

# ONLINE SAFETY AND SMARTPHONE POLICY

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## Introduction

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). It should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding, Child Protection and Behaviour Policies.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Online Safety and Smartphone Policy is to:

- Safeguard and protect all members of Rucstall Primary School's community online.
- Identify approaches to educate and raise awareness of online safety throughout the school community.
- Enable all staff and children to work safely and responsibly, model positive behaviour online, and manage personal data and information effectively.
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene, and escalate any incident where appropriate.
- Identify the risks associated with smartphone use and establish guidelines for their use within the school environment.
- Promote awareness among pupils, staff, and families about responsible internet use.

## Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of children, staff, volunteers, and governors.
- Identify and support groups of children that are potentially at greater risk of harm online than others.
- Deliver an effective approach to online safety that empowers us to protect and educate the whole school community in its use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (referred to as 'mobile phones').
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene, and escalate an incident where appropriate.

## Key Categories of Risk

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

1. **Content:** Exposure to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
2. **Contact:** Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, including peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children or young adults with the intent to groom or exploit.
3. **Conduct:** Online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as the making, sending, and receiving of explicit images (both consensual and non-consensual), online bullying, and other harmful behaviours.
4. **Commerce:** Risks associated with online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, and financial scams.

## Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Rucstall Primary School community (including staff, children, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors, community users) who have access to and are users of school digital technology systems, both in and out of the school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Governing Body

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety and smartphones is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety and smartphones whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement.

### Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The headteacher and senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring:

- The Online Safety and Smartphone Policy is implemented and compliance with the policy is monitored.
- Staff receive suitable training and development to carry out their online safety roles.
- Robust reporting channels for online safety or smartphone use concerns and incidents exist (the school currently uses CPOMS and CEOP reporting tool)
- Online safety and smartphone use issues are embedded in all relevant school policies and procedures.

### Designated Online Safeguarding Lead – Rachel Hughlock

The DOSL is responsible for:

- Leading day-to-day online safety and smartphone issues and establishing and reviewing the school's online safety and smartphone policies and procedures.
- Ensuring online safety is recognised across all safeguarding and child protection work.
- Coordinating participation in local and national online safety initiatives – including keeping up-to-date training from NCA (National Crime Agency) with CEOP Ambassador, annual training and use of Smartphones for children.
- Ensuring that online safety including smartphone free training for staff is integrated, current, and relevant.

### All Staff

All staff have a duty of care to ensure the safety of children and to report any concerns about online safety, including use of Smartphones to the DOSL or a member of the DSL team.

Staff are responsible for:

- Consistently enforcing this policy within the school.
- Modelling positive online behaviours and promoting a culture of online safety and smartphone usage.
- Embedding online safety in their teaching and school activities.
- Monitoring children's online activity, including smartphone use and reporting any concerns.
- Maintaining an awareness of current online safety issues and guidance.
- Minimise their use of mobile phones for personal reasons to model appropriate behaviour.

## Children

Children are responsible for:

- Engaging in age-appropriate online safety education, including the use of Smart Technology
- Knowing and adhering to school rules and policies regarding the use of digital technologies.
- Respecting the feelings and rights of others both online and offline.
- Seeking help from trusted adults if they are concerned about something they have seen or experienced online.

## Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have an essential role in ensuring their children use digital technologies safely and responsibly both in and out of school. Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Modelling positive online behaviours and promoting a culture of online safety and smartphone use at home.
- Discussing online safety with their children and reinforcing the school's approach and expectations.
- Keeping up to date with online safety issues and the school's Online Safety and Smartphone Policy.
- Informing the school of any online safety or smartphone concerns that may impact their child or other children at the school.

## Acceptable Use

All members of the school community must adhere to the following acceptable use guidelines as well as our Acceptable use of ICT policy:

- Use school devices for educational purposes only
- Personal devices connected to the school network (for example governors requiring access for meetings) must be used in accordance with this policy
- Do not access, share, or create inappropriate content or engage in any form of online bullying.
- Report any online safety concerns to a trusted adult immediately.

## Use of Work Devices Out of School

- School-owned devices may only be used outside of school for educational purposes as directed by school staff.
- Staff must ensure that sensitive information is stored securely, and devices are returned to school in good condition.
- Children must not take school devices home without prior permission and must adhere to the school's acceptable use policy at all times.

## Imagery Protocol (Use of Pupil Images and Media)

### Rationale

Rucstall Primary School recognises that the use of pupil images in external communications is both a safeguarding and data protection responsibility. In line with updated Hampshire guidance, the school will no longer use forward-facing or otherwise identifiable images of pupils in publicly accessible materials.

This change reflects increasing risks associated with the misuse of images online, including artificial intelligence (AI) manipulation, blackmail, grooming, and other forms of exploitation. The school has a duty to take reasonable steps to reduce these risks and protect all pupils, particularly those who may be vulnerable.

### Principles

The school will ensure that:

- The safety and wellbeing of pupils is prioritised over publicity or promotional purposes
- Pupil images are treated as personal data and handled in accordance with data protection legislation
- Practice aligns with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and local authority guidance
- A consistent, cautious approach is taken to the use of images across all platforms

#### Use of Images in External Communications

In all external-facing materials (including the school website, newsletters, social media, and published documents), the school will:

- Avoid the use of identifiable pupil images (including photographs where faces are clearly visible)
- Use anonymous pupil media wherever possible, such as:
  - Backs of heads
  - Over-the-shoulder views
  - Hands engaged in learning
  - Classroom environments, displays and resources
- Focus images on teaching, learning and the school environment rather than individual pupils
- Ensure that accompanying text does not identify pupils through names, groups, or contextual detail

#### Use of Images

Within the school (e.g. displays, exercise books, internal systems), identifiable images may be used where:

- There is a clear educational, celebratory or developmental purpose
- Appropriate parental consent has been obtained and recorded
- The use is proportionate and does not place the pupil at risk
- Images may also be used for formal school purposes such as class photographs and official school publications (e.g. brochures or postcards), where appropriate consent is in place and use remains controlled and secure

#### Consent and Communication with Parents

The school will:

- Continue to obtain and record parental consent for the use of pupil images
- Clearly communicate how images will be used and explain associated risks
- Respect and apply parental preferences consistently
- Introduce this approach transparently as part of its safeguarding responsibilities

Parents retain the right to withdraw consent at any time, and this will be actioned promptly.

#### Review and Management of Existing Images

The school will:

- Review and audit publicly available pupil images
- Remove or replace identifiable images over time
- Ensure all new content reflects this protocol
- Monitor the school's online presence regularly to reduce risk

#### Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- Following this protocol when taking, storing or using images
- Using only school-approved devices and systems

- Not using personal devices for capturing or storing pupil images
- Reporting any concerns regarding the misuse of images to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately

### Responding to Concerns

Any concerns involving the misuse, manipulation or unauthorised sharing of pupil images will be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. This may include DSL escalation, communication with families, and engagement with external agencies where appropriate.

### Monitoring and Review

This protocol will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there are changes in statutory guidance or emerging safeguarding risks.

### Closing Statement

This approach reflects the school's commitment to safeguarding pupils in an evolving digital landscape, while continuing to celebrate learning in a responsible, inclusive and secure way.

## Smartphone-Free School for Pupils

- Effective from September 2026, the following guidelines will be implemented:
  - Pupils may not bring smartphones to school unless medically required.
  - If necessary, for Year 5 and 6 only, a brick phone allowing voice calls and texts without internet access is allowed which must be handed in to the class teacher upon arrival.
  - Other internet-linked devices (e.g., smartwatches) are not permitted, unless medically required.
- Rucstall Primary School does not support children owning a smartphone for the following reasons:
  - Development of critical thinking and emotional regulation skills.
  - Encouragement of real-life social interactions.
  - Reduction of privacy risks and online dangers.
- Rucstall Primary School promotes a smartphone-free environment to encourage face-to-face interaction and reduce distractions (this is during the time any child is on the school premises, school trips and residential).
- Children are not permitted to have smartphones on school premises unless prior arrangements have been made with the Headteacher under medical grounds.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to support this policy by ensuring that children do not bring smartphones to school.
- In the event of a child having a smart phone in school, it will be reported to the DOSL and reasonable steps will be made to address concerns and risks.

