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Guidance

Online safety guidance for staff

Published 9 July 2026

Applies to England

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Online safety is an important part of your professional conduct and personal security. These suggestions help you:

- meet expected standards of online behaviour
- protect your personal and school-wide digital security
- safeguard your online reputation
- reduce the risk of online bullying or harassment

Preventing problems

Meeting behavioural expectations

Understand your school's policies on online behaviour and the use of social media. [Childnet's using technology guide](#) has information on what to be aware of at home, at school and in the classroom.

Familiarise yourself with your responsibilities and your school's responsibilities in respect of online safety and cyber security.

Reducing the likelihood of becoming a victim of online bullying

Understand the privacy and security settings of any social media and apps you use and keep them up to date. NASUWT provides guidance for teachers on [protecting your privacy online](#). Advice is also available from the [Safer Internet Centre](#).

Be mindful of your own behaviour online to avoid breaching your school's behaviour policy, or your employment code of conduct.

Protecting your online reputation

Regularly check on your online presence (for example, by typing your name into a search engine). Negative content is much easier to deal with as soon as it appears. The UK Safer Internet Centre provides information on [managing your professional reputation](#).

Be aware that your reputation could be harmed by what others share about you online (for example, if you are tagged in inappropriate posts, photographs or videos) and you may want to discuss this with family, friends and colleagues. You may become a target if they do not have their own security and privacy settings in place.

Reducing the likelihood of becoming a victim of online bullying

Avoid accepting friend requests from pupils past or present. If you feel it is necessary, seek guidance from a senior manager first. Be aware that your social media friends may also be friends with pupils or their family members and could therefore read your posts, if you do not have appropriate privacy settings. The UK Safer Internet Centre provides [social media advice for teachers](#).

Do not give out personal contact details. If pupils need to contact you about homework or exams, always use your school's contact details. On school trips, staff should have a school mobile phone rather than relying on their own.

Use your school email address for school business. Keep your personal email address for your private life. Do not mix the 2. This includes for file-sharing sites.

Addressing issues

If you are bullied online:

- never respond or retaliate – report the matter and seek support from your manager or a senior member of staff
- save evidence of the abuse – take screenshots or prints of messages or web pages and record the time and date

If you know the perpetrator is a current pupil or colleague, the majority of cases can be dealt with most effectively through your school's own procedures.

If the perpetrator is known to be an adult and a parent or carer of a pupil, the first action, in most cases, should be for a senior staff member to invite the person to discuss their concerns. If they have a reasonable complaint, they should be advised how to raise this appropriately and be requested to remove any offending comments. If they refuse, it should be for you and the school to decide what to do next.

Options include:

- reporting the matter to the social media platform in question, if it is illegal or breaches their terms. Advice on removing harmful online content is available from:
 - [Report Harmful Content](#)
 - [Internet Watch Foundation](#)
- seeking guidance from the local authority, employer or academy trust's legal advisers, or other agencies, such as the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

If the comments are threatening or abusive, discriminatory, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a representative from the school may consider contacting the police. Online harassment is a crime and employers have a duty to protect staff.

You can seek support from:

- your senior management team
- your union representative (if you are a member)
- The [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- The [NSPCC](#) by email help@nspcc.org.uk or their helpline for professionals on 0808 800 5000

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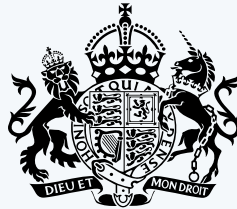
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