

Presdales School



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1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and trustees
- 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
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate an incident, where appropriate

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following four categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scam

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and its advice for schools on:

- Teaching online safety in schools
- Preventing and tackling bullying and cyber-bullying: advice for Headteachers and school staff
- Relationships and sex education
- Searching, screening and confiscation

It also refers to the Department's guidance on protecting children from radicalisation.

It reflects existing legislation, including but not limited to the Education Act 1996 (as amended), the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010. In addition, it reflects the Education Act 2011, which has given teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by, if necessary, searching for and deleting inappropriate images or files on students' electronic devices where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

The policy also takes into account the National Curriculum computing programmes of study.

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board ensures that online safety is a key component of the whole school approach to safeguarding and has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy and holding the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The trust board will coordinate regular meetings with appropriate staff to discuss and monitor online safety with the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP).

The trustee who oversees online safety is Jackie Harvey

All trustees will:

- Ensure that they have read and understand this policy

- Agree and adhere to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet (Appendix 1)
- Will undertake online safety training
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place
- Ensure that, where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, is adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some students with SEND 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 Headteacher

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

3.3 The Designated Safeguarding Person

Details of the school's DSP [and deputies] are set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy as well relevant job descriptions.

The DSP and deputies take responsibility for online safety in school, in particular:

- Supporting the Headteacher in ensuring that staff understand this policy and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school
- Working with the Headteacher, Network Manager and other staff, as necessary, to address any online safety issues or incidents
- Checking monitoring Senso reports for breaches of online conduct on school devices and following up any incidents
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged on CPOMs and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyberbullying 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 termly reports on online safety in school to the Headteacher who then reports these to the Trust Board, using data collected from CPOMs and the Network Manager to show issues causing concern.

3.4 The Network Manager

The Network Manager is responsible for:

- Putting in place (through RM Safety Net) an appropriate level of security protection procedures, including filtering and monitoring systems, which are updated on a regular basis and keep students safe from potentially harmful and inappropriate content and contact online while at school, including terrorist and extremist material
- Ensuring that the school's ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware through the use of PANDA on all school systems, and that such safety mechanisms are updated regularly
- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files (through RM Safety Net and PANDA)
- Ensuring online use is monitored through Senso software on all school devices and HfL Education constantly monitor the online usage of school users through RM Safety Net, alerting the Network Manager if there are any security incidents as needed which are then followed up in line with this policy
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this 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 (which is monitored across the school network by SENSO) and the internet (appendix 2) and ensuring that students follow the school's terms on acceptable use (appendix 1). Any ICT systems will not be disabled or deleted without the consent of the Headteacher/IT Manager
- Checking that online content and websites used in their teaching is suitable for the age of students concerned before tasks are set
- Ensuring that any departmental social media platforms are monitored, checking the suitability of content posted and checking usage of the platform
- Working with the DSP to ensure that any online safety incidents are logged on CPOMs and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy
- Responding appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or harassment, both online and offline and maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- Teaching when required remotely according to the school's Remote Learning protocols (which reflect government guidance set out in 'Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus') to ensure the safety of students learning in a remote environment. In this situation students will only be interacting online with staff and students in their class. On any other occasions parents would be notified by staff about who students would be in online contact with e.g. language exchange opportunities.

3.6 Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this policy
- Ensure their child has read, understood and agreed to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet (appendix 1)

Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- What are the issues? - UK Safer Internet Centre
- Hot topics - Childnet International
- Parent fact sheet - Childnet International

3.7 Visitors and members of the community

Visitors and members of the community who use the school's ICT systems or internet will be made aware of this policy, when relevant, and expected to read and follow it. If appropriate, they will be expected to agree to the terms on acceptable use (appendix 2).