### **Risks Associated with Smartphone Use**

Smartphones offer advanced features, including internet access and social media, which can lead to various risks:

- **Cyberbullying:** Smartphones can facilitate harassment, making it difficult for pupils to escape bullying.
- **Exposure to inappropriate content:** Unfiltered internet access can expose children to unsuitable material.
- **Mental Health Concerns:** Excessive use can contribute to anxiety and depression.
- **Distraction from Learning:** Smartphones can disrupt the learning process.
- **Privacy and Security Risks:** Children may not understand how to protect their personal information, leading to exploitation.

- Self-obsession and Personal Curation: The culture of selfies and social media can create confidence issues.

### **Confiscation and Sanctions**

- The school reserves the right to use sanctions for breaches of the mobile phone policy, including confiscation and suspension.
- Any smartphone or internet-linked device found on school premises will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or carer.
- Brick phones are permitted for the journey to and from school for Years 5 & 6, but if they are not handed in to the class teacher during school hours, they will also be confiscated and returned to a parent or carer.
- Repeated violations may result in consequences in line with our Behaviour Policy.
- Staff are protected from liability when confiscating items if they act lawfully and proportionately.

### **Encouragement of Alternatives**

- If parents wish to consider alternatives such as electronic tags or trackers for location monitoring instead of smartphones.
- We have provided a list of alternative phone options which allow for location monitoring and GPS.
- Where children are due to attend school trips or off site visits, we do not allow the use of any tracking or GPS device for an individual child. This causes increased risk to all children involved and is against our safeguarding and child policy.

### **Critical Incident Management**

In the event of an online safety incident, the school will:

- Follow established procedures for reporting, recording, and responding to incidents.
- Ensure that all staff are trained to manage online safety incidents effectively.
- Provide support and guidance for those affected by online safety incidents.
- Review and adapt policies and procedures following any critical incident to improve future responses.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Rucstall Primary School will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of this Online Safety Policy, including:

- Annual review of the policy and associated procedures.
- Monitoring of online safety incidents and concerns.
- Gathering feedback from the school community on the policy and its implementation.
- Keeping up-to-date with the latest online safety guidance and best practises.

### **Communicating the Policy**

- The policy will be communicated to all members of the school community, including pupils and parents, to ensure clarity and consistency in its implementation.
- Regular reminders will be provided to pupils about the policy and its rationale.

### **Reporting Concerns**

If any pupil, staff member, or family has concerns regarding internet or mobile phone use, they should report it to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (our DSLs are Rachel Hughlock, Nick Blake, Tricia Baugh, Rebecca Dalton-Hunt), who will liaise with the Designated Online Safeguarding Lead. All concerns will be treated seriously and addressed in line with the school's safeguarding and behavioural policies.

## Conclusion

Rucstall Primary School is committed to ensuring the online safety of all members of its community. This policy, along with our safeguarding policy, provides a comprehensive framework to guide the school's approach, ensuring that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a safe online environment. It also addresses the potential dangers of smartphones while promoting responsible habits among pupils. We invite parents to collaborate with us in creating a culture of safety and respect within our school community.

For further information, we encourage parents to visit the links on our school website for resources and support related to children's smartphone use. Together, we can help protect our pupils from the dangers of smartphones and guide them toward healthier technology use.

At Rucstall Primary School, we are dedicated to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all our pupils. Recognising that mobile phones have become ever-present among children, we understand the need for a comprehensive online safety and mobile phone policy that addresses the potential dangers associated with their use. This policy aligns with our safeguarding policy and emphasises our commitment to pupil well-being.

**Designated Online Safeguarding Leader:** Rachel Hughlock  
In the absence of the above named person, DSLs will take responsibility.

## **Alternative Options to Smart Phones**

As a school we have focussed the options firstly associated with keeping children safe and allowing a level of independence for our children in Year 5 and 6. Children in classes below Year 5 and not permitted to have any electronic communication device in school. Please see link for alternative options.

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>

### **Sim cards**

**IMPORTANT** – When you get a SIM card for your child's phone, make sure that it has NO DATA roaming, only calls and texts so that there is no chance that they can access the internet. Currently Asda are the only company that are offering this.