E-Safety (Internet Access) Policy

Reviewed: 09.26
To be reviewed: 09.28

Policy Area	**E-Safety (Internet Access)**
Reviewed by	Mr M Morris (DSL) & Mr Steve Irvine (Online Safety Lead)
Approved by	Governing Body – Mrs Bernadette Buckle (Safeguarding Governor)
SLT Oversight	Mr Lee Green
Review Date	September 2026
Next Review Due	September 2028

Summary of Key Updates (2025 Revision)

- Updated to comply with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)*.
- Integrated *Prevent Duty (2015, updated 2024)*.
- Alignment with *UKCIS Education for a Connected World (2024)*.
- Inclusion of AI, social-media and emerging-technology guidance.
- Strengthened accessibility and inclusion for sensory-impaired learners.
- Updated Responsible Use and Parent Consent appendices.
- Recognition of **Smoothwall** as the school's filtering / monitoring provider.
- Compliance with *DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2023)* and *Cybersecurity Standards (2023)*.
- Integration with *GDPR (2018)* and *Data Protection Act (2018)*.

1 Introduction and Compliance Framework

Discussion:
E-Safety is an integral part of safeguarding and forms part of St Vincent's wider ICT, Behaviour and PSHEE framework.

- Aligns with statutory guidance – *KCSIE 2026*, *Prevent Duty 2024*, *UKCIS 2024*, *DfE Cybersecurity and Filtering Standards 2023*, and *GDPR 2018*.
- Applies to all staff, pupils, volunteers, parents and visitors.
- Promotes safe, responsible and ethical technology use.

2 Why Internet Access Is Important

Discussion:
The Internet provides essential opportunities for information, communication and collaboration. Properly managed, it enhances learning and supports professional development.

- Improves access to curriculum resources and enrichment activities.
- Enables communication with parents and external agencies.
- Facilitates cloud-based collaboration and online learning.

3 How the Internet Benefits Education

Discussion:
Use of the Internet supports *Education for a Connected World*.

- Access to global resources, experts and virtual museums.
- Opportunities for collaboration with schools worldwide.
- Professional development networks for staff.
- Efficient communication with the LA and DfE.

4 Filtering and Monitoring

Discussion:
Filtering protects users from harmful content; monitoring supports safeguarding.

- The school uses **Smoothwall**, compliant with *DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2023)*.
- Reviewed termly by the **DSL** and **Online Safety Lead**, with reports to the **Safeguarding Governor**.
- Protects against inappropriate, extremist or illegal material.

- Users must report concerns to the Online Safety Lead.
- Any illegal material will be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation and law enforcement.

5 Emerging Technologies, Artificial Intelligence and Social Media

Discussion:
Technology evolves rapidly; new tools must be used ethically and safely.

- AI tools and new technologies assessed for educational value and risk.
- Used only under staff supervision for approved learning.
- Creation or sharing of harmful or misleading AI-generated content is forbidden.
- All school-related social-media accounts are authorised and monitored.
- Pupils are taught about misinformation and digital footprints.

6 Accessibility and Inclusion

Discussion:
As a specialist setting for sensory impairment, inclusion is central.

- Assistive tech – screen readers, Braille displays, voice control, magnifiers – is embedded.
- Online-safety teaching adapted for all sensory and cognitive needs.
- Staff trained in inclusive digital practice.

7 Responsible Use of Technology

Discussion:
Responsible use underpins all ICT activity.

- All users follow the **Responsible Use Agreement**.
- Technology must be used respectfully and lawfully.
- Personal data and passwords kept private.
- Copyright and IP rights respected.
- AI and communication tools used ethically.
- Misuse may lead to disciplinary action or loss of access.

8 Curriculum and Education

Discussion:
Online safety is embedded across PSHEE and Computing, following *Education for a Connected World (2024)*.

- Pupils learn to evaluate online information, manage digital identity and understand consent.
- Staff model responsible online behaviour.
- Reinforced through assemblies and cross-curricular themes.

9 Parental and Community Engagement

Discussion:
Parents and carers play a vital role.

- The school provides guidance via newsletters, workshops and its website.
- Parents signposted to **Childnet**, **Internet Matters**, and **NSPCC**.
- Promotes partnership to support safe home use.

10 Reporting Concerns and Complaints

Discussion:
Prompt reporting ensures effective safeguarding.

- Concerns reported immediately to **DSL** or **Online Safety Lead**.
- Logged and investigated per the Safeguarding Policy.
- Serious incidents referred to external agencies.
- Parents and pupils informed of appropriate outcomes.

11 ICT Security and Data Protection

Discussion:
Robust ICT security protects all users.

- Systems meet *DfE Cybersecurity Standards (2023)*.
- Firewalls, encryption and authentication secure the network.
- Software and antivirus kept up to date.
- Personal data processed in line with *UK GDPR* and *Data Protection Act 2018*.
- Staff use secure, school-approved cloud services.

12 Policy Review and Governance

Discussion:
Regular review ensures relevance and effectiveness.

- Reviewed annually by **DSL**, **Online Safety Lead**, and **SLT**.
- Approved by the Governing Body.
- Interim reviews after incidents or national updates.
- Shared with staff, pupils and parents.

St Vincent's School for Blind and Partially Sighted Children
Responsible Internet Use

Rules for Staff and Students

The school computer system provides Internet access to students and staff. This Responsible Internet Use statement will help protect students, staff and the school by clearly stating what is acceptable and what is not.

- Access must only be made via the user's authorised account and password, which must not be given to any other person.
- School computer and Internet use must be appropriate to the student's education or to staff professional activity.
- Copyright and intellectual property rights must be respected.
- Users are responsible for e-mail they send and for contacts made.
- E-mail should be written carefully and politely. As messages may be forwarded, e-mail is best regarded as public property.
- Anonymous messages and chain letters must not be sent.
- The use of public chat rooms is not allowed.
- The school ICT systems may not be used for private purposes, unless the headteacher has given permission for that use.
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden.
- The security of ICT systems must not be compromised, whether owned by the school or by other organisations or individuals.
- Irresponsible use may result in the loss of Internet access.

The school may exercise its right by electronic means to monitor the use of the school's computer systems, including the monitoring of web-sites, the interception of E-mails and the deletion of inappropriate materials in circumstances where it believes unauthorised use of the school's computer system is or may be taking place, or the system is or may be being used for criminal purposes or for storing text or imagery which is unauthorised or unlawful.

Responsible Internet Use

We use the school computers and Internet connection for learning.

These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- **I will ask permission before entering any Web site, unless my teacher has already approved that site.**
- **On a network, I will use only my own login and password, which I will keep secret.**
- **I will not look at or delete other people's files.**
- **I will not bring floppy disks into school without permission.**
- **I will only e-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved.**
- **The messages I send will be polite and sensible.**
- **When sending e-mail, I will not give my home address or phone number, or arrange to meet someone.**
- **I will ask for permission before opening an e-mail or an e-mail attachment sent by someone I do not know.**
- **I will not use Internet chat.**
- **I see anything I am unhappy with or I receive messages I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately.**
- **I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit.**
- **I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet or computers.**

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Dear Parents

Responsible Internet Use

As part of your child's curriculum and the development of ICT skills, St. Vincent's School is providing supervised access to the Internet. We believe that the use of the World Wide Web and e-mail is worthwhile and is an essential skill for children as they grow up in the modern world. Please would you read the attached Rules for Responsible Internet Use and sign and return the consent form so that your child may use Internet at school.

Although there have been concerns about pupils having access to undesirable materials, we are taking positive steps to deal with this risk in school. Our school Internet provider operates a filtering system that restricts access to inappropriate materials. This may not be the case at home and we can provide references to information on safe Internet access if you wish. We also have leaflets from national bodies that explain the issues further.

Whilst every endeavour is made to ensure that suitable restrictions are placed on the ability of children to access inappropriate materials, the School cannot be held responsible for the nature or content of materials accessed through the Internet. The School will not be liable for any damages arising from your child's use of the Internet facilities.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of Internet use (or to see a lesson in operation) please telephone me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Consent Form

Gaining pupils' and parents' agreement to the Rules for Responsible Internet Use is important but requires sound organisation. Some schools do this once each year, at the same time as checking the home and emergency contact details. The Rules for Responsible Internet Use should be included with the letter to parents to avoid any misunderstanding.

For pupils above the age of 16 and not living at home or for pupils18 or older, the school should be able to rely on the consent of the pupil alone. Otherwise parent's consent must be obtained. It is also wise to obtain parent's permission to publish pupil's work and to publish pupil's photographs, subject to strict safeguards, on the school Web site.

Responsible Internet Use

Please complete, sign and return to the school secretary

Pupil:	***Form:***
Pupil's Agreement I have read and understand the school Rules for Responsible Internet Use. I will use the computer system and Internet in a responsible way and obey these rules at all times.	
Signed:	***Date:***
Parent's Consent for Internet Access I have read and understood the school rules for responsible Internet use and give permission for my son/daughter to access the Internet. I understand that the school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure pupils cannot access inappropriate materials. I understand that the school cannot be held responsible for the nature or content of materials accessed through the Internet. I agree that the school is not liable for any damages arising from use of the Internet facilities.	
Signed:	***Date:***
Please print name:	
Parent's Consent for Web Publication of Work and Photographs I agree that, if selected, my son/daughter's work may be published on the school Web site. I also agree that photographs that include my son/daughter may be published subject to the school rules that photographs will not clearly identify individuals and that full names will not be used.	
Signed:	***Date:***

Based on the Internet Policy of the Irish National Centre for Technology in Education.