

Online Safety Policy



September 2023

To be reviewed September 2025

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- ensure that, as a school, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

Legal Context

This policy is based on and complies with DENI Circulars:

- 2007/1 Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools
- 2013/25 Internet/e-Safety
- 2016/17 Circular Online Safety
- Keeping Young People and Children Safe: An Online Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020-2025

This document sets out the policy and practices for the safe and effective use of the Internet and related technologies in Gracehill Primary School. It also links to Article 17 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Gracehill Primary School's network and devices
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety
- all children have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- appointing an online safety coordinator (Mr McClelland) to liaise with the online safety team (**Appendix 3**)
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our code of practice (**Appendix 2**)
- supporting and encouraging the young people of our school to use the internet, social media, mobile phones and AI in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others (**Appendix 4**)
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online through the use of Safer Schools NI app
- supporting and encouraging parents in how to model effective, appropriate and safe communication on social media (**Appendix 5**)
- developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents or carers (**Appendix 1**)

- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child or young person (**Appendix 3**)
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly through conversation with C2k, Safer Schools NI other trusted voices
- ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate (see GDPR Privacy Notice for Pupils and their Families on website)
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse) (see Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour policies on school website)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying or cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- safeguarding and child protection
- procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing (see above policy and **Appendix 3** below)
- Code of Practice for Staff and ICT Code of Practice Agreement for Pupils and Parents (**Appendix 1 and 2**)
- anti-bullying policy and procedures
- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- photography and image sharing guidance.
- Internet Safety Progression (**Appendix 4**)
- Ballymena Principals Joint Guidance on Social Media Posting (**Appendix 5**)



Appendix 1

Gracehill Primary School

UICT Code of Practice Agreement for Pupils and Parents

Children should know that they are responsible for their use of the Internet in school and that they do so in a safe and appropriate manner. Please discuss these guidelines below with your child and stress the importance of safe use of the internet.

Code of Practice

- I will use ICT in school in a kind and respectful manner. I will only use the websites and apps approved by my teacher.
- If I am unsure about my online safety in school, I will notify a teacher immediately.
- I will do my best to look after the equipment provided to me.
- I will report cyber bullying to Mr. McClelland, a member of staff, or the designated teacher for child protection, Mrs. Cousley. I am aware that if I engage in cyber bullying it will be dealt with in line with the school anti-bullying/positive behaviour policies.

Name of child: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____



Appendix 2

Gracehill Primary School

Code of Practice for Staff

Any breach of this Code of Practice will be dealt with in line with Education Authority Disciplinary Procedures

1. Pupils accessing the Internet should be supervised by an adult at all times
2. All pupils are aware of the rules for the safe and effective use of the Internet
3. All pupils using the Internet have written permission from their parents
4. Recommended websites are regularly shared between staff. Any additional websites used by pupils should be checked beforehand by teachers to ensure there is no unsuitable content and that material is age appropriate.
5. Deliberate/accidental access to inappropriate materials or any other breaches of the school Code of Practice should be reported immediately to Mr McCombe or the SMT
6. In the interests of system security, staff passwords should only be shared with the C2K manager
7. Staff are aware that the C2K system tracks all internet use and records the sites visited. The system also logs e-mails and messages sent and received by users
8. Staff should be aware of copyright and intellectual property rights and should be careful not to download or use any materials which are in breach of these
9. Photographs of pupils should be taken with a school camera and images should be stored on a centralised area on the school network, accessible only to staff.
10. Staff should be aware that it is inappropriate to communicate with pupils via Facebook or other programmes outside of school. When using social media outside of school staff should take care not to post items which may reflect negatively upon the school or any personnel associated with the school. Staff should be aware that such actions will be subject to disciplinary procedures in line with school policies
11. Staff should report cyber bullying to the Safeguarding Team and should be aware that if they engage in cyber bullying it will be dealt with in line with Education Authority disciplinary procedures.



Appendix 2 continued

Gracehill Primary School
Online Safety Statement ~ Staff

The computer system is owned by the school and is made available to staff to further their education and to enhance their professional activities including teaching, research, administration and management. The School's Online Safety Policy has been drawn up to protect all parties – the pupils, the staff and the school.

The school reserves the right to examine or delete any files that may be held on its computer system or to monitor any Internet sites visited.

Staff requesting internet access should be given a copy of this online safety statement and return it to the Principal for approval.

