

Online Safety Policy

School Name: Waldorf Cambridge

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1. Aims

Our school aims to ensure the online safety of all members of the school community-pupils, staff, volunteers, and trustees by establishing robust processes and fostering a culture of respect, digital responsibility, and holistic development in line with Steiner Waldorf values. We seek to:

- Empower pupils to use technology mindfully and creatively, supporting their healthy development and safeguarding their wellbeing.
- Address and mitigate risks associated with content, contact, conduct, and commerce online.
- Promote human connection, critical thinking, and self-regulation in digital environments, reflecting the Steiner Waldorf emphasis on child development, imagination, and social harmony.
- Support vulnerable groups and adapt our approach to meet individual needs, ensuring inclusivity and respect for each child's stage of development.
- Establish clear mechanisms for identifying, intervening, and escalating online safety incidents.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on statutory safeguarding guidance, including the Department for Education's "Keeping Children Safe in Education," and advice on teaching online safety, preventing and tackling bullying, and protecting children from radicalisation. It reflects relevant legislation such as the Education Act 1996, Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the Equality Act 2010.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

- Oversees and monitors the implementation of this policy.
- Ensures all staff receive regular online safety training and updates.
- Reviews filtering and monitoring systems to ensure effectiveness and appropriateness.
- Ensures online safety education is adapted for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs.
- Headteacher
- Ensures consistent implementation and understanding of this policy among staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Leads on online safety, including managing incidents, training, and reporting.
- Works with staff and external agencies to address online safety issues.

ICT Support

- Maintains secure ICT systems and appropriate filtering/monitoring.
- Logs and manages online safety incidents.

All Staff and Volunteers

- Understand and consistently implement this policy.
- Model responsible digital behaviour and support pupils in safe technology use.

Parents/Carers

- Support the school's online safety aims and reinforce safe technology use at home.
- Engage with the school's acceptable use agreements and seek guidance as needed.

Visitors and Community Members

- Are made aware of and expected to follow this policy when using school ICT systems.

4. Educating Pupils about Online Safety

Online safety is integrated into the curriculum in a developmentally appropriate way, in line with Steiner Waldorf principles:

- In the early years, technology use is minimal and always guided by adults, with a focus on creative, real-world experiences.
- As pupils grow, they are gradually introduced to digital literacy, with an emphasis on critical thinking, respectful communication, and the impact of technology on wellbeing.
- Lessons encourage discernment, self-regulation, and the development of healthy digital habits, reflecting the Steiner Waldorf approach to holistic education.
- Pupils are taught to seek help, report concerns, and value human relationships above digital interactions.

5. Educating Parents/Carers about Online Safety

- The school provides regular guidance, workshops, and resources to help parents/carers understand online risks and support their children's safe use of technology.
- Parents are encouraged to model mindful technology use and foster open communication about online experiences.

6. Cyber-bullying

- Cyber-bullying is addressed as part of the wider commitment to social harmony and respect.
- The school takes all reports seriously, responds promptly, and works with pupils, parents, and staff to restore positive relationships and support affected individuals.

7. Acceptable Use of the Internet in School

- Acceptable use agreements are tailored by age and role, emphasizing respect, responsibility, and the creative use of technology.
- Pupils are encouraged to use digital tools for learning, collaboration, and creative expression, always mindful of their impact on self and others.

8. Pupils Using Mobile Devices in School

- Waldorf Cambridge maintains a smartphone-free environment. The use of mobile devices is not permitted during the school day by pupils.
- Lower and Middle School pupils may bring a mobile device only if a prior agreement is in place (e.g. for those who travel to and from school independently). In such cases, devices must be handed in at reception upon arrival and will be held securely for the duration of the school day.
- Upper School pupils are permitted to bring mobile devices; however, use of these devices is strictly prohibited during school hours. Pupils are expected to take personal responsibility for adhering to this policy. If the policy is breached, the device will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day.
- Staff are required to restrict the use of mobile devices to staff-only areas of the school and should model appropriate and minimal use during the school day.

9. Staff Using Work Devices Outside School

- Staff follow clear guidelines for the secure and appropriate use of school devices outside school premises.

10. How the School Will Respond to Issues of Misuse

- Incidents are logged, investigated, and addressed according to the school's safeguarding and behaviour policies.
- The response is restorative, aiming to educate and support all involved, in line with Steiner Waldorf principles of empathy and personal growth.

11. Training

- Regular training is provided for staff, governors, and volunteers, with a focus on emerging risks, best practices, and the unique needs of the school community.

12. Monitoring Arrangements

- Filtering and monitoring systems are regularly reviewed to balance safety with the freedom to explore and learn.
- The effectiveness of these systems is evaluated in consultation with staff, pupils, and parents.

13. Links with Other Policies

- This policy is linked to safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, and curriculum policies, ensuring a consistent and holistic approach to pupil wellbeing.

This policy reflects the statutory framework and best practice guidance while embedding the distinctive values of Steiner Waldorf education: respect for the developing child, the primacy of human relationships, and the creative, mindful use of technology.