

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Online Safety And Acceptable Usage Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

Policy Statement

At St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we recognise that technology plays a significant and positive role in children's education, communication, creativity and future opportunities.

We are committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are able to use technology safely, responsibly and effectively.

Online safety is a safeguarding issue. As digital technologies continue to evolve, children face an increasing range of opportunities and risks when using the internet, mobile devices, social media, gaming platforms, artificial intelligence tools and other online services.

Our approach to online safety seeks to create a culture where pupils are empowered to make safe choices, develop resilience and understand how to respond appropriately when concerns arise.

Online safety is embedded throughout our curriculum, safeguarding procedures and wider school culture.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Governors
- Volunteers
- Visitors
- Parents and carers

It applies to:

- School-owned devices
- School networks
- School learning platforms
- Remote learning

- Educational visits
- Any online activity linked to the school

The policy also covers situations where a pupil's online behaviour outside school may present a safeguarding concern, impact another member of the school community or affect the safe running of the school.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.
 - Ensure safe and responsible use of technology.
 - Promote positive digital citizenship.
 - Develop pupils' understanding of online risks and how to respond to them.
 - Support staff in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities.
 - Support parents and carers in keeping children safe online.
 - Promote digital resilience and critical thinking.
 - Ensure compliance with current safeguarding, data protection and online safety guidance.
 - Foster a culture where children feel confident reporting online concerns.
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Online Safety and Safeguarding

Online safety is an essential part of safeguarding.

The school recognises that technology can be associated with a variety of safeguarding concerns including:

- Cyberbullying
- Online grooming
- Child sexual exploitation

- Child criminal exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Exposure to harmful content
- Harmful online communities
- Sextortion
- Online abuse
- Child-on-child abuse
- Misinformation and disinformation
- Manipulated media and deepfakes
- Online coercion
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Artificial intelligence-generated harmful material

Safeguarding concerns involving technology will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

All staff understand that online safeguarding concerns can occur both inside and outside school and may affect the welfare of pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure the school has appropriate online safety arrangements in place.
- Monitor the effectiveness of online safety provision.
- Ensure filtering and monitoring systems are appropriate and effective.
- Ensure online safety is considered within safeguarding arrangements.
- Support leaders in fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Provide strategic leadership for online safety.
 - Ensure appropriate resources and training are available.
 - Promote a culture of safe and responsible technology use.
 - Ensure safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively.
 - Monitor the effectiveness of the school's online safety arrangements.
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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has lead responsibility for online safety as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

The DSL will:

- Respond to online safeguarding concerns.
 - Work with pupils, parents and external agencies when concerns arise.
 - Monitor trends and emerging risks.
 - Ensure staff receive appropriate training.
 - Support staff in responding to online incidents.
 - Ensure online safety education remains current and relevant.
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Online Safety Lead / Computing Lead

The Online Safety Lead will:

- Promote online safety across the curriculum.
- Support staff with online safety education.
- Monitor the effectiveness of online safety teaching.

- Keep up to date with developments in technology and digital safeguarding.
 - Work closely with safeguarding leaders.
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Staff

All staff will:

- Promote safe and responsible use of technology.
- Follow school policies and procedures.
- Model appropriate online behaviour.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Participate in training.
- Support pupils in developing safe online habits.

Staff should recognise that online safety is everyone's responsibility.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting online safety.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Promote safe use of technology at home.
- Monitor online activity appropriately.
- Maintain open communication with their child.
- Seek support when concerns arise.
- Follow school guidance regarding online safety.

The school will support parents through information, guidance and signposting to trusted resources.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Use technology safely and responsibly.
- Respect others online.
- Report concerns to trusted adults.
- Follow instructions regarding technology use.
- Protect personal information.
- Treat online communication in the same respectful manner expected offline.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their online behaviour and understand the impact their actions may have on others.

Filtering and Monitoring

The school maintains filtering and monitoring systems appropriate to the age and needs of pupils.

These systems are designed to:

- Reduce access to harmful content.
- Support safeguarding.
- Monitor the use of school technology.
- Identify potential concerns.
- Protect pupils from inappropriate material.

The school recognises that filtering and monitoring systems are important safeguarding tools but do not replace effective supervision, education and staff vigilance.

All staff are made aware of:

- Their responsibilities regarding filtering and monitoring.
- How to report concerns.
- The procedures for managing incidents.

The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring arrangements is reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate.

Digital Citizenship

At St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we aim to develop responsible digital citizens.

Pupils are taught to:

- Behave respectfully online.
- Communicate safely.
- Understand digital footprints.
- Demonstrate empathy online.
- Respect privacy.
- Take responsibility for their online actions.
- Consider the impact of what they post, share or upload.

Digital citizenship is embedded throughout the Computing curriculum, RSHE, safeguarding provision and wider school life.

Internet Safety

The internet provides valuable opportunities for learning, communication, creativity and collaboration. However, it also presents risks that require pupils to make safe and responsible choices.

