



River Bourne Edge Alternative Provision

Online Safety Policy

Policy Owner: Head of Provision
Approved by: Senior Leadership Team
Policy Date: July 2026
Review Date: July 2027

1. Policy Statement

At The River Bourne Edge we recognise that technology plays an important role in education, communication and everyday life. We believe that young people should be equipped with the knowledge, confidence and critical thinking skills to use digital technology safely, responsibly and respectfully.

Our approach to online safety is based on education rather than fear. We work alongside students, families and partner schools to develop positive digital habits, encourage responsible decision-making and support students to navigate the online world safely.

Online safety is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to creating a culture where students feel safe to ask questions, seek help and report concerns without fear of judgement.

Our aim is not only to protect students from online harm but also to prepare them to become safe, respectful and responsible digital citizens.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote the safe, responsible and respectful use of technology;
 - safeguard students from online risks and harm;
 - educate students about positive online behaviour and digital citizenship;
 - support staff in maintaining safe and professional online practice;
 - work in partnership with parents, carers and commissioning schools;
 - ensure compliance with current safeguarding and data protection legislation.
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3. Our Approach

At The River Bourne Edge we understand that the online world offers significant opportunities for learning, creativity and communication.

However, we also recognise that students may encounter risks including exploitation, cyberbullying, inappropriate content, misinformation and online abuse.

Rather than relying solely on restrictions, we aim to educate students so they can make informed and responsible decisions both within and beyond our provision.

Our approach is based upon:

- positive relationships;
- open conversations;
- restorative practice;
- digital resilience;
- critical thinking;
- safeguarding through education.

We encourage students to speak openly with trusted adults whenever they experience something online that makes them feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Current Edition)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Guidance
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Equality Act 2010

The River Bourne Edge will review this policy whenever significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance occur.

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all students;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- agency staff;
- contractors;
- governors/directors;
- visitors using organisational technology;
- anyone using digital technology on behalf of The River Bourne Edge.

The policy applies whenever technology is used:

- on site;
 - during off-site educational activities;
 - while representing The River Bourne Edge;
 - when behaviour online has the potential to impact the safety or wellbeing of members of our community.
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6. Online Safety Responsibilities

Online safety is a shared responsibility.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- ensure appropriate online safety procedures are implemented;
- promote a positive culture of online safety;
- ensure filtering and monitoring systems remain effective;
- support staff training;
- oversee responses to significant online safety incidents.

Staff

All staff will:

- model safe and responsible online behaviour;
- maintain professional boundaries online;
- use approved methods of communication;
- protect confidential information;
- report online safety concerns immediately;
- support students to develop safe online habits;
- follow the Relationships Policy when responding to online incidents.

Students

Students are expected to:

- use technology safely and responsibly;
- treat others with respect online;
- protect personal information;
- report online concerns to a trusted adult;
- use technology to support learning;
- follow staff guidance regarding mobile devices and internet use.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting online safety.

We encourage families to:

- maintain open conversations about online activity;
- encourage safe use of technology at home;
- supervise online activity where appropriate;
- seek advice if they have concerns;
- work in partnership with The River Bourne Edge.

7. Online Risks

Students may encounter a range of online risks.

These may include:

- cyberbullying;
- online grooming;
- child sexual exploitation;
- criminal exploitation;
- radicalisation;
- misinformation and disinformation;

- harmful online challenges;
- online scams and fraud;
- sharing of indecent images;
- inappropriate or harmful content;
- exposure to violent or extremist material;
- deepfake images or videos;
- excessive screen time;
- online gaming and livestreaming risks;
- misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Staff recognise that online risks evolve rapidly and will remain vigilant to emerging technologies and safeguarding concerns.

8. Filtering and Monitoring

The River Bourne Edge uses appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to reduce the likelihood of students accessing inappropriate material whilst using organisational devices and networks.

Filtering and monitoring arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and suitable for the needs of our students.

Whilst technology provides an important safeguard, no filtering system is completely effective.

For this reason, education, supervision and positive relationships remain central to our online safety approach.

Attempts to access inappropriate material may be recorded, investigated and managed in accordance with the Relationships Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9. Mobile Devices and Personal Technology

Technology can be a valuable learning tool when used appropriately.

Personal mobile devices may only be used during learning where authorised by staff for educational purposes.

Students are expected to:

- respect the privacy of others;
- never photograph or film others without permission;
- avoid sharing images or information without consent;
- use technology respectfully;
- follow staff instructions regarding device use.

Misuse of personal devices will be managed through the Relationships Policy using restorative approaches wherever appropriate.

10. Cyberbullying and Online Behaviour

The River Bourne Edge is committed to creating a culture of kindness, respect and responsibility, both online and offline.

Cyberbullying is never acceptable and will be addressed promptly using restorative approaches alongside appropriate safeguarding measures.

