

Online Safety Policy

The safe use of ICT and the internet

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Roles and responsibilities.....	4
3. Authorised internet access	7
4. Managing emerging technologies including tablet computers & mobile telephones.....	9
5. Protecting personal data.....	9
6. Information system security	9
7. ICT equipment and internet use	9
8. Internet danger awareness.....	10
10. Staff training.....	10
9. Assessing risks.....	11
11. Handling online safety complaints.....	13
12. Communication of this policy	14
Associated policies	14
Further guidance and resources	14

1. Introduction

Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust and its schools take an effective whole school approach to online safety which includes an understanding of filtering and monitoring to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles, strategies and procedures for the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) throughout the Trust and its schools. It also recognises the risks involved in both existing and new/emerging technologies.

Online safety encompasses internet technologies and electronic communications such as mobile phones and smart technology. It highlights the need to educate children and young people about the benefits and risks of using new technology and provides safeguards and awareness for users to enable them to control their online experiences.

Online Safety depends on effective practice at a number of levels:

- Responsible ICT use by all staff and students; encouraged by education and made explicit through published policies.
- Sound implementation of online safety policy in both administration and curriculum, including secure school network design and use.
- Safe and secure broadband including the effective management of content filtering and monitoring arrangements.

- Adhering to DfE standards and specifications: [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#).
- Following guidance and requirements laid out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

1.1. The distinctive contribution of ICT to the school curriculum.

ICT contributes to the curriculum by preparing all students to participate in a rapidly changing society in which work and other forms of activity are increasingly dependent on ICT. The subject develops students' information skills, including the ability to use information sources and ICT tools to help them find, explore, develop, analyse, exchange and present information and to support their problem solving, investigative and expressive work.

An essential part of ICT capability is evaluating information and the ways in which it may be used, and making informed judgements about when and how technology can be used. Students also develop understanding of the implications of ICT for working life and society.

The use of ICT significantly enhances teaching and learning in other subjects by enabling rapid access to knowledge, information, and experiences from a wide range of sources. The use of ICT throughout the curriculum encourages critical thinking, imagination and creativity, problem solving, initiative and independence, teamwork, and reflection.

The addition of computing to the curriculum allows pupils the opportunity to create digital technology and software for themselves and gives them an understanding of how the systems that they use work; therefore, making students better informed and more responsible users.

1.2. Aims

Through the use and teaching of ICT/computing the Trust aims to:

- Meet current requirements of curriculum.
- Help other curriculum areas meet the requirements of curriculum change through the support of ICT.
- Allow staff and students to gain confidence in and enjoyment from the use of ICT and computing.
- Allow students to develop specific ICT and computing skills as set down in a school's scheme of work.
- Ensure that staff and students alike understand the capabilities and limitations of ICT and gain insight into the implications of its development for society.
- Allow teaching staff to develop professionally by enhancing their teaching skills, management skills and administrative skills.
- Support all trainee teachers in their use of ICT in the curriculum as part of their Initial Teacher Training.
- Deliver an effective approach to online safety, which empowers us to protect and educate the whole school community in its use of technology, including mobile and smart technology.
- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors, with clear mechanism to identify, intervene and escalate incidents, where appropriate.

1.3. Online safety - The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk as defined in [Keeping children safe in education 2021](#)¹ (KCSIE):

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending, receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scam

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The Trust board

The Trust has overall responsibility for all aspects of safeguarding in its schools and as such trustees have responsibility for setting and monitoring this policy and, for gaining assurance of its implementation.

This includes ensuring the Trust has appropriate filters and monitoring to reasonably limit exposure to risks via the ICT systems, whilst also being careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding.

Working with its schools, the Trust will apply the appropriate level of security protection and procedures in place, to safeguard systems, staff, and children. These arrangements will be reviewed periodically to ensure their effectiveness and to keep up to date with evolving cyber-crime technologies.

