HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL
'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

Policy Holder	Lead DSL
Date Approved	September 2025
Governor Approval	E&P Committee
Date for next review	September 2026

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Acceptable Use of Technology
- BYOD – pupils use of devices in school
- Cyber-bullying
- The use of smart technology including mobile phones
- Safeguarding Policy
- The Online Safety Act 2023

ONLINE SAFETY STATEMENT

This policy provides guidance on how our School uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff who work for us, and the children who are members of our School, to behave online. As a School, we are committed to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines:

- The terms 'child' or 'children' apply to anyone under the age of 18.
- The term 'parent' applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child.
- The term 'staff' applies to all members of staff and volunteers.

AIMS

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- To protect all children involved with our School and who make use of technology (such as mobiles phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care.
- To provide staff with policy and procedural information regarding online safety.

- To respond to incidents to ensure our School is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding online behaviour.

KEY PERSONNEL

Contacts for parents, children and staff:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (including Online, Filtering and Monitoring)

S Porter – sporter@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

Safeguarding Team

A Faure – afaure@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

K O'Riordan – koriordan@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

D Swift – dwift@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

C Wukics (Boarding) – cwukics@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

Head of IT and Digital Innovation

P Meier – pmeier@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

Safeguarding and Pastoral Governor

A Patton

Online Safeguarding Governor (including Filtering and Monitoring)

O Upchurch

UNDERSTANDING THE ONLINE WORLD

As part of using the internet and social media, our School will:

- Assess and manage the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children when using websites, social media including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, X formally known as Twitter or Snapchat, apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams.
- To ensure all parties (pupils, staff and parents) are aware of age restrictions of websites and apps, how these are governed and how to access additional information on this subject.
- Be aware of how staff and the children they work with, use social media both inside and outside our School.
- Ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media or video conferencing platforms as part of school life.
- Continue to stay abreast of innovations and evolution in how pupils and educationalists use IT as part of school life. This includes the use of AI and how it could be both a benefit and danger to all parties.

- To educate staff and children on the dangers of online use including, but not restricted to: Child sexual exploitation and grooming, safe use of AI, appropriate use of apps and websites, how to report danger or inappropriate behaviour and how to distinguish safe and harmful content viewed to prevent or limit misinformation and conspiracy theories.

- To educate parents and pupils on how their online habits may influence the content they see, to prevent the chances of radicalisation, misogyny or extremism, as well as what to do if they encounter any of this.
- Provide training for the staff responsible for managing our School's online presence.
- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
  - o making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are followed up as part of our safeguarding procedures.
  - o all staff are familiar with the School's Cyber-bullying Policy.

MANAGING OUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All school social media accounts are managed by the Holmewood House Marketing Department and will be password-protected with at least 2 members of staff having access to each account and password.
- The designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from our DSL and Governor (Digital Lead) to advise on safeguarding requirements.

Designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved).

- Children are made aware of who manages our social media accounts and that they need to be of the appropriate age to engage with these accounts.
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number will not be posted on social media platforms. Only children's first names will be used in order to protect identities.
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as a School.
- Parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media. The permission form for this is provided as part of the admissions process, and parents can change their wishes at any time by notifying the school.
- Video conferencing sessions will be password protected to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

What We Expect Of Our Staff

- Staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- Staff should take appropriate action to ensure that they are monitoring pupils during the use of IT as part of any lessons and the School will provide clear reminders of expectations and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring of devices and networks.
- Staff should be aware of online sexual abuse including the possible risk of sexual abuse of children by other children and immediately seek the support of the DSL with any concerns.
- Staff are aware that they should raise any concerns of online sexual violence and/or sexual harassment to a member of the DSL team.
- Staff should seek the advice of the DSL if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Staff should be aware of the four key areas of risk relating to online safety (4C's - Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce).

- Staff should not communicate with children via personal accounts.
- Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using School accounts. They should also disclose to the DSL or Head if a pupil attempts to connect with them on social media.
- Staff should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate and does not bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff should communicate with parents only via their Holmewood House email account. Emails or messages should maintain the School's tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (Xs), the use of slang or other inappropriate language.
- Staff should undertake all online safety training requested and gain an understanding of the current platforms children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online.
- Any concerns reported through social media or via email should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to the School's rigorous safeguarding procedures.
- Staff and children must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene (nude, semi-nude images).
- Staff will monitor pupils' correct online use of devices, spot checks will be carried out routinely on both personal and school devices.
- Any misuse will be recorded in the Misuse of Devices tracker and if necessary, additional education or appropriate sanction put in place. Parents will be informed if this is the case.

What We Expect of Children

- Children should be aware of their responsibilities when online.
- We expect children's behaviour online regardless of the device or platform they are using, to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our Pupil Acceptable Use Code of Conduct.
- Children are not permitted to use their devices without adult supervision, including during break times and after school activities, including in the boarding house.
- To be involved in the development of the online safety curriculum through enrichment programmes, My Heart My Mind programme, school council agendas and pupil voice opportunities.
- Children will be aware that their online presence will be monitored through our filtering and monitoring systems.
- Any misuse will be recorded in the Misuse of Devices tracker and if necessary, additional education or appropriate sanction put in place. Parents will be informed if this is the case.

What We Expect of Parents

- Parents should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.
- Parents should protect all children's privacy online and think carefully about what content they share about our school online, where they share it and who they're sharing it with.
- We expect parents' behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement and in our codes of conduct for parents (see parental terms and conditions).

Using Mobile Phones or Other Digital Technology

Please see School policies on the use of personal smart technology including mobile phones and the use of mobile phones on residential trips.

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ABOUT KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

- **NSPCC**

The NSPCC's guidance for parents on online safety

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety

- **Internet Matters**

Helping parents keep their children safe online

https://www.internetmatters.org/

- **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)**

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Demand's website

www.ceop.police.uk

- **The UK Safer Internet Centre**

Safer Internet Centre's advice for parents and children

www.saferinternet.org.uk

- **Sharing nudes and Semi Nudes**

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people

- **Kent County Council**

Online Safety and Your Family

https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/43568/Trading-Standards-online-safety-for-children.pdf

- **The Education People**

Online Safety: Parent and Carers

The Education People | CPD, Training, Safeguarding

- **Childnet**

Help, advice and resources for parents and carers

https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/

- **Parent Zone**

Working towards a safer digital world of opportunities

https://parentzone.org.uk/

- **Parents Protect**

Helping parents and carers protect children from abuse and exploitation

https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/