



Online safety updates for schools from the government during COVID-19 to be read in conjunction with [NYCC online safety guidance for schools](#)

Schools are providing a range of learning opportunities for pupils during COVID-19 including home learning which does have implications for the school's online safety policy.

Schools need to ensure the online safety policy allows for teaching classes online and the Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) are also inclusive for teaching classes online and that all staff, pupils and parents/carers are familiar with the school policy and AUPs.

All schools should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all their children safe. Whilst more children return to school, others will continue to stay at home and, in many cases, will be continuing to engage with their school online. It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should continue to be made to children's social care and as required the police.

The Government have produced a range of supporting information for schools which includes reference to online safety. These guidance documents are set out below. These are only a summary of the guidance documents; the full document will need to be read.

The [Government has produced a range of supporting information and signposting](#) to support everyone being safe online as more people are working from home, looking after children and spending time online. It is important for everyone to know how to stay connected, stay safe online, check the facts and remember to take a break.

They have specific guidance for schools on [Remote Education during COVID-19, guidance for schools](#) which provides further information on education resources and links to safeguarding guidance.

[Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) provides information on how schools can ensure the safety of the whole school community. Some key aspects in relation to online are:

- Most children are being educated at home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, so school leaders and teachers are having to adjust to remote education strategies. While this is happening, it is important that schools continue to follow safeguarding procedures.
- As set out in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) guidance, online education should follow the same principles set out in your school's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct).

- Keeping teachers safe when providing remote education is also essential. Remote education is a new experience for both staff and pupils, so it's important that schools understand how to approach safeguarding procedures online.
- Schools may wish to use these resources to understand more about ensuring online education is safe:
 - remote education advice from [The Key for School Leaders](#)
 - advice from [NSPCC](#) on undertaking remote education safely
 - guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on remote education
 - Guidance on [teaching online safety in schools](#) provides information to help schools ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online.
- Virtual lessons and live streaming
 - Should schools choose to provide remote education using live streaming or pre-recorded videos, guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) on [which video conference service is right for your school](#) and [using video conferencing services securely](#) could help schools to set up video conferencing safely, if this is the chosen approach.
 - In addition, [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) includes detailed advice on live, online teaching, and the [safeguarding guidance from London grid for learning \(LGfL\)](#) includes platform-specific advice.

[Online safety in schools and colleges](#)

- As more children return it will be important that schools and colleges continue to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home. Schools and colleges should continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what "appropriate" looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college's IT systems. Schools and colleges should consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. Schools and colleges should also consider what their contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.
- The [UK Council for Internet Safety](#) provides information to help governing bodies and proprietors assure themselves that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.
- Internet Matters [vulnerable children in a digital world-report](#) may help governing bodies, proprietors, senior leaders and DSLs understand more about the potential increased risks some groups of children can face online.

[Addendum to Child Protection Policy COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at School name](#)

Section 9 and 10 of the addendum refers to online safety in and away from schools which schools need to ensure are updated in the CPP.

[Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings Addendum April 2020 in response to COVID-19.](#)

- Section 24a. Use of technology for online / virtual teaching has a full section of addendums that need to be considered for the online safety policy and practice including all settings should review their online safety and acceptable use policies and amend these if necessary, ensuring that all staff involved in virtual teaching or the use of technology to contact pupils are briefed on best practice and any temporary changes to policy / procedures.
- There are also further references in the document in relation to:
 - *Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report any such incident to a senior manager.* This is as relevant in the online world as it is in the classroom; staff engaging with pupils and / or parents online have a responsibility to model safe practice at all times.
 - *Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake;* this also applies to online or virtual teaching or when working with small groups on site (in the case of schools who remain open to vulnerable children or those of critical workers). This means staff should wear clothing which *in online engagement, is similar to the clothing they would wear on a normal school day*

The **NSPCC** have developed a very [informative online safety information hub](#) which contains a wide range of useful information for schools and is regularly updated in line with COVID-10 updates.

If you have any further questions relating to online safety please do contact Clare Barrowman, Health and Wellbeing Adviser, clare.barrowman@northyorks.gov.uk , 07969 103741