and viruses
 - The physical security of devices, for example not leaving a laptop unlocked and unattended
 - The risks of using removable storage media, such as USBs
 - Multi-factor authentication
 - How and when to report a cyber incident or attack
 - How and when to report a data breach
 - Data protection for all staff. Staff who are exposed to higher-risk data will have more frequent training
 - How to check the sender address in an email
 - How to respond to a request for bank details, personal information or login details
 - How to verify requests for payments or changes to information
- Make sure staff are aware of its procedures for reporting and responding to cyber security incidents
- Investigate whether our IT software needs updating or replacing to be more secure
- Not engage in ransom requests from ransomware attacks, as this would not guarantee recovery of data
- Put controls in place that are:
 - **Proportionate:** the school will verify this using a third-party audit, to objectively test that what it has in place is effective
 - **Multi-layered:** everyone will be clear on what to look out for to keep our systems safe
 - **Up to date:** with a system in place to monitor when the school needs to update its software
 - **Regularly reviewed and tested:** to make sure the systems are as effective and secure as they can be
- Back up critical data is done automatically daily, and storage of these backups is on a dedicated backup server and uploaded to the cloud daily
- Delegate specific responsibility for maintaining the security of our management information system (MIS) to Capita SIMS
- Make sure staff:
 - Dial into our network using a virtual private network (VPN) when working from home
 - Enable multi-factor authentication where they can, on things like school email accounts
 - Store passwords securely using a password manager
- Make sure ICT staff conduct regular access reviews to make sure each user in the school has the right level of permissions and admin rights

- Make sure all necessary firewalls are in place and switched on (and that all areas of the network are secured effectively)
- Make sure effective cyber breach prevention measures and processes are in place, e.g. endpoint detection and response systems
- Check that its supply chain is secure, for example by asking suppliers about how secure their business practices are and checking if they have the [Cyber Essentials](#) (or a similarly effective and recognised) certification
- Develop, review and test an incident response plan with the IT department including, for example, how the school will communicate with everyone if communications go down, who will be contacted and when, and who will notify [Action Fraud](#) of the incident. This plan will be reviewed and tested and after a significant event has occurred, using the NCSC's '[Exercise in a Box](#)'
- Work with our Local Authority to see what it can offer the school regarding cyber security, such as advice on which service providers to use or assistance with procurement
- Conduct a cyber risk assessment at least annually, and revisit it every term, or after a significant event has occurred
- Appoint a digital lead (from the senior leadership team) to oversee cyber risk assessment

10. Internet access

The school's wireless internet connection is secure.

- Internet net access is filtered via Sophos firewall.
- We use a separate filtering setting for specified devices, staff, visitors, and guest users.
- Staff can ask for specific monitoring on a user and if needed an appropriate report generated.

Summary reports are monitored by the IT support team

Additionally on PCs we use impero which is a class Management product that also monitor words. All words are checked against a company-maintained list of inappropriate and slang terms. Any breach is sent to head of year and safeguarding team to investigate.

10.1 Students

Students will only have access to WiFi on Little Lever School devices. No personal devices for students are allowed in school or to access the school WiFi unless there is an exception authorised by the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10.2 Parents/carers and visitors

Parents/carers and visitors to the school will not be permitted to use the school's WiFi unless specific authorisation is granted by the Principal or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Principal will only grant authorisation if:

- Parents/carers are working with the school in an official capacity (e.g. as a volunteer)
- Visitors need to access the school's WiFi in order to fulfil the purpose of their visit (for instance, to access materials stored on personal devices as part of a presentation or lesson plan)

Staff must not give the WiFi password to anyone who is not authorised to have it. Doing so could result in disciplinary action.

11. Monitoring and review

The Principal, Business Manager, Network Manager, and Designated Safeguarding Lead monitor the implementation of this policy, including ensuring it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the school.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

12. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's policies on:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Use of Artificial Intelligence in School

Appendix 1: Social Media Use by Staff

Do not accept friend requests from pupils on social media

10 rules for school staff on Social Media

1. Change your display name – use your first and middle name, use a maiden name, or put your surname backwards instead
2. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if you don't, make sure that the image is professional
3. Check your privacy settings regularly
4. Be careful about tagging other staff members in images or posts
5. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be happy showing your pupils
6. Don't use social media sites during school hours
7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, our school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there
8. Don't associate yourself with the school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)
9. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts. Anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile number) is able to find you using this information
10. Consider uninstalling the social media apps from your phone. Some apps recognise WiFi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same WiFi connection (such as parents or pupils)

Check your privacy settings

- Change the visibility of your posts and photos to **'Friends only'**, rather than 'Friends of friends' or wider groups available on social media. Otherwise, pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they're friends with anybody on your contacts list
- Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos**
- The public may still be able to see posts you've **'liked'**, even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster
- **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public
- Remember that **some information is always public**: your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender

What to do if ...

A pupil adds you on social media

- In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile

- Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture
- If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents/carers. If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead about what's happening

A parent/carer adds you on social media

- It is at your discretion whether to respond. Bear in mind that:
 - Responding to 1 parent/carer's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other teachers at the school
 - Students may then have indirect access through their parent/carer's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in
- If you wish to decline the offer or ignore the message, consider drafting a stock response to let the parent/carer know that you're doing so

You're being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

- **Do not** retaliate or respond in any way
- Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred
- Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it
- If the perpetrator is a current pupil or staff member, our mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents
- If the perpetrator is a parent/carer or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address any reasonable concerns or complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material
- If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a senior leader should consider contacting the police

Appendix 2: Acceptable use of the internet: agreement for parents and carers

Acceptable use of the internet: agreement for parents and carers	
Name of parent/carers:	
Name of child:	
<p>Online channels are an important way for parents/carers to communicate with, or about, our school. The school uses the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our official Facebook page, Instagram page and may add further social media accounts at its discretion• Email/text groups for parents (for school announcements and information)• The Student Portal• The Little Lever App	
<p>When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be respectful towards members of staff, and the school, at all times• Be respectful of other parents/carers and children• Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure <p>I will not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use private groups, the school's social media pages, or personal social media to complain about or criticise members of staff. This is not constructive and the school can't improve or address issues unless they are raised in an appropriate way• Use private groups, the school's Facebook page, or personal social media to complain about, or try to resolve, a school-related behaviour issue involving other pupils. I will contact the school and speak to the appropriate member of staff if I'm aware of a specific behaviour issue or incident• Upload or share photos or videos on social media of any child other than my own, unless I have the permission of the other children's parents/carers	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix 3: Acceptable use agreement for older pupils

Acceptable use of the school's ICT facilities and internet: agreement for pupils and parents/carers

Name of pupil:

When using the school's ICT facilities and accessing the internet in school, I will not:

- Use them for a non-educational purpose
- Use them without a teacher being present, or without a teacher's permission
- Use them to break school rules
- Access any inappropriate websites
- Access social networking sites (unless my teacher has expressly allowed this as part of a learning activity)
- Use chat rooms
- 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
- Share any semi-nude or nude images, videos or livestreams, even if I have the consent of the person or people in the photo/video
- Share my password with others or log in to the school's network using someone else's details
- Bully other people
- Use AI tools and generative chatbots (such as ChatGPT or Google Bard):
 - During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
 - To present AI-generated text or imagery as my own work

I understand that the school will monitor the websites I visit and my use of the school's ICT facilities and systems.

I will immediately let a teacher or other member of staff know if I find any material which might upset, distress or harm me or others.

I will always use the school's ICT systems and internet responsibly.

I understand that the school can discipline me if I do certain unacceptable things online, even if I'm not in school when I do them.

