

The St Michael Steiner School

E-Safety Curriculum Policy

This policy explains how we teach pupils how to keep themselves safe while they are using the internet.

Our separate Policy for the Use of Electronic Media provides information about the measures we have put in place to protect our children from the dangers of internet use. These include guidance for parents, but, although we offer this, we cannot enforce it and so we must assume that even some of the youngest children in the school will be exposed to, or have access to, digital media and the internet, and provide them with appropriate support through the school's curriculum.

It is important to bear in mind that children should not be given the impression that the internet is a bad place full of predatory people; we don't want them to be afraid, suspicious or untrusting of people in real life or on the internet; this would work against our ethos of inclusion and openness to others. However, when something isn't right, the signs can be very subtle, and even as adults we often ignore them. The aim of this and other aspects of the curriculum is to help our children be aware of the signs, or that feeling, that something isn't right, and to know what to do.

E-Safety issues

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- ¥ content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- ¥ contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- ¥ conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.
- ¥ commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

The risk of children being exposed to these risks at school are minimal as children are not allowed to bring smartphones to school, or they are collected at the beginning of the day, right up to Class 12. Since September 2024, St Michael Steiner School has become a no-phone school.

Finding out about pupils' internet use

This is done in a general way in order that we can develop the content of the curriculum in relation to the children's actual experience.

- At the beginning of each school year, the school sends a questionnaire to parents of children/students between the ages of 9 and 18 about their children's internet use and experience.
- Students between the ages of 13 - 18 are also given a questionnaire.

- In our experience, children will always talk about the games they play, the things they see and read on the internet, for example at break times or in craft lessons. Teachers listen and ask them about it from time to time.

In this way, we keep abreast of changes in our children's online activity. The questionnaires are anonymous, so that pupils and parents do not feel the need to hide their online activity.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten and younger school pupils (Classes 1 and 2) are provided with safety messages through specially designed developmentally appropriate narratives and informal conversations that arise spontaneously. The teachers address any issues or questions that these children may have in an age-appropriate way.

Classes 3 - 6

Children between 9 and 12 are not given a questionnaire but a conversation is initiated by the Class teacher in the classroom to raise the relevant questions and issues and to gauge how the children are using the internet.

The Class teachers starts a discussion, giving the children the space to speak freely about:

- whether or not they have, or have access to, a smart phone, tablet or laptop
- if they have access to the Internet, whether or not their parents are present while they use it
- what kind of websites they look at and how often
- if they use any social media apps and in what way

The Class teacher then directs the conversation through questions relating to the risks and dangers of online activities.

Questions such as:

- "Have you ever chatted on social media with someone you don't know?"
- "Have you ever met up in real life with someone you met online?"
- "What do you think you should do if someone asks to meet you?"
- "Why do you think people find it easier to post negative comments on other people's posts online but wouldn't say something so negative to someone face-to-face?"
- "What do you think you should do if someone posts something negative about you?"
- "Is it more difficult to get to know someone when you can't see them?"
- "Why do you think it's not a good idea to say where you are when you post things on Instagram or Tik Tok?"
- "When you google something online do you only find the thing you're looking for?"
- "What would you do if you were chatting with someone online and something about them felt a bit funny or strange?"
- "Do you know how to make your account secure? Show me"

Through questions like these, the pupils can be given the space to open up about their online usage and the Class teacher has the opportunity to explain to the pupils ways in which they can protect themselves from certain online dangers.

These conversations should happen once a year in Classes 3 and 4 and once a term in Classes 5 and 6 unless it seems necessary to do it more often in a particular class.

Classes 7 - 12

From Class 7 onwards, the topic comes up in connection with teaching the children how to do research online; different aspects are brought in Global Issues lessons on a regular basis, (as needed and at least once a term) including looking at short videos about various scenarios and individual cases, such as those in the Online Safety training provided by EduCare and by the ISA, to stimulate discussion and sharing of personal experiences.

Even if the pupils have not had bad experiences on the internet themselves, they will have heard of someone who has. Often the stories are exaggerated and dramatised and it's very easy for young teenagers to become fascinated by them. We have to be careful to keep these conversations from becoming sensational.

There are many websites that provide material for these lessons including:

- Teaching online safety in school: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811796/Teaching_online_safety_in_school.pdf is DfE guidance outlining how schools can ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of existing curriculum requirements
- Be Internet Legends: https://beinternetlegends.withgoogle.com/en_uk?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=be_internet_legends&utm_term=beinternetlegends&gclid=CjwKCAjwNf6BRAwEiwAkt6UQk1gQO0NKsWyf68EyvCEjFGzNyYTOTL4A5baFRF5a5IYOSd0cf_ukhoCrEkQAvD_BwE is a free internet safety curriculum with PSHE accredited lesson plans and teaching resources
- Disrespect nobody: <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk> is Home Office advice and includes resources on healthy relationships, including sexting and pornography
- Education for a connected world framework: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896323/UKCIS_Education_for_a_Connected_World_.pdf is designed to be usable across the curriculum and beyond (covering early years through to age 18) and to be central to a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and online safety.
- PSHE association: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk> provides guidance to schools on developing their PSHE curriculum
- Thinkuknow: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> is the National Crime Agency/CEOPs education programme with age specific resources
- Anti-Phishing Working Group <https://apwg.org/>
- Safer Internet Guide: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/teachers-and-school-staff/teaching-resources>
- NSPCC Resources for teaching Online Safety: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/online-safety-resources>

Support

Pupils should be made aware that, if they have a bad experience using the internet, or have fears or concerns about it, they should speak to either their Class Teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Related policies

- Policy for the Use of Electronic Media
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Curriculum policy
- Sex and Relationships Education Policy