Online Safety policy

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Woodland Rise School

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ZL & JH

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Statement of intent

Woodland Rise School understands that using online services is an important aspect of raising educational standards, promoting pupil achievement, and enhancing teaching and learning. The use of online services is embedded throughout the school; therefore, there are a number of controls in place to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but they can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content**: Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material, e.g. pornography, fake news, self-harm, and suicide, and discriminatory or extremist views.
- **Contact**: Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, e.g. peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit children.
- **Conduct**: Personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, e.g. sending and receiving explicit messages, and cyberbullying.
- **Commerce**: Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, and/or financial scams.

The measures implemented to protect pupils and staff revolve around these areas of risk. Our school has created this policy with the aim of ensuring appropriate and safe use of the internet and other digital technology devices by all pupils and staff.

1: Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019

- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2024) 'Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges'
- DfE (2021) 'Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'.
- DfE (2023) 'Teaching online safety in school'.
- DfE (2022) 'Searching, screening and confiscation'.
- DfE (2023) 'Generative artificial intelligence in education'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'.
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (2020) 'Education for a Connected World – 2020 edition'
- National Cyber Security Centre (2020) 'Small Business Guide: Cyber Security'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Social Media Policy
- Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Prevent Duty Risk Assessment

2: Roles and responsibilities

The Proprietary Body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is effective and complies with relevant laws and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
- Reviewing this policy on a two-yearly basis.
- Ensuring their own knowledge of online safety issues is up to date.
- Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction and at regular intervals.
- Ensuring that there are appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place.
- Ensuring that the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems is reviewed at least annually in liaison with ICT staff and service providers.
- Ensuring that the Leadership Team and other relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the filtering and monitoring provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
- Ensuring that all relevant school policies have an effective approach to planning for, and responding to, online challenges and hoaxes embedded within them.

The Heads of Centre will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that online safety is a running and interrelated theme throughout the school's policies and procedures, including in those related to the curriculum, teacher training and safeguarding.
- Supporting the DSL and the deputy DSL by ensuring they have enough time and resources to carry out their responsibilities in relation to online safety.
- Ensuring staff receive regular, up-to-date, and appropriate online safety training and information as part of their induction and safeguarding training.
- Ensuring online safety practices are audited and evaluated.
- Organising engagement with parents to keep them up to date with current online safety issues and how the school is keeping pupils safe.
- Working with the DSL and ICT technicians to conduct half-termly light-touch reviews of this policy.
- Working with the DSL and Proprietary Body to update this policy on a two-yearly basis.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Taking the lead responsibility for online safety in the school.
- Undertaking training so they understand the risks associated with online safety and can recognise additional risks that pupils with SEND face online.
- Liaising with relevant members of staff on online safety matters, e.g. the SENCO and ICT technicians.
- Ensuring online safety is recognised as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities and that a coordinated approach is implemented.
- Ensuring safeguarding is considered in the school's approach to remote learning.
- Establishing a procedure for reporting online safety incidents and inappropriate internet use, both by pupils and staff, and ensuring all members of the school community understand this procedure.
- Understanding the filtering and monitoring processes in place at the school.
- Ensuring that all safeguarding training given to staff includes an understanding of the expectations, roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems at the school.
- Maintaining detailed, secure, and accurate written records of reported online safety concerns as well as the decisions and whether referrals have been made.
- Understanding the purpose of record keeping.
- Monitoring online safety incidents to identify trends and any gaps in the school's provision and using this data to update the school's procedures.
- Reporting to the Propriety Body about online safety on a basis.
- Working with the Heads of Centre and ICT technicians to conduct half-termly light-touch reviews of this policy.
- Working with the Heads of Centre and Propriety Body to update this policy on a two-yearly basis.

ICT technicians (through our external partner DuFeu) will be responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the school's online safety policies and procedures.
- Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the Heads of Centre.
- Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.
- Working with the DSL and Heads of Centre to conduct half-termly light-touch reviews of this policy.

All staff members will be responsible for:

- Taking responsibility for the security of ICT systems and electronic data they use or have access to.
- Modelling good online behaviours.
- Maintaining a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology.
- Having an awareness of online safety issues.
- Ensuring they are familiar with, and understand, the indicators that pupils may be unsafe online.
- Reporting concerns in line with the school's reporting procedure.
- Where relevant to their role, ensuring online safety is embedded in their teaching of the curriculum.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement and other relevant policies.
- Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced online.
- Reporting online safety incidents and concerns in line with the procedures within this policy.