4. Educating students about online safety

Students will be taught about online safety as part of the curriculum, all secondary schools have to teach:

- Relationships and sex education and health education

In Key Stage 3, students will be taught to:

- Understand a range of ways to use technology safely, respectfully, responsibly and securely, including protecting their online identity and privacy
- Recognise inappropriate content, contact and conduct, and know how to report concerns

Students in Key Stage 4 will be taught:

- To understand how changes in technology affect safety, including new ways to protect their online privacy and identity
- How to report a range of concerns

By the end of secondary school, they will know:

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- The impact of viewing harmful content
- That specifically sexually explicit material (e.g. pornography) presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
- How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in other subjects where relevant, for example the Key Stage 3 Computing curriculum provides extensive coverage of online safety issues.

The school will use assemblies to raise students' awareness of the dangers that can be encountered online and may also invite speakers to talk to students about this. Every year Safer Internet Week is celebrated in school with assemblies and SMSC activities.

5. Educating parents about online safety

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

Online safety will also be covered during parents' information evenings and the school lets parents know about Senso monitoring systems being used to monitor online use on school devices.

If parents have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised with the relevant Head of Year who will then inform the DSP and Headteacher as required. Concerns or queries about this policy can be raised with any member of staff.

6. Cyber-bullying

6.1 Definition

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. (See also the school behaviour policy.)

6.2 Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying

- To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that students understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that students know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.
- The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with students, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be. Tutors will discuss cyber-bullying with their tutor groups, and the issue will be addressed in assemblies.
- 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, trustees and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support students, as part of safeguarding training (see section 12 for more detail).
- The school also sends information/leaflets on cyber-bullying to parents so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.
- In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among students, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.
- The DSP will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

6.3 Examining electronic devices

School staff have the specific power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which has been increased by the Education Act 2011) to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on students' electronic devices, including mobile phones, iPads and other tablet devices, where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

All staff can confiscate electronic devices when they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so and the headteacher, members of the SLT and Pastoral Team can carry out a search of the device if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that:

- There is a risk to staff or pupils, and/or
- Is identified in the school rules as a banned item for which a search can be carried out, and/or
- Is evidence in relation to an offence

Before a search, if the authorised staff member is satisfied that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting any of the above, they will also:

- Make an assessment of how urgent the search is, and consider the risk to other pupils and staff. If the search is not urgent, they will seek advice from the headteacher and SLT
- Explain to the pupil why they are being searched, how the search will happen (with two members of staff being present), and give them the opportunity to ask questions about it
- Seek the pupil's cooperation

Authorised staff members may examine, and in exceptional circumstances erase, any data or files on an electronic device that they have confiscated where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

When deciding whether there is a 'good reason' to examine data or files on an electronic device, the staff member should reasonably suspect that the device has, or could be used to:

- Cause harm, and/or
- Undermine the safe environment of the school or disrupt teaching, and/or
- Commit an offence

If inappropriate material is found on the device, it is up to the headteacher/member of the SLT to decide on a suitable response. If there are images, data or files on the device that staff reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk, they will first consider the appropriate safeguarding response.

When deciding if there is a good reason to erase data or files from a device, staff members will consider if the material may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence. In these instances, they will not delete the material, and the device will be handed to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. If the material is not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, staff members may delete it if:

- They reasonably suspect that its continued existence is likely to cause harm to any person, and/or
- The pupil and/or the parent refuses to delete the material themselves

If a staff member **suspects** a device **may** contain an indecent image of a child (also known as a nude or semi-nude image), they will:

- **Not** view the image
- Confiscate the device and report the incident to the DSL (or equivalent) immediately, who will decide what to do next. The DSL will make the decision in line with the DfE's latest guidance on [screening, searching and confiscation](#) and the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

Any searching of pupils will be carried out in line with:

- The DfE's latest guidance on [searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- UKCIS guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- The School Behaviour for Learning Policy which includes the Search and Confiscation Policy

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

7. Acceptable use of the internet in school

All students, parents, staff, volunteers and trustees are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet (appendices 1 and 2).

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 students, staff, volunteers, trustees and visitors (where relevant) to ensure they comply with the above using Senso software which alerts the school of inappropriate internet use on school devices. Staff, students and parents have all been informed about this system being used.

