



An alternative approach to education

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Online Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

Plan B is committed to an approach to online safety and safeguarding that protects and educates students and staff in their technology use. We aim to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers, and board members. We use training, education, and effective procedures to educate, empower and protect the whole school community when they are online. We recognise that the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, including child-on-child abuse. We take any concerns seriously and escalate these where appropriate.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, we aim to address the following four areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **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, and
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. The DSL liaises with staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare, including online and digital safety and when deciding upon a referral to relevant agencies.

We strive to consistently create a culture that incorporates the principles of online safety across all elements of Plan B life. This helps to support our safeguarding culture.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children when online and provide our staff and volunteers with the guidance and means to do this.

Our mechanisms to identify online safety concerns include our filtering and monitoring system, the direct work we conduct with pupils through our lesson plans and the training we provide to staff.

Where online safety concerns arise we utilise our Safeguarding Policy, Acceptable Use Agreements and Behaviour Policy as necessary to ensure an appropriate response. This could include but is not limited to:

- intervention work with pupils on online safety,
- adjustments to the curriculum to teach key ideas or strategies for staying safe online,
- the use of the Behaviour Policy,

Where necessary, we may need to escalate concerns around online safety. The Designated Safeguarding Lead would take a part in this decision-making process and where necessary external agencies would be involved.



2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Directors:

- Take overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation
- Read, and understand this policy
- Ensure the policy is reviewed and updated annually
- Ensure students are taught about online safety
- Ensure staff and board members receive safeguarding training that includes online safety at induction, and that this is regularly updated
- Ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing Plan B's approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures
- Ensure there are appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review the effectiveness of these systems

2.2. Office Manager:

- Ensure staff understand this policy
- Ensure the implementation of this policy is consistent across Plan B
- Ensure any new members of staff learn about our approach to online safety at induction and regularly thereafter
- Understand the filtering and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and understand how to escalate concerns

2.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead and DDSL's:

- Support the Principal in implementing this policy
- Oversee the annual review of Plan B's approach to online safety, supported by the annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks that children face online
- Take the lead responsibility for online safety as part of their duties as safeguarding lead
- Work with all staff to address any online safety concerns or incidents, in line with our child protection and safeguarding policy
- Liaise with external safeguarding partners as necessary, including children's social care and the police and make referrals with the support of relevant colleagues and their expertise
- Ensure any online safety incidents are recorded appropriately and that staff are aware of how to record online incidents
- Deliver staff training on online safety
- Provide regular updates regarding online safety incidents to the Principal
- Understand the filtering and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and understand how to escalate concerns
- Ensure that the filtering and monitoring system flags safeguarding concerns to the DSL/ safeguarding team and regular reports are received

2.4 All staff and volunteers

- Read and understand this policy
- Assist with the consistent implementation of this policy
- Agree with and follow our acceptable use of IT agreement
- Agree with and follow the Staff Code of Conduct Policy which outlines what we expect from staff in relation to use of mobile and smart technology, social media, and acceptable online communication with students.
- Refer any online safety safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a Deputy DSL by face to face conversation, email, text or via safeguarding concerns chat, and CPOMS



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- Respond appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or harassment, both online and offline, maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here' and not dismissing any reports.
- Update parents (via the Office manager) if their children are being asked to do work online, including the sites they may be asked to access and who, if anyone, their child should be interacting with from Plan B online.

2.6 Parents

- Understand the importance of children being safe online
- Read, understand and comply with this policy
- Read the information shared with parents regarding acceptable use, what Plan B may ask the child to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from Plan B will be interacting with their child
- Notify a member of staff regarding any questions regarding this policy and its implementation
- Ensure their child has read, understood and agreed to the acceptable use agreement
- Support their child to behave safely and appropriately online

3. Teaching online safety

In line with 'Teaching online safety in school,' published by the Department for Education in January 2023, we discuss with pupils about online safety and harms. Our teaching covers the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help pupils to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app.

Throughout this, staff will address online safety and appropriate behaviour in an age appropriate way that is relevant to their pupils' lives, including:

- how to evaluate what they see online
- the risks posed by social media platforms
- how to recognise techniques used for persuasion
- unacceptable online behaviour
- how to identify online risks
- how and when to seek support
- how elements of online activity could adversely affect a pupil's personal safety or the personal safety of others online
- how elements of online activity can adversely affect a pupil's wellbeing

3.1 Pupils with SEND

Plan B pupils have special educational needs, who may be more susceptible to online harm. As such pupils may also face additional risks, for example from bullying, grooming and radicalisation. We tailor our curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils by staff training. We will ensure these pupils receive the information and support they need through mentoring and discussions

In addition, Plan B completes an annual risk assessment for online safety. We consider the updated non-statutory guidance (Jan 2023) from the [DfE on teaching online safety](#) and how we teach these elements.



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4. Filtering and monitoring

We use the [Test your internet filter](#) service to assess our filtering and monitoring and to inform our personalised approach to meeting the standards.

No student can access the internet through Plan B devices

The DSL has lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

The processes we have in place have been informed by our risk assessment as required by the Prevent Duty.

The DfE has published [filtering and monitoring standards](#) which set out that schools should:

- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without reasonably impacting teaching and learning
- Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

We at Plan B have done the following in relation to this - No student can access the internet through Plan B devices

When the monitoring system (manual) detects concerning usage on personal devices, we will record this and take appropriate action, including a referral to children's social care when necessary.