2.2. The governing board

The governing board has a responsibility for monitoring this policy and holding the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will make sure that all staff undergo online safety training as part of child protection and safeguarding training, and ensure staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring.

At least annually, the governing board will review filtering and monitoring systems to ensure they are embedded and that they are effective.

They will also co-ordinate regular meetings with staff to discuss online safety and monitor online safety logs as provided by the designated safeguarding lead.

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014057/KCSIE_2021_September.pdf

All governors will:

- Ensure they have read and understand this policy
- Agree and adhere to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet
- Ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme while devising and implementing their whole school approach to safeguarding
- Ensure that, where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, is adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some pupils of SEND because of the importance of recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach may not be appropriate for all children in all situations, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may often be more suitable

2.3. The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school.

2.4. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Details of the school's DSL are set out in our child protection policy. The DSL takes lead responsibility for online safety in school, in particular:

- Supporting the headteacher in ensuring that staff understand this policy and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the school
- Working with the headteacher, ICT manager and other staff, as necessary, to make sure the appropriate systems and processes are in place, and address any online safety issues or incidents
- Taking the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place on school devices and school networks
- Managing all online safety issues and incidents in line with the school child protection policy, ensuring all incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy
- Updating and delivering staff training on online safety
- Providing regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety, to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Liaising with other agencies and/or external services if necessary
- Undertake annual risk assessments that consider and reflect risks children face, and provide regular reports on online safety in school to the headteacher and governing body

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

2.5. The ICT manager

The ICT manager is responsible for:

- Putting in place an appropriate level of security protection procedures, such as filtering and monitoring systems, which are reviewed with the DSL and updated on a regular basis with the DSLs to assess effectiveness and ensure pupils are kept safe from potentially harmful and inappropriate content and contact online, while at school, including terrorist and extremist material
- Ensuring that the school's ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware, and that safety mechanisms are updated regularly

- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files
- Conducting regular security checks and monitoring the school's ICT systems
- Working with DSLs to ensure that any online safety incidents are appropriately logged and dealt with appropriately

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

2.6. All staff and volunteers

All staff, including contractors and agency staff, and volunteers are responsible for:

- Maintaining an understanding of this policy
- Implementing the policy consistently
- Agreeing and adhering to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet and ensuring that pupils follow the school's terms on acceptable use
- Working with the DSL to ensure that any online safety are logged and dealt with appropriately
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with appropriately and in line with the school behaviour policy
- Responding appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or harassment, both online and offline and maintaining an attitude of "it could happen here"
- Knowing that the DSL is responsible for the filtering and monitoring systems and processes, and being aware of how to report any incidents of those systems or processes failing by contacting the DSL and ICT helpdesk immediately
- Knowing that if filtering and monitoring systems need to be bypassed for educational purposes then guidance and authorisation must be sought from the DSL

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

2.7. Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this policy
- Ensure their child has read, understood and agreed to the terms on acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet

Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations:

- What are the issues? – [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- Hot topics – [Childnet International](#)
- Parent resource sheet – [Childnet International](#)
- [Healthy relationships – Disrespect Nobody](#)

2.8. Visitors and members of the community

Visitors and members of the community who use the school's ICT systems or internet will be made aware of this policy, where relevant, and expected to read and follow it. If appropriate they will be expected to agree to the terms on acceptable use.

3. Authorised internet access

3.1. General

- All students, staff and visitors must read and sign a Computer Network and ICT Acceptable Use Agreement before using any school ICT resources.
- Parents will also be asked to sign and return the Student Computer Network and ICT Acceptable Use Agreement.
- Parents will be informed that students internet access will be monitored but that it is not possible to filter all unsuitable sites.
- Students must apply for internet access individually by agreeing to comply with the Computer Network and ICT Acceptable Use Agreement.
- Access to the wi-fi in each school will be managed locally, by each school, through the use of specific log on and passwords available from the IT Office/Headteacher/Administrator.

