Online Safety Policy

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Document Control

Review Frequency	Annual
Review Date	September 2026
Ratified By	CAST Senior Executive Leadership Team
Date of Ratification	03/11/2025
Lead/Owner	Chief Operating Officer & Director of Education
Target Audience	CAST Directors CAST Local Governors Senior Leadership Teams at Trust and School Level All staff (Teaching & Non-Teaching) Pupils & Students Visitors Contractors
Document Version	1.0

The electronic version is the definitive version of this document.

The content of this procedure may be subject to revision from time to time in line with the policy review schedule or when legislation changes or operational reasons arise. Consultation with the recognised trade unions will be completed before any changes are made.

Version Changes

Version	Page Number	Details of Change	Agreed By	Date
1.0		New Policy	0311/2025	SELT

1. Vision and Values

1.1. Plymouth CAST is a multi-academy trust of Catholic schools which is part of the mission of the Catholic Church dedicated to human flourishing and the building of a kingdom of peace, truth and justice. The Trust is to be conducted in all aspects in accordance with canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and at all times to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

1.2. Our vision and values are derived from our identity as a Catholic Trust. Central to our vision is the dignity of the human person, especially the most vulnerable. Our academies are dedicated to providing an education and formation where all our pupils and young people flourish in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment. All governors in our academies are expected to be familiar with the vision, mission, values and principles of the Trust and not in any way to undermine them. They should support and promote the vision and conduct themselves at all times in school and on school business according to the vision and principles of the Trust.

1.3. Plymouth CAST expects all its employees to recognise their obligations to each school within the Multi-Academy Trust, the public, pupils and other employees and to provide consistently high standards of education and performance at all times and in accordance with Plymouth CAST's vision, mission and principles.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes a clear framework for the safe use of digital technologies across all Plymouth CAST schools. It outlines roles, responsibilities, and procedures for managing online safety and sets minimum standards in line with:

- The DfE Core Digital and Technology Standards
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- The Trust's Digital Technology Strategy (2025–2027)

It applies to all staff, pupils, governors, volunteers, visitors, and contractors using any technology or digital service within or on behalf of the Trust.

3. Key Principles

- Safeguarding children and vulnerable individuals is paramount.

- Digital activity must reflect the Trust's values of integrity, respect, and accountability.
- All schools must provide filtered and monitored access to the internet via a secure infrastructure.
- Pupils and staff must be equipped to use online tools safely and responsibly.
- All online safety incidents must be logged, investigated, and responded to appropriately.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board and Central Team

- Provide strategic oversight of online safety and ensure Trust-wide compliance.
- Monitor performance against DfE standards and statutory duties.

Headteachers

- Implement this policy locally and oversee the school's online safety practice.
- Ensure filtering systems are in place, training is delivered, and incident response is effective.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- Coordinate the response to online safety incidents.
- Liaise with Securly alerts, CPOMS logs, and the Trust Safeguarding Officer.
- Lead staff awareness and pupil education on online risks.

IT and Digital Leads

- Manage filtering and monitoring systems (Securly).
- Implement cybersecurity measures in line with DfE Core Standard 5.
- Support secure access, patching, and Multi-Factor Authentication.

All Staff

- Follow Acceptable Use Agreements (AUPs).
- Model positive and safe digital behaviour.
- Report incidents or concerns immediately via CPOMS or to the DSL.

Pupils and Students

- Use devices and networks respectfully and safely.

- Report anything upsetting or suspicious online to a trusted adult.
- Follow the Acceptable Use Policy and school digital rules at all times.

5. Infrastructure, Filtering, and Monitoring

- All Plymouth CAST schools use the **Securly** filtering platform or an approved alternative which is compliant with DfE requirements.
- Securly provides keyword filtering, context alerts, and age-adjusted controls.
- Alerts are sent directly to DSLs or safeguarding teams for timely intervention.
- Logs are reviewed termly in safeguarding audits and support risk assessment.
- Filtering is applied on-site and remotely for Trust-managed devices.
- Filtering exceptions must be logged, justified, and authorised by the Headteacher and DSL.