More information is set out in the acceptable use agreements in appendices 1 and 2

8. Students using mobile devices in school

Students may bring mobile devices into school but are not permitted to use them in the school building unless explicit permission has been given by a member of staff for them to use them to support their learning e.g. in a lesson to do research or to participate in an online quiz.

We appreciate that students have unrestricted access to the internet via their own mobile phone network, or a personal VPN, and the school accepts that it has no control in stopping students doing this. However, in online safety teaching we promote the responsible use of using the internet at all times whether on the school site or not.

Any use of mobile devices in school by students must be in line with the acceptable use agreement (see appendix 1).

Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a student may trigger disciplinary action in line with the school behaviour policy, which may result in the confiscation of their device.

9. Staff using work devices outside school

Staff members using a work device outside school must not install any unauthorised software on the device and must not use the device in any way which would violate the school's terms of acceptable use, as set out in appendix 2.

Staff must ensure that their work device is secure and password-protected, and that they do not share their password with others. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure the security of their work device when using it outside school.

If staff have any concerns over the security of their device, they must seek advice from the Network Manager.

Work devices must be used solely for work activities.

10. How the school will respond to issues of misuse

Where a student misuses the school's ICT systems or internet, we will follow the procedures set out in our policies on behaviour and acceptable use policies. 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 which involve illegal activity or content, or otherwise serious incidents, should be reported to the police.

11. Training

All new staff members will receive training, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation.

All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year as part of safeguarding training, as well as relevant updates as required (for example through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

By way of this training, all staff will be made aware that:

- Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of online abuse
- Children can abuse their peers online through:
 - Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content
 - Physical abuse, sexual violence and initiation/hazing type violence can all contain an online element

Training will also help staff:

- develop better awareness to assist in spotting the signs and symptoms of online abuse
- develop the ability to ensure students can recognise dangers and risks in online activity and can weigh the risks up
- develop the ability to influence students to make the healthiest long-term choices and keep them safe from harm in the short term

The DSP and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training, which will include online safety, at least every 2 years. They will also update their knowledge and skills on the subject of online safety at regular intervals, and at least annually.

Trustees will receive training on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues in conjunction with their safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training and updates, if applicable.

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

12. Monitoring arrangements

The DSP logs and reports on behaviour and safeguarding issues related to online safety through CPOMs and reports these termly to the Headteacher who reports these to the Trust Board.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the DSP with an annual risk assessment. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trust Board.

13. Links with other policies

This online safety policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Complaints procedure
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy

Appendix 1: Online Safety Acceptable Use Agreement (students and parents/carers)

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE SCHOOL'S ICT SYSTEMS AND INTERNET: AGREEMENT FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS/CARERS

Name of student:

I will read and follow the rules in the acceptable use agreement policy

When I use the school's ICT systems (like computers) and get onto the internet in school

I will:

- Only use ICT systems in school, including the internet, e-mail, digital video, and mobile technologies for school purposes and will always log on with my own username and password and not someone else's details.
- Follow the school's ICT security system and not reveal my passwords to anyone and change them regularly.
- Only use my school email address
- Make sure that all ICT communications with students, teachers or others are responsible and sensible
- Be responsible for my behaviour when using the Internet and not use any inappropriate language when communicating online
- Ensure that my online activity, both in school and outside school, will not cause my school, the staff, students or others distress or bring the school community into disrepute, including through uploads of images, video, sounds or texts
- Tell a teacher immediately if I find any material which might upset, distress or harm me or others
- Always log off or shut down a computer when I'm finished working on it

I will not:

- Download or install software on the school's ICT system
- Browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to my teacher
- Give out any personal information such as name, phone number or address.
- Attempt to bypass the internet filtering system
- Sign up to online services until I am old enough to do so
- Access any inappropriate websites including: social networking sites, chat rooms and gaming sites unless my teacher has expressly allowed this as part of a learning activity
- Open any attachments in emails, or follow any links in emails, without first checking with a teacher
- Arrange to meet anyone offline without first consulting my parent/carer, or without adult supervision

I am aware that when I take images of students and/ or staff, that I must only store and use these for school purposes in line with school policy and must never distribute these outside the school network without the permission of all parties involved, including in school breaks and all occasions when you are in school uniform or when otherwise representing the school. I agree that the school will monitor the websites I visit and that there will be consequences if I don't follow the rules.

