

Online Safety Policy



Version: 2

Ratified by the Governing Body: 16th Oct 2025

Signed by the Governing Body: 16th Oct 2025

To be reviewed (bi-annually): Sept 2027

Uffculme School Online Safety Policy

1. Policy Statement

Uffculme Special School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils, including those with autism, by ensuring a safe and supportive digital environment. Online safety is a key part of our whole-school safeguarding approach and is embedded in our curriculum, staff training, and parental engagement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils, staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors.
- All devices and platforms used within school and for remote learning.
- All forms of digital communication, including email, messaging, social media, and gaming.

3. Aims

- To protect pupils from online harm including inappropriate content, contact, conduct, and commercial exploitation.
- To educate pupils about safe and responsible online behaviour.
- To support families in understanding and managing online risks.
- To ensure staff are trained and equipped to respond to online safety concerns.

4. Online Safety Risks for Autistic Pupils

Children with autism may be particularly vulnerable to online risks due to:

- Difficulties interpreting social cues and online interactions.
- Challenges with understanding safe boundaries and relationships.
- Intense focus on special interests that may lead to excessive screen time or risky searches.
- Increased susceptibility to grooming, cyberbullying, or misinformation.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Oversees online safety provision and incident management.
- Liaises with external agencies and parents as needed.
- Ensures filtering and monitoring systems are effective and reviewed regularly.

Staff:

- Model safe online behaviour.
- Deliver age- and ability-appropriate online safety education.
- Report concerns promptly to the DSL.

Pupils:

- Are taught to use technology safely and respectfully.
- Are supported to understand risks and seek help when needed.

Parents and Carers:

- Are encouraged to engage with school-led online safety initiatives.
- Receive guidance on managing home internet use and supporting their child's digital wellbeing.

6. Curriculum Integration

Online safety is taught through:

- PSHE and Relationships Education.
- Computing and digital literacy lessons.
- Assemblies and enrichment activities.
- Use of visual supports, social stories, and role play to aid understanding.

7. Filtering and Monitoring

- The school uses robust filtering and monitoring systems managed by IT professionals (SENSO)
- Systems are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet DfE standards.
- Staff are trained to interpret monitoring alerts and respond appropriately.

8. Responding to Online Safety Incidents

- All concerns are logged and investigated by the DSL.
- Parents are informed where appropriate.
- Support is offered to affected pupils, including counselling or pastoral care.
- Serious incidents (e.g. grooming, sextortion, radicalisation) are referred to external agencies.

9. Staff Training

- All staff receive annual safeguarding training including online safety.
- Additional training is provided on SEND-specific risks and digital safeguarding.
- Staff are briefed on emerging threats such as AI misuse, deepfakes, and online radicalisation.

10. Parental Engagement

- Regular workshops and newsletters are provided.
- Parents are signposted to resources such as NSPCC, Internet Matters, and CEOP.
- Families are supported to set up safe home environments and manage screen time.

11. Policy Review

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in legislation or technology.
- Feedback from pupils, staff, and parents informs updates.