

Itchen Abbas Primary School

Online Safety Policy



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 Policy is to:

- Safeguard and protect all members of Itchen Abbas 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 (through support and guidance), and escalate any incident where appropriate.

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').

Key Categories of Risk

Our approach to online safety 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 Itchen Abbas Primary School community (including staff, children, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors, community users) who have access to and are users of digital technology systems, both in and out of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

In line with the requirements of KCSIE, the governing body has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy and holding the headteacher to account for its implementation. The governing body will ensure:

- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, and the school's approach to online safety is reviewed annually.
- The school has an up-to-date Online Safety Policy and appropriate procedures in place.
- Online safety is integrated into safeguarding and related policies and procedures.

- That online safety is an integral part of curriculum planning and any teacher training.
- The responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement, considers the role of online safety within the school and community.

KCSIE states:

“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 is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety 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 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 concerns and incidents exist (the school currently uses CPOMS)
- Online safety issues are embedded in all relevant school policies and procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Rob Bogan

The DSL (deputy responsibility is delegated to the SLT in Leads absence) is responsible for:

- Leading day-to-day online safety issues and establishing and reviewing the school's online safety 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) and annual training.
- Ensuring that online safety 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 to the DSL or a member of the DSL team.

Staff are responsible for:

- Modelling positive online behaviours and promoting a culture of online safety.
- Embedding online safety in their teaching and school activities.
- Monitoring children's online activity and reporting any concerns.
- Maintaining an awareness of current online safety issues and guidance.

Children

Children are responsible for:

- Engaging in age-appropriate online safety education.
- 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 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 Policy.
- Informing the school of any online safety 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:

- Use school devices and networks for educational purposes only.
- 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.

Smartphone-Free School for Pupils

- Itchen Abbas Primary School promotes a smartphone-free environment to encourage face-to-face interaction and reduce distractions.
- 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 DSL and reasonable steps will be made to address concerns and risks.
- A separate appendix to this policy outlines the rationale, process and expectations for the use of mobile phones in school.

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

Itchen Abbas 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.

Conclusion

Itchen Abbas Primary School is committed to ensuring the online safety of all members of its community. This Online Safety 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.

Appendix 1

Mobile phone usage at Itchen Abbas Primary School

At Itchen Abbas 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 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Identify the risks associated with smartphone use.
2. Establish guidelines for mobile phone usage within the school environment.
3. Promote awareness among pupils, staff, and families about responsible phone use.
4. Provide alternatives that eliminate the necessity of purchasing a smartphone for a child.

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.

Comparison: Smartphones vs. Brick Phones

- **Smartphones:** Multifunctional but pose significant risks.
- **Brick Phones:** Basic devices allowing voice calls and texts without internet access, providing a safer alternative for younger children.

Policy on Smartphone Ownership

Itchen Abbas 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.

Encouragement of Alternatives

We encourage families to consider alternatives such as electronic tags or trackers for location monitoring instead of smartphones.

Guidelines for Mobile Phone Use

Effective from September 2025, the following guidelines will be implemented:

1. **Prohibition of Smartphones:** Pupils may not bring smartphones to school unless medically required.
2. **Prohibited Devices:** Other internet-linked devices (e.g. smartwatches) are not permitted.

Confiscation

- Any smartphone or internet-linked device found on school premises will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or carer.
- Repeated violations may result in suspension.

Communicating the Policy

- The mobile phone 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

- All staff are responsible for consistently enforcing the school's mobile phone policy.
- Staff should refrain from using their own mobile phones for personal reasons during school hours to model appropriate behaviour.
- Staff should ensure that when using smart devices, such as iPads or mobile phones, they access only work-related software and applications (e.g., email, authenticators) to maintain focus on their professional duties and minimise distractions in the classroom.
- Personal apps and communication must be conducted in designated areas, such as the staffroom, office space, or staff car park, to prevent distractions during teaching and uphold a professional learning environment for children.

Pupils

- They will be educated about the risks associated with mobile phones and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.
- Pupils are expected to understand and comply with the mobile phone policy.

Parents

- Parents are encouraged to support the school's policy and discuss its importance with their children.
- In case of urgent communication, parents should contact the school office rather than their child directly.

Sanctions

- The school reserves the right to use sanctions for breaches of the mobile phone policy, including confiscation and suspension.
- Staff are protected from liability when confiscating items if they act lawfully and proportionately.

Reporting Concerns

If any pupil, staff member, or family has concerns regarding mobile phone use, they should report it to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. All concerns will be treated seriously and addressed in line with the school's safeguarding and behavioural policies.

Conclusion

Itchen Abbas Primary School is committed to fostering a safe and productive learning environment. This mobile phone policy, along with our safeguarding policy, 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 and support, we encourage parents to contact us and together, we can help protect our children from the dangers of smartphones and guide them toward healthier technology use.

Date ratified by Governors: May 2025

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Date for review: May 2027