If I bring a personal mobile phone or other personal electronic device into school:

- I will not use it during lessons, tutor group time, clubs or other activities organised by the school, without a teacher's permission
- I will use it responsibly, and will not access any inappropriate websites or other inappropriate material or use inappropriate language when communicating online

Signed (student):

Date:

Parent/carer's agreement: I agree that my child can use the school's ICT systems and internet when appropriately supervised by a member of school staff. I agree to the conditions set out above for students using the school's ICT systems and internet, and for using personal electronic devices in school, and will make sure my child understands these.

Signed (parent/carer):

Date:

Appendix 2: Acceptable Use Agreement (staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors)

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE SCHOOL'S ICT SYSTEMS AND INTERNET: AGREEMENT FOR STAFF, TRUSTEES, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Name of staff member/trustee/volunteer/visitor:

When using the school's ICT systems and accessing the internet in school, or outside school on a work device (if applicable),

I will:

- Ensure that all electronic communications with students and staff are compatible with my professional role
- Ensure that my online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school, my professional reputation or that of others into disrepute
- Only use the approved, secure email system(s) for any school business
- Ensure that personal data on students is kept secure and is used appropriately, whether in school, taken off the school premises or accessed remotely.
- Only store, take or use images of students and/or staff for professional purposes in line with school policy and with written consent of the parent, carer or staff member
- Ensure that all settings for social media, amongst others, are set to private User

I will not:

- Browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory
- Use ICT systems 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
- Give out my own personal details, such as mobile phone number, personal e-mail address, personal Twitter account, or any other social media link, to students
- 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 students or staff, or other members of the community
- Access, modify or share data I'm not authorised to access, modify or share
- Promote private businesses, unless that business is directly related to the school

I agree that the school will monitor the websites I visit and my use of the school's ICT facilities and systems. I will let the designated safeguarding person (DSP) and ICT manager know if a student 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 students in my care do so too.

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

Date:

Appendix 3 - Online safety policy guide - Summary of key parent/carers responsibilities

The school provides online safety information for parents/carers, through the website, in newsletters and at events. It is important that parents/carers understand their key role in supporting children to behave appropriately and keep themselves safe online.

The online safety policy, supported by its acceptable use agreements, is intended to protect the interests and safety of the whole school community.

- Parents/carers are required to support their child in understanding and signing the Online Safety Acceptable Use Agreement for students.
- Parents/carers may only use personal mobile phones and devices in designated areas of the school unless otherwise informed, e.g. for specific events and activities. Under no circumstance should images be taken at any time on school premises that include anyone other than their own child, unless there is a pre-specified agreement with individuals and parents/carers. When a parent/carer is on school premises but not in a designated area, their phone/s must be switched off and out of sight.
- Parents/carers should not assume that students can bring technological devices to school and should always check the school policy.
- All cyberbullying incidents affecting children in the school should be reported immediately. (If the incident involves an indecent image of a child the report must also be made immediately to the police for your own protection.) The school will investigate and respond to all reported cyberbullying incidents, liaising with others where appropriate. No reply should ever be sent to the sender/poster of cyberbullying content. If applicable block the sender and report abuse to the site. Evidence should be retained and shown in school and/or to the police. Evidence should not be forwarded.
- The school may choose to set up social media sites, blogs or have some other online presence in its own name. Parents/carers, however, do not have the right to set up any site, page, chat group or any other online presence that uses the school name or logo in any form.
- Any parent/carer, distressed or concerned about an aspect of school should make immediate contact with a member of staff rather than posting their concerns online. Parents/carers should not share school related information or images online or post material that may bring the school or any individual within it into disrepute. Negative postings about the school would impact on the reputation of the whole school community. Parents/carers are encouraged to report breaches so that we can protect the reputation of the school, staff, students and parents/carers.