For more information on filtering and monitoring, parents and carers can contact the DSL

We also refer to the [DfE's guidance on the use of generative AI in education \(2025\)](#) to support our approach to online safety, digital literacy and filtering/monitoring practices.

5. Security

Plan B has appropriate levels of security protection, and this is reviewed periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. This includes password protected browsers.

6. Educating parents about online safety

We recognise that parents can play a significant role in keeping their children safe online. To raise parents' awareness of online safety, we keep them informed of their children's online activity reported to us.

7. Use of mobile and smart technology

We recognise that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some students, whilst at Plan B, can sexually harass, abuse, bully or control their peers via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups), and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

To manage this and reduce risk, we manually monitor mobile phone use.

Our Staff Code of Conduct policy outlines what we expect from staff in relation to use of mobile and smart technology, social media, and acceptable online communication with students.

In summary in relation to tablets, game, consoles, mobile phones and wearable technology and appropriate use of social media we outline the following for each group:



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Staff

- No online communication with students
- Social media settings to be set to private
- Names disguised on all social media platforms

Pupils

- No contact online with staff
- No requests to staff for friends or following on social media platforms

Parents

- Make Plan B aware of any messages
- Support their children

8. Training and staff knowledge

All new staff members will receive training, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. This will also include training on the filtering and monitoring system used by Plan B and an understanding of expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to this.

All staff members will receive refresher training at least annually as part of our safeguarding training programme, as well as regular updates where relevant (for example through emails, staff group chats and staff meetings).

The DSL and Deputy DSLs will undertake child protection and safeguarding training, which will include online safety, at least every 2 years. They will also update their knowledge and skills about online safety at regular intervals, and at least annually. This will equip staff with the relevant knowledge and skills to safeguard children effectively, including online.

All staff should be aware and know:

- The indicators of abuse and neglect include understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of Plan B, inside and outside of the home and online.
- To take reports of online harmful behaviour seriously and report them according to the school procedures.
- That technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline.
- That children can abuse other children online, this can take the form of:
 - Online abuse, including sexual
 - Online harassment, including sexual
 - Cyberbullying
 - Misogynistic/ misandrist messages,
 - the non-consensual sharing of incident images, especially around chat groups,
 - and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.
 - That child-on-child abuse could be happening in the school setting and that this could be taking place online. All incidents of child-on-child abuse should be reported in line with our reporting systems.

More information about safeguarding training is set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.



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9. Anti-Bullying and child-on-child abuse

We recognise that our approach to online safety should strengthen the work we do around anti-bullying. The anti-bullying approach of Plan B is highlighted in our Anti Bullying Policy

Our work on online safety helps to tackle bullying by raising awareness of harms and dangers online to our pupils

In addition, we understand that online behaviour can also constitute child-on-child abuse. We respond to incidents of child-on-child abuse in line with our Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy, this includes:

- Any cases of child-on-child abuse will be thoroughly investigated, with the victim always being taken seriously and both the victim and alleged perpetrator given appropriate support. Support will take the child's wishes into account and may include increased pastoral support, a mentor, access to counselling and a referral to external services. We will liaise with the police and children's social care as necessary. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, an immediate risk assessment will be made, considering the needs of the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and our other pupils. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded in our safeguarding files.
- In cases where nudes or semi-nudes have been shared, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (December 2020).
- Plan B recognises that some children and young people may feel worried about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts or behaviours. In such cases, pupils can access confidential advice and support through the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Shore Space service: <https://www.shore.space>.
- We record these incidents in line with our normal record-keeping process. Staff must record their concern or the disclosure using CPOMS.

10. Further information to support you

We work with our local safeguarding partners to ensure our students are safeguarded. We will liaise with these partners where there are safeguarding concerns and will follow their policies and procedures when needing their support. This may include referrals or seeking advice from Children's Social Care, our local Prevent team and/ or the police.

For **parents** the following websites could be of use:

- [Samaritans: Talking to your child about self-harm and suicide content online](#)
- [NSPCC Online Safety Guides for parents](#)
- Report harmful content at <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>
- Report concerns to the NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-reporting/>
- [CEOP](#) - how to help your children get the most out of the internet
- Further guidance shared by the DfE can be accessed [here](#)

For **students** the following websites could be of use:

- [Mind](#)- mental health support
- [Togetherall](#)- online community accessible 24/7
- [Shout](#)- a free text service available 24 hours a day. You can start a conversation by texting Shout to 85258
- [Samaritans' self-help app](#)
- [Kooth](#) is an online mental wellbeing community for young person
- Report harmful content at <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/child/>
- Report concerns to the NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-reporting/>
- Plan B recognises that some children and young people may feel worried about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts or behaviours. In such cases, pupils can access confidential advice and support through the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Shore Space service: <https://www.shore.space>.

For **all staff and volunteers** it is useful to be aware of the resources available to staff and students so that you can signpost them as required. In addition, the following resources could be of use:

- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)- practical resources, advice, and training to support safe and responsible internet use.
- [internetmatters.org](#) – research, free lesson plans, and resources to support the teaching of online safety and digital literacy across subject areas.
- [DfE guidance Teaching online safety in schools](#) - non-statutory guidance outlining how schools can ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of existing curriculum requirements.

Policies/ guidance to be read and understood alongside our online safety policy:

- Safeguarding/ Child Protection policy.
- Behaviour policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct inc. acceptable use of technology in the staff code of conduct policy.
- Anti-bullying procedures including cyberbullying
- [The Prevent Duty](#) and [The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)