Pupils are taught to:

- Use the internet safely and responsibly.
- Access age-appropriate content.
- Protect personal information.
- Recognise when content may be inappropriate, harmful or misleading.
- Understand that not all online information is accurate or trustworthy.

- Seek support from a trusted adult if they encounter anything upsetting, concerning or unsafe.

The school uses filtering and monitoring systems designed to reduce the risk of access to inappropriate content. However, pupils must also learn to make informed decisions and develop safe online behaviours.

If inappropriate content is accessed accidentally, pupils should:

- Stop using the device immediately.
- Inform a trusted adult.
- Avoid sharing the content with others.
- Follow staff instructions.

Staff will respond promptly and sensitively to all concerns.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly significant part of everyday life, education and employment.

At St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, pupils will be introduced to AI in age-appropriate ways as part of Computing, Online Safety and wider curriculum learning.

Pupils are taught that:

- AI can be used to create text, images, videos, audio and other forms of content.
- AI can be helpful when used appropriately.
- AI can make mistakes and provide incorrect information.
- AI-generated content is not always accurate, reliable or unbiased.
- Information generated by AI should be checked against trusted sources.
- AI should support learning and creativity rather than replace thinking and effort.
- People remain responsible for the decisions they make, even when using AI tools.

The school promotes critical thinking and encourages pupils to question information rather than accepting it at face value.

Deepfakes and Manipulated Media

The school recognises the increasing availability of manipulated digital content, including deepfakes and AI-generated images, videos and audio recordings.

Pupils are taught:

- That online content can be altered or manipulated.
- How images and videos can be edited.
- That not everything seen online reflects reality.
- To think critically about what they view and share.
- To report content that concerns them.

The school teaches pupils how to recognise misleading digital content and understand the risks associated with sharing manipulated material.

Misinformation and Disinformation

Pupils are taught to evaluate information critically and understand the difference between:

- Information
- Opinion
- Misinformation (false information shared without intent to deceive)
- Disinformation (false information deliberately created or shared to deceive)

Pupils learn:

- How to identify reliable sources.
- Why information should be checked before sharing.
- How headlines, images and videos can be misleading.
- Why critical thinking is important when using the internet.

Developing these skills supports both online safety and wider curriculum learning.

Online Challenges and Hoaxes

Online challenges and hoaxes can present significant risks to children and young people.

The school teaches pupils to:

- Think critically about online trends.
- Avoid participating in unsafe challenges.
- Seek adult advice when unsure.
- Report any challenge or content that appears unsafe or harmful.
- Understand that popularity online does not mean that something is safe.

The school will respond to concerns on a case-by-case basis and will provide support, guidance and safeguarding intervention where appropriate.

Pupils are encouraged to discuss online experiences openly without fear of judgement or blame.

Social Media

Many social media platforms have minimum age requirements which are above the age of primary-aged pupils.

The school teaches pupils:

- About age restrictions.
- The importance of privacy settings.
- How information shared online can have long-term consequences.
- The importance of respectful online communication.
- The risks associated with sharing personal information.
- How to report concerns and block inappropriate content.

Social media education forms part of the school's wider programme of online safety and digital citizenship.

Online Gaming

The school recognises that online gaming forms an important part of many children's lives.

Pupils are taught:

- How to stay safe whilst gaming.
- The importance of appropriate online behaviour.
- How to manage online communication with others.
- The risks associated with in-game purchases.
- How to report concerning behaviour.
- How to seek help if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Children are encouraged to balance gaming with other activities and maintain healthy routines.

Digital Wellbeing

The school recognises that online experiences can positively and negatively impact wellbeing.

Pupils are taught:

- The importance of balancing screen time with offline activities.
- Healthy technology habits.
- Strategies for managing online pressures.
- The importance of sleep and physical activity.
- How excessive screen use may affect wellbeing.
- How to recognise when online experiences are negatively affecting them.
- The value of face-to-face relationships and communication.

Digital wellbeing is promoted throughout the curriculum and wider school life.

Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

The school aims to maintain a safe, focused and disruption-free learning environment.

Pupils are not permitted to carry or use mobile phones during the school day.

Where parents wish older pupils to bring a phone for travel purposes:

- The device must be handed into the school office upon arrival.
- The device will be stored securely.
- The device may be collected at the end of the school day.

Pupils must not use personal devices to:

- Access the internet during the school day.
- Communicate with others during lessons or breaktimes.
- Record images, videos or audio.
- Access social media platforms.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones in the presence of pupils unless authorised for educational or emergency purposes.

Any inappropriate use of mobile devices will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Acceptable Online Behaviour

All members of the school community are expected to use technology responsibly and respectfully.

This includes:

- Respecting other people online.
- Communicating appropriately.
- Protecting personal information.
- Respecting school equipment and systems.

- Reporting concerns promptly.
- Following school policies and procedures.

Online behaviour should reflect the same expectations of respect, kindness and responsibility expected in face-to-face interactions.

E-Mail Safety

The school uses approved communication systems to support teaching, learning and administration.

Pupils do not require personal email accounts for school activities.