3.2. World Wide Web

- If staff or students discover unsuitable sites, the URL (address), time, content must be reported to the ICT Network Team/Class Teacher.
- All teaching staff should ensure that their use of internet derived materials, and that of students, complies with copyright law.
- Students should be taught to be critically aware of the materials they are shown and how to validate information before accepting its accuracy.

3.3. Email

- Students may only use approved e-mail accounts on the school system.
- Students must immediately tell a teacher if they receive any offensive e-mails.
- Students must not reveal personal details of themselves, or others, in e-mail communications, or arrange to meet anyone, without specific permission.
- Staff should not disclose any personal details about themselves when communicating via email with students.
- All communication with students should be through the school email system and not through staff members or students' personal email accounts. Access in school to external personal e-mail accounts may be blocked.
- Any email sent from the school should be written with the same considerations as a letter written on school headed paper and follow exactly the same procedures and protocols.
- School email accounts should not be used to register for any type of non-school related online account (including all forms of social media) without express permission from the ICT Network Team/Headteacher.

3.4. Social Networking

- The school will block/filter access to social networking sites and newsgroups unless a specific use is approved.
- Students will be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them or their location.
- Students should be advised not to place personal photos on any social network space.
- Students should be advised on security and encouraged to set passwords, deny access to unknown individuals and instructed how to block unwanted communications. Students should be encouraged to invite known friends only and deny access to others.

3.5. Filtering and monitoring

- The Trust will be using a professional filter which will enable web content to be filtered using a number of techniques. These include real-time context analysis in multiple languages, a known database of categorised sites and sophisticated image content analysis.
- The Trust uses SSL Intercept Mode. This means every time you visit a site in the form <https://somesite.com> the filter software will decrypt, check, and re-encrypt the traffic before continuing communication with the target site.
- As students progress through school, they are given greater responsibility as the filtering of internet use is reduced. Sixth Formers for example may have access to YouTube to allow them to access its many educational resources dependent on what courses they are on.
- The Trust's filter monitors traffic to the web on school devices both on and off site and produces a daily report of potential inappropriate searches using keyword monitoring. These reports are reviewed on a regular basis by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Filtering and monitoring arrangements in Trust schools will consider the age range of students, the level of student access, the costs associated versus the safeguarding risk, and the Prevent Duty risk assessment.

3.6. Video conferencing

- Pupils should ask permission from the supervising teacher before making or answering a videoconference call.
- Videoconferencing will be appropriately supervised for the pupils' age.

3.7. Published content

School website

- The contact details on the website will be the school address, e-mail and telephone number.
- Staff or students' personal information will not be published.
- The Trust will adopt a Publication Scheme in line with Information Commissioner guidance.

Publishing students' images and work

- Photography and video: Working with children and young people may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of children and young people.
- Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child or young person, must always be sought before an image is published for any purpose. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media, or on the internet.
- Photographs that include students will be selected carefully and will be appropriate for the context.
- Students' full names will not be used anywhere on Trust websites, blogs or any social media content, particularly in association with photographs.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs or video of students are published on the school website.

- Work can only be published with the permission of the student and parents.

4. Managing emerging technologies including tablet computers & mobile telephones

- Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use in school is allowed.
- Mobile phones **must not** be used for personal use during lessons or formal school time (student's mobile phones should normally be switched off and out of sight during lesson time). However, the teacher in charge may give permission for the use of mobile phones for educational purposes.
- The sending of abusive or inappropriate messages in all forms, and using all technologies, is forbidden. This includes the sending of indecent images, consensually or non-consensually.
- Any misuse of these technologies will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy, or in the case of staff, in line with the Code of Conduct.
The school will consider whether incidents that involve illegal activity or content, or otherwise serious incidents, should be reported to the police.

5. Protecting personal data

Personal data will be recorded, processed, transferred and made available according to the Data Protection Act 1998². Further information can be found in the Trust Data Protection Policy.

6. Information system security

- Trust ICT systems capacity and security, including the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems and processes will be reviewed regularly.
- Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly.
- Security strategies will be discussed with all stakeholders.
- Laptops (supplied by the school) should be connected to the school network at least once per calendar month to allow for anti-virus scans/updates to occur and software updates to be installed.
- Access to USB memory sticks is disabled.

7. ICT equipment and internet use

Devices must not be used in any way that would violate the ICT acceptable use agreement. Misuse will be dealt with in line with the staff Code of Conduct/student Behaviour Policy.

All students, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and governors are required to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and internet. Visitors will be expected to read and sign the agreement if relevant.

Use of internet in school

Use of the school's internet must be for educational purposes only, or for the purpose of fulfilling the duties of an individual's role.

Websites visited will be monitored to ensure they comply with the above agreement and access restricted through filtering systems where appropriate.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Staff using work devices

Work devices must be used solely for work activities. All staff members must take appropriate steps to ensure their devices remain secure. This includes but is not limited to:

- Keeping the device password protected
- Ensuring the hard drive is encrypted
- Making sure the device locks if inactive for a period of time
- In the case of working from home, not sharing the device amongst family or friends
- Keeping operating systems and anti-virus software up to date by always installing the latest updates – devices should be connected to the school network at least once per calendar month to allow for these updates to be installed
- Notifying the ICT team of any concerns regarding the security of their device

Staff using personal devices for school related activities

Staff should not use personal laptops/tablets for school related activities. Where this is unavoidable, then you should seek permission from the ICT Network Team and the following preventative steps taken:

- Due care and attention should be taken to protect usernames and passwords. You should never use 'remember me' to store any usernames or passwords, particularly on personal equipment.
- Software such as Teams should be logged off at the end of each session in order to prevent unauthorised/accidental access.
- School related data/information **must not** be downloaded and stored onto personal laptops.

8. Internet danger awareness

All students will be made aware of the potential dangers of online activity.

A program of online safety education will be delivered throughout the year covering, but not limited to, cyberbullying, sexting, using ICT in the workplace and digital footprints. These messages are supplemented and reinforced by assemblies. Where necessary, topics will be adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The teaching of online safety throughout the curriculum will help students:

- Develop the knowledge and behaviours needed to navigate the internet safely, responsibly and respectfully
- Understand and recognise the harms and risks that can come from being online
- Find ways to look after their wellbeing when using the internet
- Critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- Identify harmful behaviours online, know where to report them and how to find support

Parents will be alerted to topical issues relating to internet danger via emails and newsletters.

10. Staff training

All new staff members will receive training, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues, including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation.

All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year as part of safeguarding training, as well as relevant updates as required (for example through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

By way of this training, all staff will be made aware that:

- Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of online abuse
- Children can abuse their peers online through:
 - Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nudes or semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography,
- Physical abuse, sexual violence and initiation/hazing type violence can all contain an online element

Training will also help staff:

- Develop better awareness to assist in spotting the signs and symptoms of online abuse
- Develop the ability to ensure children can recognise dangers and risks in online activity and can weigh up the risk
- Develop the ability to influence students to make the healthiest long-term choices and keep them safe from harm in the short term

More information about safeguarding training is set out in the Child Protection Policy.

9. Assessing risks

The Trust will take all reasonable precautions to prevent access to inappropriate material.

However, due to the international scale and linked internet content, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a school computer. The Trust, therefore, cannot accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences of internet access.

The school will regularly audit ICT use to establish if the online safety policy remains adequate and that the implementation of the online safety policy is appropriate.

10.1 Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Adults

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the internet is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children and young people, if proven.

Adults should not use equipment belonging to the Trust to access adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children. School equipment can be monitored to guard against inappropriate usage.

