

School Filtering and Monitoring Guidelines



Schools in England (and Wales) are required ["to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school, including by establishing appropriate levels of filtering"](#). Furthermore, the Department for Education's statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' obliges schools and colleges in England to "ensure appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place and regularly review their effectiveness" and they "should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system". However, schools will need to "be careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

What is filtering and monitoring?

Filtering systems block access to harmful websites and content. Monitoring systems identify when someone searches for or accesses certain types of harmful online content on school devices, identify who is searching for or accessing the harmful content and alerts the school about it so we can intervene and respond

Responsibilities - We're all responsible for filtering and monitoring

No filtering and monitoring software is perfect as it might not be aware of all the websites that contain inappropriate content, abbreviations or misspellings in a search engine may slip past the software, inappropriate content may be found on websites considered 'safe'.

Governors and Leaders have ensured that our setting has age and ability appropriate filtering and monitoring in place, to limit learners' exposure to online risks. They are also aware of the need to prevent "over blocking" as that may unreasonably restrict what can be taught with regards to online activities and safeguarding.

The management of the school's filtering policy is overseen by the Network Manager with support from the Senior Leadership Team. He manages the school filtering and will keep records of breaches of the filtering systems. The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering and monitoring methods are effective and appropriate.

To ensure that there is a system of checks and balances and to protect those responsible, changes to the school filtering service must be approved by the headteacher. All users have a responsibility to report immediately to the headteacher of any infringements of the school's filtering policy of which they become aware or any sites that are accessed, which they believe should have been filtered. Users must not attempt to use any programmes or software that might allow them to bypass the filtering / security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.

All members of staff are aware that they cannot rely on filtering and monitoring alone to safeguard learners. Effective classroom management and regular education about safe and responsible use is essential

Filtering and Monitoring

Filtering

Education broadband connectivity is provided through Virgin Media Business. We use Meraki Firewall which blocks sites which can be categorised as: pornography, racial hatred, extremism, gaming and sites of an illegal nature. We also are aware of the filtering detecting other safeguarding issues, such as self-harm, serious violent crime or issues with county lines grooming. The filtering system blocks all sites on the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) list. All school devices are connected to a filtered feed.

Changes to the Filtering System

If a school device needs access to additional content, for instance to manage official social media, the filter settings for that device or user should be modified to allow access to that content once the headteacher has been consulted.

- Staff member observes site that is unavailable.
- Staff member obtains filtering log request form from Network Manager.
- Staff fill in form with full details of the site that requires unblocking.
- The form is then passed back to the network Manager.
- The Network Manager checks the site and passes the form onto the Headteacher for approval and a signature to authorise unblocking/blocking of the site.
- The completed form is filed in the Network Manager's office as evidence.
- Users who gain access to, or have knowledge of others being able to access, sites which they feel should be filtered (or unfiltered) should report this in the first instance to the class teacher who will report the matter to the Headteacher.

Monitoring

We will appropriately monitor internet use on all setting internet enabled devices. This is achieved by: Physical monitoring (supervision), monitoring internet and web access. Alerting e-mails are sent to the Headteacher who then takes appropriate action. If a concern is identified via monitoring approaches, the Headteacher will respond in line with the child protection policy. All users will be informed that use of our systems can be monitored and that all monitoring will be in line with data protection, human rights and privacy legislation. Any material believed to be illegal will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies.

If learners discover unsuitable sites, they will be required to:

1. Turn off monitor/screen and report the concern immediate to a member of staff.
2. The member of staff will report the concern to the Headteacher
3. The breach will be recorded and escalated as appropriate.
4. Parents/carers will be informed of filtering breaches involving their child.

Inappropriate content includes:

Illegal content (e.g. child sexual abuse), discriminatory content (e.g. sexist, racist or homophobic content), sites that promote drugs or substance abuse, extremist content (e.g. the promotion of terrorism, gambling sites, malware and/or hacking software, pornography, pirated material (copyright theft, sites that promote self-harm, suicide and/or eating disorders and violent material,

Education / Training / Awareness

Pupils are made aware of the importance of filtering systems through the school's online safety curriculum. They are also warned of the consequences of attempting to subvert the filtering system. Staff users will be made aware of the filtering systems through signing the Acceptable Use Policy and Staff Training. Parents are informed of the school's filtering policy through the Acceptable Use agreement and through ParentMail and online safety session with Online Safety experts.

Audit / Reporting

Logs of filtering change controls and of filtering incidents will be made available to:

- *The Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher / Safeguarding Governor*