3: Managing online safety

- All staff will be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues affecting young people, particularly owing to the rise of social media and the increased prevalence of children using the internet.
- The DSL has overall responsibility for the school's approach to online safety, with support from deputies and the Heads of Centre where appropriate, and will ensure that there are strong processes in place to manage any concerns about pupils' safety online. The DSL should consult with the police or children's social care services for support responding to harmful online sexual behaviour.

The importance of online safety is integrated across all school operations in the following ways:

- Staff and the Proprietor receive regular training.
- Staff receive regular email updates regarding online safety information and any changes to online safety guidance or legislation.
- Online safety is integrated into learning throughout the curriculum.

Managing online safety concerns

- Any disclosures made by pupils to staff members about online abuse, harassment, or exploitation, whether they are the victim or disclosing on behalf of another child, will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff will be aware that harmful online sexual behaviour can progress on a continuum, and appropriate and early intervention can prevent abusive behaviour in the future. Staff will also acknowledge that pupils displaying this type of behaviour are often victims of abuse themselves and should be suitably supported.
- The victim of online harmful sexual behaviour may ask for no one to be told about the abuse. The DSL will consider whether sharing details of the abuse would put the victim in a more harmful position, or whether it is necessary to protect them from further harm. The DSL will balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other young people. The DSL and other appropriate staff members will meet with the victim's parents/carers to discuss the safeguarding measures that are being put in place to support their child and how the report will progress.
- Confidentiality will not be promised, and information may be still shared lawfully, for example, if the DSL decides that there is a legal basis under UK GDPR such as the public task basis whereby it is in the public interest to share the information. If the decision is made to report abuse to children's social care or the police against the victim's wishes, this must be managed extremely carefully – the reasons for sharing the information should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialised support should be offered.
- Concerns regarding a staff member's online behaviour are reported to the Heads of Centre, who decides on the best course of action in line with the relevant policies. If the concern is about the Heads of Centre, it is reported to the Proprietor.
- Concerns regarding a pupil's online behaviour are reported to the DSL, who investigates concerns with relevant staff members, e.g. the Heads of Centre and ICT technicians, and manages concerns in accordance with relevant policies depending on their nature, e.g. the Positive Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the Heads of Centre contacts the police.

4: Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Threatening, intimidating, or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips sent via mobile phone cameras.
- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible.
- Threatening or bullying emails sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging.
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook.
- Abuse between young people in intimate relationships online i.e. teenage relationship abuse.
- Discriminatory bullying online i.e. homophobia, racism, misogyny/misandry.

The school will be aware that certain pupils can be more at risk of abuse and/or bullying online, such as LGBTQ+ pupils.

Cyberbullying against pupils or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with quickly and effectively wherever they occur in line with the Anti-bullying Policy.

5: Child-on-child sexual abuse and harassment

All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and understand where the risk of such harms can occur online. Staff will understand that this can occur both in and outside of school, off and online, and will remain aware that pupils are less likely to report concerning online sexual behaviours, particularly if they are using websites that they know adults will consider to be inappropriate for their age.

The following are examples of online harmful sexual behaviour of which staff will be expected to be aware:

- Threatening, facilitating, or encouraging sexual violence
- Upskirting, i.e. taking a picture underneath a person's clothing without consent and with the intention of viewing their genitals, breasts, or buttocks.
- Sexualised online bullying, e.g. sexual jokes, or taunts.
- Unwanted and unsolicited sexual comments and messages
- Consensual or non-consensual sharing of sexualised imagery
- Abuse between young people in intimate relationships online, i.e. teenage relationship abuse.

All staff will be aware of and promote a zero-tolerance approach to sexually harassing or abusive behaviour, and any attempts to pass such behaviour off as trivial or harmless. Staff will be aware that allowing such behaviour could lead to a school culture that normalises abuse and leads to pupils becoming less likely to report such conduct.

Staff will be aware that creating, possessing, and distributing indecent imagery of other children, i.e. individuals under the age of 18, is a criminal offence, even where the imagery is created, possessed, and distributed with the permission of the child depicted, or by the child themselves.

The school will be aware that interactions between the victim of online harmful sexual behaviour and the alleged perpetrator(s) are likely to occur over social media following the initial report, as well as interactions with other pupils taking "sides," often leading to repeat harassment. The school will respond to these incidents in line with the Child-on-child Abuse Policy and the social media Policy.

The school will respond to all concerns regarding online child-on-child sexual abuse and harassment, regardless of whether the incident took place on the school premises or using school-owned equipment. Concerns regarding online child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL, who will investigate the matter in line with the Child-on-child Abuse Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6: Grooming and exploitation

Grooming is defined as the situation whereby an adult builds a relationship, trust, and emotional connection with a child with the intention of manipulating, exploiting, and/or abusing them.

