Online Safety Policy

Date created: September 2024

Last review: September 2025

Reviewed: Annually

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1. Policy Statement

At Hawthorn Learning, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our Students, including their safety online. We recognise that our Students may have a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and our approach to online safety is adapted to meet individual needs and circumstances.

2. Aims

- Protect Students from online harm, including cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and online exploitation
- Provide accessible, differentiated education on safe and responsible internet use
- Support Team members and parents/carers in understanding their roles in online safety, especially for Students with SEND

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Students, Team members, volunteers, and visitors using the setting's IT equipment or accessing the internet within setting
- All devices and platforms used for setting purposes, including remote learning and assistive technology

4. Leadership and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Tomlin Wilding, responsible for online safety and safeguarding
- **Directors:** Overall responsibility for implementing the online safety policy
- **All Team Members:** Required to model safe online behaviour, adapt support to individual pupil needs, and report concerns
- **Students:** Encouraged and supported to follow online safety rules and report unsafe behaviour according to their ability

5. Education and Training

- Students receive regular online safety education, adapted to their level of understanding, through our THRIVE Curriculum
  - Use of visuals, social stories, and practical demonstrations to reinforce key messages
- Team members receive annual training on online safety, with a focus on supporting Students with SEND and recognising specific vulnerabilities
- Parents/carers are offered accessible information, factsheets, and workshops on online safety, including practical strategies for supporting their child at home

6. Filtering and Monitoring

- Robust, age- and ability-appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place for all setting devices and networks
- Regular reviews of filtering and monitoring systems to ensure they remain suitable for our Students' needs
- Team members are vigilant in supervising online activity and responding promptly to concerns

7. Acceptable Use

- **Students:** Supported to understand and engage into the settings mutual agreement around phone usage
- **Team Members:** Encouraged to model good online behaviour and support the setting's approach to online safety
- **Parents/Carers:** Encouraged to model good online behaviour and support the setting's approach to online safety

8. Responding to Incidents

- All online safety concerns are reported to the DSL or deputy, in line with setting safeguarding procedures
- Serious incidents (e.g., online abuse, exploitation) are referred to external agencies as appropriate
- All incidents are recorded and reviewed to inform future policy and practice

9. Communication

- This policy is available on the setting website and in accessible formats on request
- Regular updates and accessible guidance (e.g., easy-read, translated, or symbol-supported materials) are shared with Students, Team members, and parents/carers

10. Review

- This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner in response to significant incidents or changes in guidance or legislation