

PORT·REGIS

ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

POLICY NAME	Online Safety Policy	POLICY OWNER	Deputy Headmaster Pastoral
APPROVED BY	GRNS	DATE APPROVED	June 2025
DATE OF LAST REVIEW	June 2025	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	June 2026
Source	ISBA		

1. Aims and Objectives

It is the duty of Port Regis School to ensure that every pupil in its care is safe; and the same principles apply to the digital world as apply to the real world. Online communications and technology provide opportunities for enhanced learning, but also pose great risks to young people. Our pupils are therefore taught how to stay safe in the online environment and how to mitigate risks, including but not limited to the risk of bullying, harassment, grooming, stalking, abuse and radicalisation and identity theft.

Technology is continually enhancing communication, the sharing of information, learning, social interaction and leisure activities. However, many information technologies, particularly online resources, are not effectively policed. All users need to be aware, in an age-appropriate way, of the range of risks associated with the use of these internet technologies. Current and emerging technologies used in and outside of school include:

- Websites;
- Email and instant messaging;
- Blogs, forums and chat rooms;
- Mobile internet devices such as smart phones and tablets;
- Social networking sites;
- Music / video downloads;
- Gaming sites and online communities formed via games consoles;
- Instant messaging technology via SMS or social media sites;
- Video calls;
- Podcasting and mobile applications;
- Virtual and augmented reality technology; and
- Artificial intelligence.

This policy, supported by the Acceptable Use Policy (for all staff, visitors and pupils), is implemented to protect the interests and safety of the whole school community. It aims to provide clear guidance on how to minimise risks and how to deal with any infringements. It is linked to the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Prevent policy
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy/Behaviour Management Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice/s;
- School Trips Policy
- PSHE / RSE Policy; and
- Acceptable Use of AI

At Port Regis, we understand the responsibility to educate our pupils on online safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills necessary to enable them to remain both safe and within the law when using the internet and related technologies in and beyond the classroom. We also understand the importance of involving pupils in discussions about online safety and listening to their fears and anxieties as well as their thoughts and ideas.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including staff, pupils, parents and visitors, who have access to and are users of the school IT systems. In this policy:

- “staff” includes teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, and volunteers;
- “parents” includes pupils' carers and guardians; and
- “visitors” includes anyone else who comes to the school.

Both this policy, and the Acceptable Use policies, cover both fixed and mobile internet devices provided by the school (such as PCs, laptops, webcams, tablets, whiteboards, digital video equipment, school Wi-Fi and internet etc.); as well as all devices owned by pupils, staff, or visitors and brought onto school premises (personal laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.).

In designing this policy, the school has considered the “4Cs” outlined in KCSIE (content, contact, conduct and commerce) as the key areas of risk. However, the school recognises that many pupils will have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks. This means that some pupils, may use mobile technology to facilitate child-on-child abuse, access inappropriate or harmful content or otherwise misuse mobile technology whilst at school. The improper use of mobile technology by pupils, in or out of school, will be dealt with under the school’s Behaviour Policy and / or Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy as is appropriate in the circumstances.

3. Roles and responsibilities in relation to online safety

All staff, governors and visitors have responsibilities under the safeguarding policy to protect children from abuse and make appropriate referrals. The following roles and responsibilities must be read in in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.1. The Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall leadership responsibility for safeguarding as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Governing Body of the school is responsible for the approval of this policy and for reviewing its effectiveness at least annually.

The Governing Body will ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, both at induction and with updates at regular intervals, to ensure that:

- all staff, in particular the DSL is adequately trained about online safety;
- all staff are aware of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and how to raise to escalate concerns when identified;
- staff are aware of the school procedures and policies that should be followed in the event of the abuse or suspected breach of online safety in connection to the school.

3.2. Headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team

The Headmaster is responsible for the safety of the members of the school community and this includes responsibility for online safety. Together with the Senior Leadership Team, they are responsible for procuring appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, documenting decisions on what is blocked or allowed and why, reviewing the effectiveness of the filtering and monitoring provisions, overseeing reports and ensuring staff are appropriately trained.

3.3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL takes the lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child protection at Port Regis. This includes a responsibility for online safety as well as the school's filtering and monitoring system.

The DSL will ensure that this policy is upheld at all times, working with the Headmaster and SLT and IT staff to achieve this. As such, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, the DSL will take appropriate action if in receipt of a report that engages that policy relating to activity that has taken place online.

The DSL will work closely with the school's IT service providers to ensure that the school's requirements for filtering and monitoring are met and enforced. The DSL will review filtering and monitoring reports and ensure that regular checks are properly made of the system.

