



Online Safety Policy (2 year reviews)

April 2026

The Paddock is a calm and nurturing alternative provision in Shropshire, offering personalised, research-informed support for young people who need a smaller, more flexible approach to learning. We specialise in helping academically capable students who currently find mainstream environments overwhelming, providing a peaceful space where they can re-engage, rebuild confidence, and thrive.

We recognise that many of our young people partners have spent a great deal of their time online and exposed to numerous social media and other web based content. This Online Safety Policy functions to make clear the approach we take towards achieving our aims as a learning provider, including the high expectations we have for our young people partners. It will identify the dangers faced by our young people partners and the steps we will take to encourage their safety online.

The Aims of The Paddock Community

As a community, we aim to ensure the following are in place...

- robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of all partners including young people, staff, volunteers and governors
- identification and support for young people that are potentially at greater
- risk of harm online than others
- an effective approach to online safety, which protects and educates the Paddock community in its use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- clear mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate an incident, where appropriate

There are many opportunities for risk online, but the following categories have been identified as areas to address through the work we do with our young people partners on achieving their project targets...

1. Content

This includes the exposure online to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism

2. Contact

This refers 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

3. Conduct

The personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and 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

4. Commerce

Including risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

In order to create this policy, we have referred to the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and its advice for schools on:

[Teaching online safety in schools](#)

[Preventing bullying](#)

[Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)

[Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation in schools](#)

[Education for a Connected World](#)

It also refers to the DfE's guidance on [protecting children from radicalisation](#)

In addition to the above, this policy should be read alongside The Paddock's policies on...

- Behaviour
- Bullying
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Staff Code of Conduct

Responsibilities at The Paddock

All members of staff at The Paddock are responsible for safeguarding. However, specific responsibilities are placed as follows.

Young people partners will use all technology responsibly and in a safe way, reporting anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or they feel is inappropriate.

All staff will model the expected online behaviour. They will adhere to this policy and the Child protection and Safeguarding policy at all times, reporting concerns without unnecessary delay and in accordance of the policies. Where appropriate, they will deliver or help the delivery of the curriculum content on e-safety.

The DSL will have an overview of all of the above, and ensure that the appropriate support is put in place to facilitate the e-safety aims at The Paddock.

The Character of the Paddock Community

As a community we are committed above all to providing safety and respect for our young people partners. As a result, the use of online resources is restricted to ensure our partners are...

- Aware of their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online
- Aware of online risks, including the ease with which shared material can be forwarded to others without consent
- Aware not to provide materials to others that they would not want shared further
- Aware of what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- Understand the impact of viewing harmful content
- Understand that specifically sexually explicit material (e.g. pornography) presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- Know that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence that carries severe penalties including prison
- Understand how information and data is generated, collected and shared online
- Recognise how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours

The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in circle time and in Student induction days. Where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, will be adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some students with SEND. There are circle time sessions that are delivered to students which capture all of this information.

Safeguarding of The Paddock Community

The filtering and monitoring of online content plays an important part in not only keeping our young people partners safe whilst at The Paddock, but also in their learning of how to keep themselves safe when they are not. The following areas are filtered on all equipment through The Paddock's Wi-Fi...

- Age specific sites such as pornography, gambling and gaming
- Content which can be interpreted as radicalisation and extremism
- Promotion of harmful behaviours content such as drugs, self-harm and suicide
- Unprotected and unsafe sites
- Illegal gaming and streaming sites
- All social media

All young people partners will be monitored whilst using the internet. Its use will form part of one – to – one sessions and there will be no unstructured use.

Learning at the Paddock

Young people partners will be taught about online safety as part of the wellbeing curriculum at the Paddock. This will form at least one target in each partner's projects. The rationale for the content of this area of the curriculum comes from Education for a Connected World (UK Council for Internet Safety) which identifies the 8 key strands for our programme...

- Self-image and identity
- Online relationships
- Online reputation
- Online Bullying
- Managing online information
- Health, wellbeing and lifestyle
- Privacy and security

- Copyright and ownership

These are delivered through a blend of one-to-one sessions and circle time. Where they have been identified as a key element of a young people partner’s project, they will always be delivered in a specific one-to-one session. We aim for our online safety education to be empowering, building resilience and effecting positive culture for change.

As part of this programme, we will reiterate our expectation that all partners should be encouraged to report any concerns over online behaviour, including use outside of The Paddock of the areas listed above.

Policy	Online Safety Policy
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Date reviewed	
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Signed	
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