Appendix 4 - Guidance on the process for responding to cyberbullying incidents

All cyberbullying incidents should be reported and responded to. Where the perpetrator is a member of the school community the majority of cases can be dealt with through mediation and/or disciplinary processes.

The following procedures are recommended:

- Never reply to the sender/poster of cyberbullying content. If applicable, block the sender.
- Incidents should be reported immediately. Students should report to a member of staff (e.g. class teacher, headteacher) and staff members should seek support from their line manager or a senior member of staff.
- The person reporting the cyberbullying should save the evidence and record the time and date. This evidence must not be forwarded but must be available to show at a meeting. Under no circumstances should indecent images of children and young people be printed or forwarded as this is a further criminal act. Staff should not ask to see the evidence of reported indecent images of children or young people but must refer this immediately to the police. Any member of staff being shown such evidence should immediately inform their line manager or the headteacher so that the circumstances can be recorded.
- A senior member of staff will meet with the person who has reported the incident and the target, if different, to listen, reassure and support. All relevant facts will be reviewed and documented.
- A senior member of staff will conduct an investigation.
- Anyone found to have cyberbullied will have attention drawn to the seriousness of their behaviour and if necessary the police will be involved. If the comments are threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature, constitute a hate crime or are libellous they may well break the law. Online harassment and stalking is also a crime.
- Once evidence has been secured then the person who has cyberbullied will be requested to remove the offending comments/material. Any refusal will lead to an escalation of sanctions.

Appendix 5 - Guidance for staff on preventing and responding to negative comments on social media

The school should make it clear which, if any, social media platforms are used to communicate with parents/carers. If used correctly, parents can use a school's social media site as a source of reliable information. The online safety policy, see especially Appendix F (Online safety policy guide - Summary of key parent/carer responsibilities), clarifies that no other social media platforms should be set up using the school's name or logo.

The school should regularly reinforce with all parties that discussion of school issues on social media platforms, either positive or negative, should not take place as this could bring the school into disrepute and affect families and children. Parents should be encouraged to be good online role models and not post statements written in anger or frustration. Identified routes to raise concerns directly with the school should be used.

If negative comments are posted:

1. Collect the facts

As soon as you become aware of adverse comments relating to the school you need to establish what is being said. It is essential that if you have access to the postings they are secured and retained together with any other evidence. Do not become engaged in responding directly.

If the allegations against a member of staff or a student are of a serious nature, these will need to be formally investigated. This may involve the police and the headteacher will need to follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

If there is a risk of serious damage to the school reputation or the reputation of individual members of staff, professional legal advice should be sought.

Adverse comments of any kind are highly demotivating and cause stress and anxiety. It is important that the senior staff reassure and support all staff and/or other affected members of the school community.

2. Addressing negative comments and complaints

Contact the complainants and invite them to a meeting. In the meeting, make sure you have any evidence available.

The meeting must:

- Draw attention to the seriousness and impact of the actions/postings;
- Ask for the offending remarks to be removed;
- Explore the complainant's grievance;
- Agree next steps;
- Clarify the correct complaints procedures.

If the meeting does not resolve the issue, the parents must be informed that the school will need to take the matter further. This may include:

- Reporting the matter to the social network site if it breaches their rules or breaks the law;
- Reporting the matter to the police if it breaks the law, e.g. if the comments are threatening, abusive, malicious, sexist, of a sexual nature, constitute a hate crime or are libellous they may well break the law. Online harassment and stalking is also a crime.

If inappropriate postings continue or the original material is not removed, a second meeting is advisable to reiterate the seriousness of the matter.