1. All internet activity should be appropriate to staff professional activity or the pupils' education
2. Access should only be made via the authorised account and password, which should not be made available to any other person
3. Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT system, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden
4. Users are responsible for all e-mails sent and for contacts made that may result in e-mails being received
5. Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes and advertising is forbidden
6. Copyright of materials must be protected
7. Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden
8. As e-mail can be forwarded or inadvertently sent to the wrong person, the same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media
9. Use of the network to access inappropriate material such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is forbidden

Staff member's signature _____ Date _____

Principal's signature _____ Date _____

ICT co-ordinator's signature _____ Date _____



Appendix 3

Reporting Procedure

I wish to report a serious ICT incident
e.g. any breach of our online safety
policy



I can report the incident to my teacher or
another member of staff in my room



I should then report the incident to
Mr McClelland (online safety co-ordinator)
or any member of the safeguarding team

A record of serious incidents will be kept in an e-safety log book in a locked cupboard.

The Online Safety Log Book will be made available to the:

- SMT
- Principal
- BoG
- Online Safety Team

Online Safety Team

The Online Safety Team consists of:

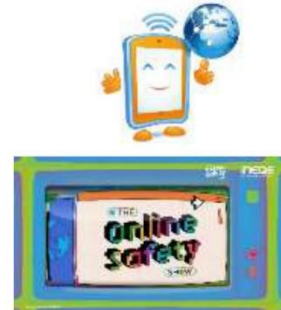
- Mr McClelland Online Safety Coordinator
 ICT Coordinator and C2k Manager
- Mrs Cousley Designated Teacher Child Protection
- Mr R McCombe Principal
- Mrs Rowe Deputy Designated Teacher Child Protection
 Vice Principal
- Mr R Hall BoG for Safeguarding

Appendix 4




Gracehill PS Internet Safety Progression

Whole School Approach:

- All classes will take part in Internet Safety Week in February
- Children in P5-P7 will watch 'The Online Safety Show' by Safer Schools NI every month to discuss topical issues and online safety.
- Safer Schools App



Some proposed resources to try out with your year group:


Year	Activity	Resources
P1	DigiDuck Stories	https://www.childnet.com/resources/digiduck-stories/about-the-series-and-supporting-resources/
P2	Buddy the Dog	https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-t-29363-buddy-the-dogs-internet-safety-story-powerpoint
P3	Chicken Clicken'	Book by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross 
P4	Think You Know video series and Band Runner Game	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/8_10/watch/ 
P5	Minecraft: Cyber Safe AllState Visit	https://education.minecraft.net/en-us/discover/cyber-and-digital-safety/cyber-safe 
P6	Interland	https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/interland 4 levels across 4 weeks?
P7	Safer Schools Teach Hub Resources and/or BBC Own It	https://saferschoolsni.co.uk/teach-hub/ password EDU-SAF-SCH-TH there are some good topical PowerPoint lessons like 'Influencers' https://www.bbc.com/ownit/curations/teachers






Appendix 5



Ballymena Primary Principals' Association
Joint Guidance on Social Media Posting





We tend to forget that almost anybody can see what we are posting online and comments that may have been made in the heat of the moment can easily be copied and then shared by others, even after the original post has been deleted. As Ballymena schools, we wish to urge our school communities to work together, communicate appropriately and remember at all times that parents/carers are representatives of their schools. Inappropriate actions on social media can impact negatively on the life and welfare of those connected with the school.

The partnership of parents and school is central to achieving the best pastoral and educational outcomes for all our pupils.

- All parents have a responsibility in role-modelling effective, appropriate and safe communication on social media.
- Parents/Guardians should be aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking by accessing their own school's social media policy.

Methods of proper school communication with parents/carers include:

- School prospectus, school website, newsletters, texting service, emails, letters and face to face meetings.
- Pictures taken of school members be confined to the school's online platforms.
- Parents should be aware that primary aged children should not be on social media platforms. It is the parents' duty to protect their children from unhelpful social media contact. It is also not the school's responsibility to deal with any social media issues which have taken place outside school.
- Parents should not share complaints about a child, teacher or school through social media as such action, and subsequent comments by others, may cause significant emotional distress to those persons referenced and/or the school community as a whole. Every school has a published Complaints' Procedure which should be adhered to by both parents and the school.

Please remember that perceived complaints written in the heat of the moment and posted on social media may have a personal bias and not necessarily reflect the whole truth about a situation or incident to viewers. We therefore advise parents not to be drawn into liking or commenting on such postings if they see them on social media.

Complaints to do with in-school incidents, should they arise, should be pursued through the appropriate channels by:

- Making contact with the class teacher, the Vice Principal or Principal.
- A meeting can then be arranged at a mutually convenient time to try and bring about a resolution to the issue.
- All schools have a complaints procedure that should be followed.

Parents/carers should also be aware that defamatory/unhelpful comments made online will naturally be viewed negatively by the school as the parent/carer has chosen to disregard the school's Complaint Policy. The parent may have to be asked to come in and speak to Senior Management about this breach in policy and the matter dealt with face to face, which would have been the preferred method of dealing with the initial complaint.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARENTS WHO PARTNER WITH US WITH FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING.