

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Online Policy

This Policy has been approved by the Full Governing Body in the Autumn Term 2026 and will be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2027.

St Marys Catholic Primary School

'Learning together in Faith and Love'

Mission Statement

"Learning together in Faith and Love"

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School exists to serve the Roman Catholic families of the Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Kensal New Town and other local parishes.

The aims of our schools are:

- To promote Christian values where children live, learn and celebrate the teaching of Christ.
- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and meaningful and where children can experience enjoyment and fulfilment.
- To promote the highest standards of teaching and learning within the framework of the National Curriculum
- To develop in each child a sense of achievement, value and self-worth and to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- To help our children acquire the skills of independent learning and make sufficiently rapid progress.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children feel valued, and where they respect, help and care for each other.
- To involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and promote good home/school partnership.
- To develop in our children awareness and respect for the different cultures and religions represented in society and their responsibility to the wider community.
- To foster the continuing development of staff, parents and governors in serving the community.

St. Mary's Values- these are the values that underpin all areas of our school community:

- Kindness
- Respect
- Tolerance
- Honesty
- Responsibility (for ourselves and our world)
- Co-operation

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1. Aims

Our school 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, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news), and conspiracy theories
 - Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit the user for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
 - Conduct – 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), including those generated using AI, 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 statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education from the Department for Education (DfE) and its advice for schools on:

- Teaching online safety
- Meeting digital and technology standards
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- [Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education – remove if not applicable, see section 4]
- Searching, screening and confiscation
- Mobile phones in schools
- 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, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and the Equality Act 2010. In addition, it reflects the Education Act 2011, which has given teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying.

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The policy also takes into account the National Curriculum computing programmes of study and complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board:

- Has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy and holding the Executive Headteacher to account for its implementation. The governing board will ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme in the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures, including when planning the curriculum, teacher training, the role of the DSL (and deputies) and any parental engagement.
- 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.
- Will also 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.
- Will co-ordinate regular meetings with appropriate staff to discuss online safety and requirements for training, and monitor online safety logs as provided by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).
- Will make sure that the school teaches pupils how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.
- Will make sure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place on school devices and school networks, and that a review of the effectiveness of the filtering and monitoring systems is carried out by SLT at least once every academic year. The board will review the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discuss with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting the standards, which include:
 - Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
 - Reviewing filtering and monitoring provisions at least annually
 - Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
 - Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet the school's safeguarding needs
- Make sure 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.
- Make sure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing the whole-school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and/or procedures.
- Make sure 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 Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for making sure that staff understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school.

They will make sure that there are robust cover arrangements for when the DSL is unavailable due to illness, leave or other circumstances – for example, a confidential shared mailbox to make sure safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted on without delay.

3.3 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Details of the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) [and deputy/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 Executive Headteacher in making sure that staff understand this policy and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school
- Working with the Executive Headteacher and governing board to review this policy [annually] and make sure 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
- Providing governors with assurance that filtering and monitoring systems are working effectively and reviewed regularly
- Working with the ICT manager to make sure the appropriate systems and processes are in place
- Working with the Executive Headteacher, ICT manager and other staff, as necessary, to address any online safety issues or incidents
- Managing all online safety issues and incidents in line with the school's child protection policy
- Responding to safeguarding concerns identified by filtering and monitoring
- Making sure that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy
- Making sure 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
- Liaising with other agencies and/or external services if necessary
- Providing regular reports on online safety in school to the Executive Headteacher and/or governing board
- Undertaking annual risk assessments that consider and reflect the risks pupils 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

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3.4 The ICT manager

The ICT manager is 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 make sure pupils are kept safe from potentially harmful and inappropriate content and contact online while at school, including terrorist and extremist material
- Making sure that the school's ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware, and that such safety mechanisms are updated regularly
- Conducting a full security check and monitoring the school's ICT systems on a [weekly/fortnightly/monthly] basis
- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files
- Making sure that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy
- Making sure that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy

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, and making sure that pupils follow the school's terms on acceptable use
- 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
- Working with the DSL to make sure that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy
- Making sure 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'

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the Executive Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this policy
- Make sure that their child has read, understood and agreed to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet
- 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
- Help and advice for parents/carers – Childnet
- Parents and carers resource sheet – Childnet

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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 and expected to read and follow it. If appropriate, they will be expected to agree to the terms on acceptable use.

4. Educating pupils about online safety

4.1 Pupils will be taught about online safety as part of the curriculum. They will also have Relationships Education and Health Education lessons.

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
- Be discerning in evaluating digital content

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure
- How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this
- That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites, which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults
- The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online
- Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up
- That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online

The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in other subjects where relevant.

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Where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, will be adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some pupils with SEND.

4.2 Pupils will be taught practical cyber security skills

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

- Methods that hackers use to trick people into disclosing personal information
- Password security
- Social engineering
- The physical security of devices
- The risks of removable storage devices (e.g. USBs)
- Multi-factor authentication
- How to report a cyber-incident or attack
- How to report a personal data breach
- Pupils will also receive age-appropriate education on safeguarding issues such as cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation.

5. Educating parents/carers about online safety

The school will raise parents/carers' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home, and in information via our website or virtual learning environment (VLE) [edit as applicable]. This policy will also be shared with parents/carers. Online safety will also be covered during parents' evenings.

The school will let parents/carers know:

- What systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use
- What their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from the school (if anyone) their child will be interacting with online
- The school's expectations in respect of appropriate use of AI by pupils
- If parents/carers have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised in the first instance with the Executive Headteacher and/or the DSL.
- Concerns or queries about this policy can be raised with any member of staff or the Executive Headteacher.

6. Cyber-bullying

6.1 Definition

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of 1 person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. (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 encourage them to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

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- The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be. Class teachers will discuss cyber-bullying with their classes.
- 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.
- The school also sends information/leaflets on cyber-bullying to parents/carers so they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.
- In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school behaviour 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 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative 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 Gemini.

We recognise 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' or 'deep nudes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. This includes deepfake pornography: pornographic content created using AI to include someone's likeness. We will treat any use of AI to bully pupils very seriously, in line with our behaviour policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while they are still being developed and should carry out a risk assessment where new AI tools are being used by the school/trust, and where existing AI tools are used in cases which may pose a risk to all individuals that may be affected by them, including, but not limited to, pupils and staff.

7. Acceptable use of the internet in school

All 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. 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.

8. Pupils using mobile devices in school

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In line with statutory guidance, our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils are not permitted to have access to or use their mobile phones or smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (e.g. smart watches), which we refer to collectively as 'mobile phones', throughout the school day. This prohibition includes all lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtimes.

Children in Year 5 and 6, who have permission to walk home alone, are allowed to bring their phone to school; however, at the gate in the morning they are handed to a member of staff. The phones are then locked away and returned to the children at dismissal.

9. 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 [behaviour and ICT and internet acceptable use – adapt according to what policies you have]. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature and seriousness of the specific incident, and will be proportionate. Where a staff member misuses the school's ICT systems or the internet, or misuses a personal device where the action constitutes misconduct, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the [staff disciplinary procedures/staff code of conduct]. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature and seriousness of the specific incident.

The school will consider whether incidents that involve illegal activity or content, or otherwise serious incidents, should be reported to the police.

10. Training for staff, governors and volunteers

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, threatening, harassing and misogynistic messages
- Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, including images generated or altered by AI, especially around chat groups
- Sharing of abusive images and pornography, including images generated or altered by AI, 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

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- 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 deputy/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.

11. Monitoring arrangements

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

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Governing Body. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board. 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.

12. 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
- Mobile phones policy
- AI policy

Think before you click



**I will only use the Internet
and email with an adult**



**I will only click on icons and
links when I know they are
safe**



***I will only send friendly and
polite messages***



***If I see something I don't
like on a screen, I will
always tell an adult***

My Name:

My Signature:

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These rules will keep me safe and help me to be fair to others:

- I will only use the school's computers for schoolwork and homework.
- I will only edit or delete my own files and not look at, or change, other people's files without their permission.
- I will keep my logins and passwords secret.
- I will not bring files into school without permission or upload inappropriate material to my workspace.
- I am aware that some websites and social networks have age restrictions and I should respect this.
- I will not attempt to visit Internet sites that I know to be banned by the school.
- I will only e-mail people I know, or a responsible adult has approved. • The messages I send, or information I upload, will always be polite and sensible.
- I will not open an attachment, or download a file, unless I know and trust the person who has sent it.
- I will not give my home address, phone number, send a photograph or video, or give any other personal information that could be used to identify me, my family or my friends, unless a trusted adult has given permission. I will never arrange to meet someone I have only ever previously met on the Internet, unless my parent/carer has given me permission and I take a responsible adult with me.
- If I see anything I am unhappy with or I receive a message I do not like, I will not respond to it but I will show a teacher / responsible adult.

I have read and understand these rules and agree to them.

Signed:

Date:

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Online Safety agreement for Parents

Internet and Computing:

As the parent or legal guardian of the pupil(s) named below, I grant permission for the school to give my daughter / son access to:

- the Internet at school
- the school's chosen email system
- IT facilities and equipment at the school.

I accept that ultimately the school cannot be held responsible for the nature and content of materials accessed through the Internet and mobile technologies, but I understand that the school takes every reasonable precaution to keep pupils safe and to prevent pupils from accessing inappropriate materials.

I understand that the school can, if necessary, check my child's computer files and the internet sites they visit at school and if there are concerns about my child's safety or e-behaviour they will contact me.

Use of digital images, photography and video: I understand the school has a clear policy on "The use of digital images and video" and I support this.

I will not take and then share online, photographs of other children (or staff) at school events without permission.

Social networking and media sites; I understand that the school has a clear policy on "The use of social networking and media sites" and I support this.

I understand that the school takes any inappropriate behaviour seriously and will respond to observed or reported inappropriate or unsafe behaviour.

I will support the school by promoting safe use of the Internet and digital technology at home. I will inform the school if I have any concerns.

My daughter / son name(s): _____

Parent / guardian signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____