Where educational platforms include messaging or communication functions, these will be monitored and managed through approved school systems.

Staff should:

- Use school-issued email accounts for all professional communication.
- Follow the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Exercise caution when opening attachments or hyperlinks.
- Report suspicious emails, phishing attempts or security concerns promptly.
- Protect confidential and sensitive information.

All users should understand that email communications may be monitored where appropriate in accordance with school policies and safeguarding responsibilities.

Digital Communications

Technology enables effective communication, collaboration and celebration across the school community.

All digital communication linked to the school should:

- Be respectful and professional.
- Reflect the values and ethos of St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School.
- Promote positive relationships.

- Comply with safeguarding expectations.
- Protect personal information.

Pupils are taught appropriate online communication skills and are encouraged to consider the impact of their words and actions when communicating online.

Staff must not engage in online activity that could compromise professional responsibilities or damage the reputation of the school.

Use of Images, Cameras and Video

Digital photographs, videos and recordings may be used to:

- Enhance learning.
- Celebrate achievement.
- Support assessment.
- Record educational experiences.
- Share information with families.

Photographs and videos of pupils will only be used in accordance with parental permissions and school procedures.

The school will:

- Ensure images are stored securely.
- Avoid the use of full names alongside images.
- Remove images upon request where appropriate.
- Follow data protection requirements.

Staff should only use school-authorised devices for capturing images and recordings.

Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record pupils unless there is explicit authorisation from senior leaders.

Pupils should always seek staff permission before using cameras, recording devices or multimedia tools.

Parent and Carer Use of Images and Video

Parents and carers may occasionally take photographs or videos during school performances and events.

These images are intended for personal and family use only.

Parents and carers should:

- Follow guidance issued by the school.
- Avoid photographing or filming children changing.
- Refrain from posting images of other children online without permission.
- Respect the privacy of all members of the school community.

The school reserves the right to restrict photography or filming where safeguarding concerns exist.

Data Protection

The school complies with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

All members of the school community are expected to:

- Protect personal information.
- Handle data securely.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Access only information they are authorised to use.
- Report data breaches or concerns promptly.

Staff must ensure that sensitive information is stored and shared appropriately in accordance with school procedures.

Pupils are taught the importance of privacy, confidentiality and protecting personal information online.

Online Safety in the Early Years

At St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we recognise that online safety begins in the Early Years.

Technology is used purposefully to support learning, communication, creativity and exploration.

Children are taught, through age-appropriate activities, how to:

- Use technology safely.
- Ask for help when something worries them.
- Treat devices with care and respect.
- Understand simple rules for staying safe online.
- Recognise trusted adults who can help them.

Online safety is modelled daily through interactions with technology and is embedded throughout the EYFS curriculum.

Parents and carers are supported through guidance and resources to promote safe technology use at home.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to deliberately upset, intimidate, threaten or harm another person.

The school recognises that cyberbullying may take place through:

- Social media.
- Messaging services.
- Online gaming.
- Video-sharing platforms.
- Image-sharing applications.

- Other digital technologies.

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated.

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Pupils are taught:

- How to recognise cyberbullying.
- How to respond safely.
- The importance of reporting concerns.
- The impact that online behaviour can have on others.

Incidents will be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Responding to Online Safety Incidents

Online safety concerns will be responded to promptly and appropriately.

Staff should:

- Record concerns accurately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead where necessary.
- Preserve evidence where appropriate.
- Engage parents and carers where suitable.

Responses will take account of:

- The nature of the concern.
- The age of those involved.
- Potential safeguarding risks.
- Wider contextual information.

Serious concerns may involve external agencies including Children's Social Care, the Police or specialist support services.

Staff Acceptable Use

All staff are expected to model safe and responsible technology use.

Staff should:

- Use technology professionally.
- Follow school policies.
- Protect sensitive information.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Promote online safety through teaching and interactions with pupils.
- Report concerns promptly.

Staff must not engage in activities that could compromise safeguarding, confidentiality or professional standards.

All staff will receive appropriate online safety training as part of safeguarding training.

Technical Support and Security

The school's technical systems are designed to support safe, secure and effective learning.

Technical support staff will:

- Maintain filtering and monitoring systems.
- Address security concerns.
- Support staff and pupils.
- Monitor network security.
- Investigate technical issues.
- Promote safe and effective use of technology.

The school regularly reviews systems to ensure they remain effective and appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of online safety provision will be monitored through:

- Pupil voice.
- Staff feedback.
- Safeguarding records.
- Behaviour records.
- Filtering and monitoring reports.
- Curriculum reviews.
- Leadership monitoring.
- Parent feedback.

Findings will be used to improve provision and respond to emerging technologies, risks and opportunities.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Computing Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

- Social Media Policy
 - Acceptable Use Agreements
 - Health and Safety Policy
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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where changes to legislation, safeguarding guidance, technology or school practice require revision.

Through effective online safety education and robust safeguarding practices, St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School seeks to ensure that all pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to navigate the digital world safely, responsibly and successfully.