Cyberbullying may include:

- sending abusive or threatening messages;
- sharing embarrassing or inappropriate images or videos;
- impersonating another person online;
- excluding others from online groups;
- spreading rumours or false information;
- repeated unwanted online contact;
- posting offensive or discriminatory comments.

Where incidents occur, staff will:

- ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of those involved;
- listen to all parties fairly and respectfully;
- preserve evidence where appropriate;
- inform parents or carers and the commissioning school where necessary;
- consider safeguarding implications;
- facilitate restorative conversations where appropriate;
- involve external agencies where required.

Where online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, appropriate agencies, including the Police, will be contacted.

11. Safe Communication

The River Bourne Edge expects all electronic communication to remain professional, respectful and secure.

Staff

Staff will:

- only communicate with students and families using approved organisational systems;
- never use personal email accounts or social media to contact students;
- maintain professional boundaries at all times;
- protect confidential information;
- follow the Staff Code of Conduct and Data Protection Policy.

Students

Students are encouraged to:

- communicate respectfully online;
 - think carefully before sending messages or images;
 - avoid sharing personal information;
 - seek permission before sharing photographs of others;
 - report inappropriate communication immediately.
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12. Social Media

Social media can provide valuable opportunities for communication and learning but also presents risks.

Students will receive education on:

- protecting personal information;
- recognising fake accounts and scams;
- respectful online communication;
- privacy settings;
- managing digital footprints;
- understanding that online actions have real-life consequences.

Staff will not:

- accept friend requests from current students;
 - communicate with students through personal social media accounts;
 - publish photographs of students without appropriate consent.
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13. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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

The River Bourne Edge supports the responsible and ethical use of AI whilst recognising the potential risks.

Guidance for Students

Students should:

- use AI to support learning rather than replace their own thinking;
- check information provided by AI using reliable sources;
- never share personal or confidential information with AI systems;
- understand that AI may provide inaccurate, biased or misleading information;
- acknowledge AI support where appropriate;
- seek help from staff if unsure how AI should be used.

AI should never be used to:

- cheat;
 - plagiarise work;
 - create harmful or inappropriate content;
 - impersonate others;
 - bully or intimidate others.
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Guidance for Staff

Staff may use AI to support professional practice where appropriate.

However:

- confidential or identifiable student information must never be entered into public AI systems;
 - AI-generated content should always be checked for accuracy before use;
 - professional judgement remains the responsibility of the member of staff;
 - AI should enhance professional practice, not replace it.
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Guidance for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- discuss AI openly with their child;
 - encourage responsible and ethical use;
 - support critical thinking;
 - supervise younger children using AI technologies;
 - seek advice from The River Bourne Edge where concerns arise.
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14. Reporting Online Safety Concerns

Students are encouraged to report anything online that makes them feel:

- worried;
- frightened;
- pressured;
- uncomfortable;
- unsafe.

Concerns may relate to:

- cyberbullying;
- inappropriate contact;
- grooming;
- exploitation;
- extremist content;
- scams;
- AI misuse;
- inappropriate images;
- harmful websites.

All concerns will be taken seriously.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified, staff will immediately follow The River Bourne Edge Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

15. Staff Training

The River Bourne Edge is committed to ensuring staff remain confident and informed about online safety.

Training may include:

- current online safeguarding risks;

- cyberbullying;
- online exploitation;
- Prevent;
- Artificial Intelligence;
- social media;
- filtering and monitoring;
- professional boundaries;
- data protection;
- emerging technologies.

Training will be reviewed regularly to reflect changes in technology and safeguarding guidance.

16. Working with Parents and Carers

Online safety is most effective when schools and families work together.

The River Bourne Edge will:

- provide advice and guidance where appropriate;
 - signpost families to reliable online safety resources;
 - discuss concerns openly and respectfully;
 - encourage positive digital habits;
 - work collaboratively to support students experiencing online difficulties.
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17. Recording and Monitoring

Online safety incidents will be recorded in accordance with The River Bourne Edge Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where appropriate, records may include:

- the nature of the concern;
- actions taken;
- agencies involved;
- communication with parents or carers;
- outcomes and follow-up support.

Senior leaders will monitor online safety incidents to identify trends and opportunities for improvement.

18. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Relationships Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (where applicable)

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
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19. Equality Statement

The River Bourne Edge is committed to ensuring that all students can access online learning safely and equitably.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate to support students with additional needs, disabilities or communication differences.

We recognise that online safety education should be inclusive and accessible to all learners.

20. Policy Summary

Technology provides young people with incredible opportunities to learn, communicate and prepare for the future. It also presents new and evolving risks.

At The River Bourne Edge we believe that the best protection is education, strong relationships and open communication.

We are committed to helping every student develop the confidence, resilience and critical thinking needed to use technology safely, responsibly and ethically.

By working together with students, families, commissioning schools and partner agencies, we aim to create a culture where everyone feels safe, respected and empowered both online and offline.