6. Curriculum and Pupil Education

Pupils will be taught online safety as part of the Trust's computing and PSHE/RSE curriculum, and via assemblies, theme days (e.g. Safer Internet Day), and tutor time.

Topics include:

- Online identity, privacy, and password security
- Cyberbullying and respectful behaviour
- Online grooming, radicalisation, and manipulation
- Misinformation and content bias
- Safe and ethical use of AI and digital tools
- Commercial exploitation (e.g. scams, in-app purchases)

Additional considerations:

- SEND and EAL pupils will receive differentiated support.
- Parents will be supported through workshops, newsletters, and school website materials.

7. Staff Training and Acceptable Use

- All staff will receive annual online safety training (statutory for KCSIE compliance).

- Training will include filtering, supervision, incident handling, cyber hygiene, and AI-related risks. Staff are required to sign the **Acceptable Use Agreement** annually.
- Breaches of the AUP will be addressed in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and disciplinary policy.

8. AI, Emerging Technologies, and Digital Citizenship

- This policy aligns with the Trust's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.
- Pupils will be educated in the safe, responsible, and ethical use of generative AI tools.
- Staff will use only approved AI platforms under data protection and safeguarding guidance
- Filtering systems (Securly) will be monitored and updated in response to new threats such as deepfakes, impersonation, or LLM misuse.

9. Incident Management

All online safety concerns must be:

1. Reported immediately to the DSL
2. Logged using CPOMS or a school's safeguarding reporting system
3. Investigated and responded to in line with the Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies

Where there is a serious risk to a child or adult, DSLs must escalate to:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Police / CEOP / Internet Watch Foundation
- The Trust Safeguarding Officer

Annual safeguarding audits will include online safety incidents and trends.

10. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory requirements or threat levels change.
- It will be informed by:
    - Securly alert data and usage reports

- CPOMS online incident logs
- Feedback from pupils, parents, and staff

- Trust-wide online safety audits will assess compliance with DfE Core Standards 1, 2, 5, and 6.

11. Linked Policies and Documentation

- Plymouth CAST Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Plymouth CAST Model Behaviour Policy
- Plymouth CAST Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Plymouth CAST Data Protection Policy
- Plymouth CAST Staff Code of Conduct
- Plymouth CAST Acceptable Use Agreements (AUPs)
- Plymouth CASTDigital Technology Strategy 2025–2027
- DfE Core Digital and Technology Standards

12. Online Safety Risk Categories

(adapted from DfE & UKCCIS framework)

- **Content Risk** – exposure to illegal, harmful, or age-inappropriate content (e.g. pornography, violence, extremism)
- **Contact Risk** – harmful online interactions (e.g. grooming, coercion, trolling)
  Conduct Risk – negative personal behaviours (e.g. cyberbullying, sexting, impersonation)
- **Commerce Risk** – online scams, in-game purchases, fake offers, advertising targeting children

Appendix A: Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement (Summary)

- I will only use school technology for learning and with permission.
- I will not share personal information or passwords online.
- I will always treat others with respect in online communication.
- I will tell a teacher or trusted adult if I see anything upsetting.
- I will not use AI tools without permission from a teacher.
- I understand that what I do online in school can be monitored.

Appendix B: Staff Acceptable Use Agreement (Summary)

- I will use Trust technology and systems professionally and responsibly.
- I will keep all usernames and passwords secure and not share them.
- I will never access, store, or share inappropriate content.
- I will not use personal devices to access pupil data or Trust systems without authorisation.
- I will report any online safety concerns or breaches using CPOMS or to the DSL.
- I will complete all required training and model safe online behaviour.

Appendix C: Online Safety Incident Response Procedure

1. Identification:
Concern is identified by staff, pupil, parent, or filtering system (e.g. Securly).

2. Reporting:
The incident is reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

3. Recording:
The DSL logs the incident in CPOMS or equivalent safeguarding system.

4. Assessment:
The DSL assesses the risk level:

- **Low risk:** restorative action or digital education
- **High risk:** escalated to external agencies (e.g. LADO, Police, CEOP)

5. Response:
Action taken, including informing parents/carers if appropriate.

6. Review:
Incident added to safeguarding logs and reviewed termly as part of Trust audits.

Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the gospel.