3.4. IT staff

The school's IT staff have a key role in maintaining a safe technical infrastructure at the school and in keeping abreast with the rapid succession of technical developments. They are responsible for the security of the school's hardware system, its data and for training the school's teaching and administrative staff in the use of IT. They monitor the use of the internet and emails, maintain content filters, and will report inappropriate usage to the DSL.

3.5. Teaching and support staff

All staff are required to sign and return the IT Acceptable Use Policy before accessing the school's systems. As with all issues of safety at this school, staff are encouraged to create a talking and listening culture in order to address any online safety issues which may arise in classrooms on a daily basis.

All staff must read and understand this Online Safety Policy and enforce it in accordance with direction from the DSL and the Headmaster / Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

3.6. Pupils

Pupils are responsible for using the school IT systems and personal devices (boarders) in accordance with the Pupil Acceptable Use of ICT Policy.

3.7. Parents and carers

The school will contact parents if it has any concerns about pupils' behaviour in this area and likewise it hopes that parents will feel able to share any concerns with the school.

4. Filtering and Monitoring

In general:

Port Regis aims to provide a safe environment to learn and work, including when online. Filtering and monitoring are important parts of the school's safeguarding arrangements and it is vital that all staff understand the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

Staff, pupils, parents and visitors should be aware that the school's filtering and monitoring systems apply to all users, all school owned devices and any device connected to the school's internet server. Deliberate access, or an attempt to access, prohibited or inappropriate content, or attempting to circumvent the filtering and monitoring systems will be dealt with under the Staff Code of Conduct or the Behaviour Policy, as appropriate.

The DSL will check once per term that the filtering and monitoring system are operating effectively – these checks must be recorded along with any appropriate action. From time to time the Safeguarding and/or Online Safety governor and the DSL will review the filtering and monitoring system, looking at the records of the checks. Such a review should occur before the beginning of every new academic year, however such reviews should occur if:

- there is a major safeguarding incident;
- there is a change in working practices; or

- if any new technology is introduced.

The school's filtering system blocks internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content. The filtering system will block access to child sexual abuse material, unlawful terrorist content, adult content as well as, but not limited to, the following: games where shooting or violence is depicted. If there is a good educational reason why a particular website, application, or form of content should not be blocked a pupil should contact the relevant member of teaching staff, who will then contact the DSL for their consideration.

The school will monitor the activity of all users across all of the school's devices or any device connected to the school's internet server allowing individuals be identified. In line with the school's Data Protection Policy, Blueloop will monitor the logs daily. Any incidents should be acted upon and recorded. If there is a safeguarding concern, this should be reported to the DSL immediately. Teaching staff should notify their Head of Department and the DSL if they are teaching material which might generate unusual internet traffic activity.

Staff:

If any member of staff has any concern about the effectiveness of the filtering and monitoring system, they must report the matter to the DSL immediately in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; particularly if they have received a disclosure of access to, or witnessed someone accessing, harmful or inappropriate content. If any member of staff accidentally accesses prohibited or otherwise inappropriate content, they should proactively report the matter to the DSL or use the Low-Level Concern Self-Referral Form.

While the filtering and monitoring system has been designed not to unreasonably impact on teaching and learning, no filtering and monitoring system can be 100% effective. Teaching staff should notify the head of their department and the DSL if they believe that appropriate teaching materials are being blocked.

Pupils:

Pupils must report any accidental access to materials of a violent or sexual nature or that are otherwise inappropriate to the Deputy Head, Pastoral (and DSL) / appropriate teacher (Form Tutor). Deliberate access to any inappropriate materials by a pupil will be dealt with under

the school's Behaviour Management Policy. Pupils should be aware that all internet usage via the school's systems and its Wi-Fi network is monitored.

Certain websites are automatically blocked by the school's filtering system. If this causes problems for school work / research purposes, pupils should contact a member of the IT staff and the Deputy Head, Pastoral for assistance.

5. Education and training

5.1. Staff: awareness and training

As part of their induction, all new teaching staff receive information on online safety, including the school's expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities regarding filtering and monitoring. This will include the Online Safety Policy.

All staff working with children are responsible for demonstrating, promoting and supporting safe behaviours in their classrooms and following the school's Online Safety procedures. These behaviours are summarised in the IT Acceptable Use Policy which must be signed and returned before use of technologies in school.

All teaching staff receive regular information and training (at least annually) on online safety issues in the form of INSET training and internal meeting time, and are made aware of their individual responsibilities relating to the safeguarding of children within the context of online safety.

Teaching staff are encouraged to incorporate online safety activities and awareness within their subject areas and through a culture of talking about issues as they arise. They should know what to do in the event of misuse of technology by any member of the school community. When pupils use school computers, staff should make sure children are fully aware of the agreement they are making to follow the school's IT guidelines.

In accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, if there is a safeguarding concern a report must be made by staff as soon as possible if any incident relating to online safety occurs and be provided directly to the DSL.

5.2. Pupils: the teaching of online safety

Online safety guidance will be given to pupils on a regular basis. We continually look for new opportunities to promote online safety and regularly monitor and assess our pupils' understanding of it.

The school provides opportunities to teach about online safety within a range of curriculum areas and IT lessons. Educating pupils on the dangers of technologies that may be encountered outside school will also be carried out via PSHE / RSE, by presentations in assemblies, as well as informally when opportunities arise.

At age-appropriate levels, pupils are taught about their online safety responsibilities and to look after their own online safety. Pupils are taught about recognising online sexual exploitation, stalking and grooming, the risks, and of their duty to report any such instances they or their peers come across. Pupils can report concerns to the DSL and any member of staff at the school.

Pupils are also taught about relevant laws applicable to using the internet such as those that apply to data protection, online safety and intellectual property. Pupils are taught about respecting other people's information and images (etc.) through discussion and classroom activities.

Pupils should be aware of the impact of cyber-bullying and know how to seek help if they are affected by these issues (see also the school's Safeguarding / Anti Bullying / Sanctions Policies, which describes the preventative measures and the procedures that will be followed when the school discovers cases of bullying). Pupils should approach the DSL, or any other member of staff they trust, as well as parents, peers and other school staff for advice or help if they experience problems when using the internet and related technologies.

5.3. Parents

The school seeks to work closely with parents and guardians in promoting a culture of online safety. The school will contact parents if it has any concerns about pupils' behaviour in this area and likewise it hopes that parents will feel able to share any concerns with the school.

The school recognises that not all parents and guardians may feel equipped to protect their child when they use electronic equipment at home. The school therefore works with Schools Mobile to provide support for parents and an outside specialist to advise about online safety and the practical steps that parents can take to minimise the potential dangers to their children without curbing their natural enthusiasm and curiosity.

6. Use of school and personal devices

Staff

School devices assigned to a member of staff as part of their role must have a password or device lock so that unauthorised people cannot access the content. When they are not using a device staff should ensure that it is locked to prevent unauthorised access.

Staff at Port Regis are permitted to bring in personal devices for their own use. Staff are allowed to have their personal devices switched on during the working day. They may use such devices for school purposes such as registering children on iSams.

Staff are not permitted under any circumstances to use their personal devices when taking images, videos or other recording of any pupil nor to have any images, videos or other recording of any pupil on their personal devices, without the prior consent of the DSL. Please read this in conjunction with Child Protection and Safeguarding, Acceptable Use, Staff Code of Conduct and School Trips policies.

Pupils

Boarders must leave all personal devices in their respective Houses during the school day.

If pupils bring in mobile devices (e.g. for boarders to contact their parents in the evenings), they must have the Schools Mobile app installed, and only use the device under the supervision of house parents and house staff. They should be handed in after use and kept securely by the boarding staff. No child should be in possession of a mobile phone at any time during the school day. These requirements apply to phones and all devices that communicate over the internet, including smartwatches and other wearable technology.

The school has introduced the use of pupil-owned laptops in A and B Form as a teaching and learning tool and pupils are required to adhere to the IT Pupil Acceptable Use Policy when using laptops for school work. In particular, the IT Pupil Acceptable Use Policy requires pupils to ensure that their use of laptops for school work complies with this policy and prohibits pupils from using laptops for non-school related activities during the school day.

School mobile technologies made available for pupil use by Port Regis including laptops, tablets, cameras, etc. are stored securely in relevant departments (eg Drama). Members of staff should account for each device after each use by a pupil.

Pupils are responsible for their conduct when using school issued or their own devices. Any misuse of devices by pupils will be dealt with under the School's Behaviour Policy.

The school recognises that mobile devices are sometimes used by pupils for medical purposes or as an adjustment to assist pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs. Where a pupil needs to use a mobile device for such purposes, the pupil's parents or carers should arrange a meeting with the SENDco to agree how the school can appropriately support such use. The SENDco will then inform the pupil's teachers and other relevant members of staff about how the pupil will use the device at school.

7. Online Communications

Staff

Any digital communication between staff and pupils or parents / carers must be professional in tone and content. Under no circumstances may staff contact a pupil using any personal email address or SMS / WhatsApp. The school ensures that staff have access to their work email address when offsite, for use as necessary on school business. Personal telephone numbers, email addresses, or other contact details, may not be shared with pupils or parents / carers unless there is a compelling reason such as when staff members with children in the same year group are arranging play dates/birthday parties or other social events with other parents. Under no circumstances may staff contact a pupil using a personal telephone number, email address, or other messaging system nor should pupils be added as social network 'friends' or similar.