Staff will be aware that grooming often takes place online and that pupils who are being groomed are commonly unlikely to report this behaviour for many reasons, e.g. the pupil may have been manipulated into feeling a strong bond with their groomer and may have feelings of loyalty, admiration, or love, as well as fear, distress and confusion.

Due to the fact pupils are less likely to report grooming than other online offences, it is particularly important that staff understand the indicators of this type of abuse. The DSL will ensure that online safety training covers online abuse, the importance of looking for signs of grooming, and what the signs of online grooming are, including:

- Being secretive about how they are spending their time online.
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend, usually one that does not attend the school and whom their close friends have not met.
- Having money or new possessions, e.g. clothes and technological devices, that they cannot or will not explain.

7: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Although CSE often involves physical sexual abuse or violence, online elements may be prevalent, e.g. sexual coercion and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways through the internet. In some cases, a pupil may be groomed online to become involved in a wider network of exploitation, e.g. the production of child pornography or forced child prostitution and sexual trafficking.

CCE is a form of exploitation in which children are forced or manipulated into committing crimes for the benefit of their abuser, e.g. drug transporting, shoplifting and serious violence. While these crimes often take place in person, it is increasingly common for children to be groomed and manipulated into participating through the internet.

Where staff have any concerns about pupils with relation to CSE or CCE, they will bring these concerns to the DSL without delay, who will manage the situation in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. This process can occur through direct recruitment, e.g. individuals in extremist groups identifying, targeting, and contacting young people with the intention of involving them in terrorist activity, or by exposure to violent ideological propaganda. Children who are targets for radicalisation are likely to be groomed by extremists online to the extent that they believe the extremist has their best interests at heart, making them more likely to adopt the same radical ideology.

Staff members will be aware of the factors which can place certain pupils at increased vulnerability to radicalisation. Staff will be expected to exercise vigilance towards any pupils displaying indicators that they have been, or are being, radicalised.

Where staff have a concern about a pupil relating to radicalisation, they will report this to the DSL without delay.

8: Mental health

Staff will be aware that online activity both in and outside of school can have a substantial impact on a pupil's mental state, both positively and negatively. The DSL will ensure that training is available to help ensure that staff members understand popular social media sites and terminology, the ways in which social media and the internet in general can impact mental health, and the indicators that a pupil is suffering from challenges in their mental health.

9: Online hoaxes and harmful online challenges

For the purposes of this policy, an **"online hoax"** is defined as a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful, normally one that is intended to scaremonger or to distress individuals who come across it, spread on online social media platforms.

For the purposes of this policy, **"harmful online challenges"** refers to challenges that are targeted at young people and involve users recording themselves participating in an online challenge, distributing the video through social media channels and daring others to do the same. Although many online challenges are harmless, an online challenge becomes harmful when it could potentially put the participant at risk of harm, either directly because of partaking in the challenge itself or indirectly as a result of the distribution of the video online – the latter will usually depend on the age of the pupil and the way in which they are depicted in the video.

Where staff suspect there may be a harmful online challenge or online hoax circulating amongst pupils in the school, they will report this to the DSL immediately.

The DSL will conduct a case-by-case assessment for any harmful online content brought to their attention, establishing the scale and nature of the possible risk to pupils, and whether the risk is one that is localised to the school or the local area, or whether it extends more widely across the country. Where the harmful content is prevalent in the local area, the DSL will consult with the LA about whether quick local action can prevent the hoax or challenge from spreading more widely.

Prior to deciding how to respond to a harmful online challenge or hoax, the DSL and the Heads of Centre will decide whether each proposed response is:

- In line with any advice received from a known, reliable source, e.g. the UK Safer Internet Centre, when fact-checking the risk of online challenges or hoaxes.
- Careful to avoid needlessly scaring or distressing pupils.
- Not inadvertently encouraging pupils to view the hoax or challenge where they would not have otherwise come across it, e.g. where content is explained to younger pupils but is exclusively being shared amongst older pupils.
- Proportional to the actual or perceived risk.
- Helpful to the pupils who are, or are perceived to be, at risk.
- Appropriate for the relevant pupils' age and developmental stage.
- Supportive.
- In line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where the DSL's assessment finds an online challenge to be putting pupils at risk of harm, they will ensure that the challenge is directly addressed to the relevant pupils, e.g. those within a particular age range that is directly affected or individual pupils at risk where appropriate.

The DSL and Heads of Centre will only implement a school-wide approach to highlighting potential harms of a hoax or challenge when the risk of needlessly increasing pupils' exposure to the risk is considered and mitigated as far as possible.

