



Wheatcroft Community Primary School

Policy for Online Filtering and Monitoring

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mariana Glass

Policy Date: September 2023

Adopted: At a meeting of the School Performance and Management Committee on 30.11.23

Review date: November 2024

Safeguarding Statement:

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. Everyone who comes in to contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make their approach child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child”. (KCSIE 2023)

Filtering and monitoring systems are both important parts of safeguarding pupils and staff from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material when using school devices and the network / IT system.

Filtering systems: Block access to harmful sites and content.

Monitoring systems: Identify when a user accesses or searches for certain types of harmful content on school devices (it doesn’t stop someone accessing it). The school is then alerted to any concerning content so staff can intervene and respond.

At Wheatcroft CP School, we are doing all that we reasonably can to limit children’s exposure to the above risks via school’s devices and the network / IT system. We are also careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

Aims of the Policy:

The filtering of internet content provides an important means of preventing users from accessing material that is illegal or is inappropriate in an educational context. The filtering system cannot, however, provide a 100% guarantee that it will do so. It is therefore important that the school has an online filtering and monitoring policy to manage the associated risks and to provide preventative measures which are relevant to the situation at Wheatcroft CP School.

The four areas of risk online

Content:

Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

Contact:

Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: 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:

Online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, 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).

Commerce:

Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Refuge and Risk Report - Life Online for Vulnerable Young People report

This report provides insight into 6,500+ UK children with some form of vulnerability, how the online world has become their lifeline.

Some are up to seven times more likely to meet particular dangers over the internet than their non-vulnerable peers.

This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities and the procedures in place at Wheatcroft CP School to provide preventative measures against potential harmful content.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Annex C – P 164 – The role of the designated safeguarding lead:

The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and *understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place*). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Miss Mariana Glass

School Business Manager (responsible for receiving alerts and running filtering tests) – Miss Vicki Lewis

SMD Solutions (School IT Provider) – Mr Steve Chandler

Filtering and monitoring System – RM Safety Net

Independent Filter Testing System – SWGfL

Filtering and Monitoring Link Governor: Mr Matt Parkins

The responsibility for the management of the school's filtering and monitoring policy will be held by the DSL, supported by the School Business Manager and Head teacher (Deputy DSL). They will manage the school filtering in line with this policy and will keep records/logs of changes and of breaches of the filtering systems.

All staff in school have a responsibility to report immediately to the DSL any infringements of the school's filtering policy of which they become aware or any sites that are accessed, which they believe should have been filtered. Staff/users must not attempt to use any programmes or software that might allow them to bypass the filtering/security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.

Staff responsibility:

- To understand which pupils may be more vulnerable online
- To be vigilant to changes in pupils' behaviour
- To be vigilant when pupils are accessing online devices in school
- To complete history checks on devices of vulnerable pupils
- To keep up to date of what children are doing online and online risks.
- To attend regular online safety training / briefings. To complete cyber security training on how to protect the school from cyber attacks
- To know what to do if they have a concern, and who to report it to

They should report if:

- they witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed
- they can access unsuitable material
- they are teaching topics which could create unusual activity on the filtering logs
- there is failure in the software or abuse of the system
- there are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks
- they notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material

Procedures:

At Wheatcroft CP School, all staff have received up to date training with regard to who has overall oversight for filtering and monitoring (the DSL) and their responsibility to report any concerns. We follow the procedure as set out below:

- All staff will remain vigilant and will report any infringements of the school's filtering system, whether these are carried out by pupils or other staff members. These will be recorded via CPOMs, the school's Child Protection Online Management System and investigated accordingly by the school DSL/DDSLs. Linked actions will also be recorded on CPOMs e.g. if changes need to be made to the filtering system to block further sites from being accessed. Staff must endeavour to make the DSL/DDSL/SBM aware if they think their educational searches for the purposes of teaching and learning could result in an alert being raised by the filtering system.
- The school works with SMD Solutions as an IT Provider. SMD Solutions use a third party company to manage security and this is RM Safety Net (KCSIE 2023) compliant. The DSL, DDSLs and the School Business Manager have access to the login for RM Safety Net and are able to see and set the filters in place. RM Safety Net works to block access to harmful sites and content. There are filtering parameters in place that are mandatory and in line with KCSIE 2023. There are also further filters that have been added by the DSL and SBM and alterations have been made to fine tune the blocked sites to adjust permissions for sites that are trusted (so as to avoid unreasonable restrictions). The system has been set up so that alerts of attempts to access prohibited sites are sent through to the school business manager on a daily basis. The SBM is then able to open the information with regards to this, to see what site has been searched for, times and, in some cases a specific fixed IP address. If an active alert were to come through, this would be investigated by the DSL and all records regarding the incident logged via CPOMs as per the Child Protection Policy.
- The DSL has oversight of RM Safety Net and is able to monitor the data provided by the company as to the sites being visited, including attempts to visit blocked sites.
- The School Business Manager runs weekly checks to ensure that RM Safety Net is actively blocking child abuse and terrorist content. This is done through the SWGfL filtering website. The results of each test are shared with the DSL/DDSLs and a paper copy is kept in a file in the school office to ensure ongoing monitoring can take place.
- A link governor for Filtering and Monitoring has been assigned and Filtering and Monitoring is a standing item on the agenda for Governor's meetings. Monitoring is also included in the Head Teacher's report to Governors to keep them updated.
- At Wheatcroft CP School, Filtering and Monitoring systems are reviewed at least annually.

Linked Policies:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Relationship and Behaviour Policy

Online Safety Policy

SEN Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy on Parental use of Social Networking and Internet Sites