Where indecent images of children or other unsuitable material are found, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Child Protection Officer (CPO) should be immediately informed

(depending on material / circumstances the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) may also be informed). Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

Students

Staff should ensure that children and young people are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Organisations need to ensure that internet equipment used by children have the appropriate controls with regards to access. E.g., personal passwords should be kept confidential, and appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

If a staff member, including volunteers, contractors or visitors working in school is made aware of, or suspects an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), **they must report it to the DSL immediately.**

They must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.

All incidents involving nudes and semi-nudes must be referred to the DSL (or equivalent) as soon as possible

10.2. Risks to students from the internet and emerging technologies

Some of the more common risks to children and young people, which all users need to be aware of, and which the Trust staff will be actively monitoring and looking for signs of are:

- Children/students viewing adult pornography.
- Children/students abused through using the internet and mobile phones.
- Children/students creating and sending indecent images of themselves to others.
- Children/students who create, view or download sexually abusive images of other children.
- Children/students creating or placing images of other children online.
- Children/students groomed for sexual abuse online.
- Children/students made the subject of child abuse images or pseudo-images.
- Inappropriate material promoting sexual/racial intolerance and/or terrorism/extremist behaviour.

10.3. Prevent Duty responsibilities

In cases of potential radicalisation/extremism the national Prevent Duty may be implemented which could lead to the referral of individuals to the Prevent Duty Delivery Board and the Channel Panel in specific circumstances.

The objectives of the [Prevent strategy](#) are to:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that need to be addressed
- The guidance from the Home Office explains that schools should be "safe spaces" that allow pupils to "understand and discuss sensitive topics" such as terrorism and extremist ideas, and enable pupils to challenge these ideas.

It adds:

The Prevent duty is not intended to limit discussion of these issues.

Schools should, however, be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues.

10.4. Cyber-bullying

This can take many forms and has the potential for a much wider audience by its very nature and, as a result, a much greater level of participation. All incidents of cyberbullying will be recorded by the school and pupils will be made aware of how to report such incidents. Internet access and the use of ICT equipment will be restricted to anyone guilty of cyberbullying, with parents/carers involved as appropriate.

10.5. Artificial intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access.

The Trust recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. Any use of AI to bully others will be dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out a risk assessment where they are being considered for use in school.

10.6. Remote learning

Where remote learning is required, risks must be assessed, and appropriate safeguarding measures must be put in place. Staff and students will be reminded of the importance of online safety, and expectations will be communicated to both students and their parents.

11. Handling online safety complaints

- Complaints of a child protection nature must be dealt with in accordance with school child protection procedures.
- Complaints of internet misuse will be dealt with by the Network Managers and/or school's Headteacher.
- Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Headteacher.
- Pupils and parents will be informed of the complaints procedure.

12. Communication of this policy

13.1. Students

- Rules for internet access are posted in all ICT suites.
- Students will be informed that internet use will be monitored.
- Advice and online safety information available to students via School Websites and Intranet

13.2. Staff

- All staff will be given the School Online Safety Policy and its importance explained.
- Staff should be aware that internet traffic can be monitored and traced to the individual user. Discretion and professional conduct is essential.
- Staff that manage filtering systems or monitor ICT use will be supervised by senior management and have clear procedures for reporting issues.

13.3. Parents

- Parents' attention will be drawn to the School Online Safety Policy in newsletters and on the school website.
- Advice and online safety information will be available to parents via school website.
- Parents should be aware that the Trust will take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of its students: in cases where the school has reason to be concerned that any child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or any other form of abuse, the school has no alternative but to follow the Trust's Child Protection Policy.

Associated policies

Below are listed the associated policies for consideration when reading and reviewing this policy:

- YCST Acceptable Use Agreement (Adult/Student/Visitor)
- School Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy

Further guidance and resources

- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [Online safety guides - NSPCC](#)
- [Think U Know resources – CEOP](#)
- [Be Internet Legends – Google](#)
- [Disrespect Nobody – Home Office](#)