10: Online safety training for staff

The DSL will ensure that all safeguarding training given to staff includes elements of online safety, including how the internet can facilitate abuse and exploitation, and understanding the expectations, roles and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems. All staff will be made aware that pupils are at risk of abuse, by their peers and by adults, online as well as in person, and that, often, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

11: Online safety and the curriculum

Online safety teaching is always appropriate to pupils' ages and developmental stages.

Pupils are taught the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform, or app they are using. The underpinning knowledge and behaviours pupils learn through the curriculum include the following:

- How to evaluate what they see online
- How to recognise techniques used for persuasion
- Acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour
- How to identify online risks
- How and when to seek support
- Knowledge and behaviours that are covered in the government's online media literacy strategy.

The online risks pupils may face online are always considered when developing the curriculum.

The DSL will be involved with the development of the school's online safety curriculum. Pupils will be consulted on the online safety curriculum, where appropriate, due to their unique knowledge of the kinds of websites they and their peers frequent and the kinds of behaviours in which they engage online.

Relevant members of staff, e.g. the SENCO and designated teacher for CLA, will work together to ensure the curriculum is tailored so that pupils who may be more vulnerable to online harms, e.g. pupils with SEND and CLA, receive the information and support they need.

The school will also endeavour to take a more personalised or contextualised approach to teaching about online safety for more susceptible children, and in response to instances of harmful online behaviour from pupils.

Class teachers will review external resources prior to using them for the online safety curriculum, to ensure they are appropriate for the cohort of pupils.

External visitors may be invited into school to help with the delivery of certain aspects of the online safety curriculum. The Heads of Centre and DSL will decide when it is appropriate to invite external groups into school and ensure the visitors selected are appropriate.

Before conducting a lesson or activity on online safety, the class teacher and DSL will consider the topic that is being covered and the potential that pupils in the class have suffered or may be suffering from online abuse or harm in this way. The DSL will advise the staff member on how to best support any pupil who may be especially impacted by a lesson or activity. Lessons and activities will be planned carefully so they do

not draw attention to a pupil who is being or has been abused or harmed online, to avoid publicising the abuse.

During an online safety lesson or activity, the class teacher will ensure a safe environment is maintained in which pupils feel comfortable to say what they feel and ask questions and are not worried about getting into trouble or being judged.

If a staff member is concerned about anything pupils raise during online safety lessons and activities, they will make a report in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If a pupil makes a disclosure to a member of staff regarding online abuse following a lesson or activity, the staff member will follow the reporting procedure outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12: Internet access

Pupils, staff, and other members of the school community will only be granted access to the school's internet network once they have read and signed the Acceptable Use Agreement. A record will be kept of users who have been granted internet access in the school office and uploaded to Arbor.

Filtering and monitoring online activity

The Proprietary Body will ensure the school's ICT network has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and that it is meeting the DfE's 'Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges'. The Proprietary Body will ensure 'over blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what pupils can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

The DSL will ensure that specific roles and responsibilities are identified and assigned to manage filtering and monitoring systems and to ensure they meet the school's safeguarding needs.

Deliberate breaches of the filtering system will be reported to the DSL and ICT technicians, who will escalate the matter appropriately. If a pupil has deliberately breached the filtering system, they will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour Policy. If a member of staff has deliberately breached the filtering system, they will be disciplined in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Where there is a significant problem with the misuse of smart technology among pupils, the school will discipline those involved in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

13: Educating parents

The school will work in partnership with parents to ensure pupils stay safe online at school and at home. Parents will be provided with information about the school's approach to online safety and their role in protecting their children. Parents will be sent a copy of the Acceptable Use Agreement at the beginning of each academic year and are encouraged to go through this with their child to ensure their child understands the document and the implications of not following it.

14: The school website

The Heads of Centre will be responsible for the overall content of the school website – they will ensure the content is appropriate, accurate, up-to-date and meets government requirements.

The website will be managed in line with the School Website Policy

15: Use of devices

Staff members and pupils will be issued with school-owned devices to assist with their work, where necessary. Requirements around the use of school-owned devices can be found in the school's Device User Agreement.

The use of personal devices on the school premises and for the purposes of schoolwork will be managed in line with the Staff ICT and Electronic Devices Policy and Pupils' Personal Electronic Devices Policy.

16: Monitoring and review

The school recognises that the online world is constantly changing; therefore, the DSL, ICT technicians and the Heads of Centre conduct half-termly light-touch reviews of this policy to evaluate its effectiveness.

The Propriety Body, Heads of Centre and DSL will review this policy in full on a two-yearly basis and following any online safety incidents.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is August 2028

Any changes made to this policy are communicated to all members of the school community.