Signed (pupil):

Date:

Appendix 4: Acceptable use agreement for staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors

Acceptable use of the school's ICT facilities and the internet: agreement for staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors

Name of staff member/governor/volunteer/visitor:

When using the school's ICT facilities and accessing the internet in school, or outside school on a work device, I will not:

- Access, or attempt to access any illegal or inappropriate material, including but not limited to material of a violent, criminal or pornographic nature (or create, share, link to or send such material)
- Use them in any way which could harm the school's reputation
- Access social networking sites or chat rooms
- Use any improper language when communicating online, including in emails or other messaging services
- Install any unauthorised software, or connect unauthorised hardware or devices to the school's network
- Share my password with others or log in to the school's network using someone else's details
- Share confidential information about the school, its pupils or staff, or other members of the community
- Access, modify or share data I'm not authorised to access, modify or share
- Promote any private business, unless that business is directly related to the school

I understand that the school will monitor the websites I visit and my use of the school's ICT facilities and systems.

I will take all reasonable steps to ensure that work devices are secure and password-protected when using them outside school, and keep all data securely stored in accordance with this policy and the school's data protection policy.

I will let the designated safeguarding lead (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Network Manager know if a pupil informs me they have found any material which might upset, distress or harm them or others, and will also do so if I encounter any such material.

I will always use the school's ICT systems and internet responsibly and ensure that pupils in my care do so too.

Signed (staff member/governor/volunteer/visitor):

Date:

Appendix 5: Glossary of cyber security terminology

These key terms will help you to understand the common forms of cyber attack and the measures the school will put in place. Many of these terms are from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) [glossary](#).

TERM	DEFINITION
Antivirus	Software designed to detect, stop and remove viruses and other kinds of malicious software.
Breach	When your data, computer systems or networks are accessed or affected without authorisation.
Cloud	An on-demand, massively scalable service, hosted on a shared infrastructure where you can store and access your resources (including data and software) via the internet, instead of locally on physical devices.
Cyber attack	An attempt to access, damage or disrupt your computer systems, networks or devices maliciously.
Cyber incident	Any event that threatens the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of data within your computer network, or where the security of your system or service has otherwise been breached.
Cyber security	The protection of your devices, services and networks (and the information they contain) from unauthorised theft or damage.
Download attack	Where malicious software or a virus is downloaded unintentionally onto a device without the user's knowledge or consent.
Firewall	Hardware or software that uses a defined rule set to constrain network traffic – this is to prevent unauthorised access to or from a network.
Hacker	Someone who uses their technology skills to gain unauthorised access to computers, systems and networks.
Malware	Malicious software. Any kind of software that can damage computer systems, networks or devices, which includes viruses, trojans or any code or content that is harmful.
Patching	Updating firmware or software to improve security and/or enhance functionality.
Pentest	Short for penetration test. This is an authorised test of a computer network or system to look for security weaknesses with the end aim of fixing them.

TERM	DEFINITION
Pharming	An attack on your computer network that means users are redirected to a wrong or illegitimate website even if they type in the right website address.
Phishing	Untargeted, mass emails or text messages sent to many people asking for sensitive information (such as bank details or passwords) or encouraging them to visit a fake website.
Ransomware	Malicious software that stops you from using your data or systems, usually by encrypting your files, until you make a payment (a ransom) for decryption.
Social engineering	Manipulating people into giving information or carrying out specific actions that's of use to an attacker.
Spear-phishing	A more targeted form of phishing where an email is designed to look like it's from a person the recipient knows and/or trusts.
Trojan	A type of malware/virus designed to look like legitimate software that can be used to hack a victim's computer.
Two-factor/multi-factor authentication	Using 2 or more different components to verify a user's identity.
Virus	Programmes designed to self-replicate and infect legitimate software programs or systems.
Virtual private network (VPN)	An encrypted network which allows remote users to connect securely.
Whaling	Highly-targeted phishing attacks (where emails are made to look legitimate) aimed at senior people in an organisation.