Staff must immediately report to the DSL / Headmaster the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication. Staff must remain alert to the risk of fraudulent emails and should report emails they suspect to be fraudulent to IT Staff.

Pupils

The school will ensure that there is appropriate and strong IT monitoring and virus software. Pupil email is not available.

Pupils must not respond to any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and should immediately report such a communication, to a member of staff who should then refer it to the DSL.

8. Use of social media

Staff

When accessed from staff members' own devices / off and on school premises, staff must use social networking sites with extreme caution, being aware of the nature of what is published online and its potential impact on their professional position and the reputation of the school in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Any online communications, whether by email, social media, private messaging or other, must not:

- place a child or young person at risk of, or cause, harm;
- bring Port Regis into disrepute;
- breach confidentiality;
- breach copyright;
- breach data protection legislation;
- or do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
- using social media to bully another individual; or
- posting links to or endorsing material which is discriminatory or offensive.
- otherwise breach the Staff Code of Conduct or Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils

The school expects pupils to think carefully before they post any information online, or repost or endorse content created by other people. Content posted must not be, or potentially be, inappropriate or offensive, or likely to cause embarrassment to an individual or others. The school takes misuse of technology by pupils very seriously and incidents will be dealt with under the Behaviour, Safeguarding and Child Protection and Anti-Bullying policies as appropriate.

9. Data protection

Please refer to the Data Protection policy and the IT Acceptable Use Policy for further details as to the key responsibilities and obligations that arise when personal information, particularly that of children, is being processed by or on behalf of the school.

Staff and pupils are expected to save all data relating to their work to their school laptop / PC or to the school's central server as per the IT Acceptable Use Policy.

Staff devices should be encrypted if any data or passwords are stored on them. The school expects all removable media (USB memory sticks, CDs, portable drives) taken outside school or sent by post or courier to be encrypted before sending.

Staff may only take information offsite when authorised to do so, and only when it is necessary and required in order to fulfil their role. No personal data of staff or pupils should be stored on personal memory sticks, but instead stored on an encrypted USB memory stick provided by the school.

Staff should also be particularly vigilant about scam / phishing emails (and similar) which could seriously compromise the school's IT security and/or put at risk sensitive personal data (and other information) held by the school. If in any doubt, do not open a suspicious email or attachment and notify the Blueloop in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and IT Acceptable Use Policy.

Any security breaches or attempts, loss of equipment and any unauthorised use or suspected misuse of IT must be immediately reported to Blueloop.

10. Password security

Pupils and staff have individual school network logins and storage folders on the server. Staff and pupils are regularly reminded of the need for password security.

All pupils and members of staff should:

- use a strong password (usually containing eight characters or more, and containing upper- and lower-case letters as well as numbers), which should be changed regularly;
- not write passwords down; and
- not share passwords with other pupils or staff.

11. Safe use of digital and video images

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to learning, allowing staff and pupils instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the internet. However, staff, parents / carers and pupils need to be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the internet. Such images may provide avenues for cyberbullying, stalking or grooming to take place. Digital images may remain available on the internet forever and may cause harm or embarrassment to individuals in the short or longer term.

When using digital images, staff should inform and educate pupils about the risks associated with the taking, use, sharing, publication and distribution of images. In particular they should

recognise the risks attached to publishing their own (personal) images on the internet (e.g. on social networking sites).

12. Artificial Intelligence

Port Regis does not permit the use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT on school devices / systems.

It is important to be aware that the technology, despite its advances, still produces regular errors and misunderstandings and should not be relied on for accuracy. In particular, pupils should not use these tools to answer questions about health / medical / wellbeing issues, or indeed anything of a personal nature. It is always best to seek help and recommendations as to reliable resources from a member of staff / DSL.

13. Misuse

Port Regis will not tolerate illegal activities or activities that are in breach of the policies referred to above. Where appropriate the school will report illegal activity to the police and/or the local safeguarding partnerships. If a member of staff discovers that a child or young person is at risk as a consequence of online activity they should report it to the DSL. The DSL then may seek assistance from the CEOP, the LADO, and/or its professional advisers as appropriate.

The school will impose a range of sanctions on any pupil who misuses technology to bully, harass or abuse another pupil in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding and Behaviour policies.

14. Complaints

As with all issues of safety at Port Regis if a member of staff, a pupil or a parent / carer has a complaint or concern relating to online safety prompt action will be taken to deal with it. Complaints should be addressed to the Deputy Head, Pastoral in the first instance, who will liaise with the senior leadership team and undertake an investigation where appropriate. Please see the Complaints Policy for further information.

Incidents of, or concerns around online safety will be recorded in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and reported to the school's the DSL, Iain Hepburn in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding.