

**Title:** Online Safety

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## Policy Aims

The policy aims to ensure that:

- **Safeguarding and Protection:** All staff, students, apprentices, and visitors of Bath College are safeguarded and protected while engaged in online activity.
- **Commitment to Online Safety Education:** There is a commitment across Bath College to identify and embed approaches to educate and raise awareness of online safety.
- **Responsible Online Conduct:** Staff work safely and responsibly, role modeling positive behavior online, and maintaining professional standards and practice when using technology.
- **Effective Response to Concerns:** Bath College is effective in responding to online safety concerns.

The College recognises that online safety issues are considerable but can be broadly categorised into three areas:

1. **Content:** Exposure to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material.
2. **Contact:** Harmful online interaction with others.
3. **Conduct:** Personal online behavior that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.

## Policy Scope and Application

This policy applies to all staff, students, apprentices, and other College users, including volunteers, external contractors, remote students, and employers where students/apprentices have work placements or are engaged in work-based learning.

The policy should be read with the Safeguarding Policy, providing specific guidance on the risks associated with online activity and a framework to protect all College users from potential harm online.

The policy covers all internet access and use of technology, including personal devices and any Bath College-issued devices used off-site, such as work laptops, tablets, or mobile phones. The College recognises that while some online risks can be minimised by enforcing behavior expectations and codes of conduct, along with teaching and learning about online safety, not all risks can be flagged to the Safeguarding Team through web-filtering unless individuals are accessing the internet via the College browser.

### **Online Safety Commitment**

Bath College recognises that online safety is a critical aspect of safeguarding. The College is committed to protecting students and apprentices from potential harm online, while also acknowledging that the internet and related devices such as computers, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, and game consoles are integral to everyday life. The College believes in empowering students and apprentices to build resilience and develop strategies to manage and respond effectively to online risks.

Students and apprentices will be supported to:

- Engage in age, curriculum-, and level-appropriate online safety education opportunities.
- Read and adhere to the IT Acceptable Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Respect the feelings and rights of others both online and offline.
- Take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe online.
- Seek help from a trusted adult if there is an online safety concern and support others experiencing online safety issues.

Bath College Governors and Senior Leaders, in collaboration with ICT Services, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and Heads of Curriculum, have ensured that the College has age and ability appropriate filtering and monitoring in place to limit students' and apprentices' exposure to online risks while on College premises.

The Governors and Senior Leaders recognise the need to prevent "over-blocking," as this may unreasonably restrict educational content related to online activities and safeguarding.



Staff, students, apprentices, and visitors will be directed to the IT Acceptable Use Policy upon their first use of College internet systems. Additionally through the college code of conduct.

## **Filtering**

The College employs an appropriate filtering system to block sites deemed harmful, distracting, or unnecessary for a comprehensive learning experience, including all sites on the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) list.

Staff, students, apprentices, and visitors are encouraged to report accessible but unsuitable sites to ICT Services.

Any material believed to be illegal will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies, such as the IWF, Police, or the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP).

## **Monitoring**

Internet usage is appropriately monitored on all Bath College-provided internet-enabled devices, in compliance with data protection, human rights, and privacy legislation. Any identified concerns are reviewed by the DSL or DDSL in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Procedures.

## **Use of Personal Devices and Mobile Phones**

Bath College acknowledges that personal communication through mobile technologies is an integral part of daily life for students, apprentices, staff, and other members of the College community. However, these technologies must be used safely and appropriately within the College setting.

Staff members are required to follow the IT Acceptable Use Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct when using personal devices and mobile phones on college premises.

Promoting the safe and appropriate use of personal devices and mobile phones will be included in the educational approach for students and apprentices

across the College. All students and apprentices are expected to comply with the Student Code of Conduct and any specific classroom management instructions regarding the use of personal devices and mobile phones.

## **Social Media**

Bath College will regulate student and staff access to social media while using college-provided devices and systems on-site.

The College expects all staff members to use social media safely and responsibly. Concerns regarding staff conduct on social media platforms should be reported to the People and Culture Team. If the concern involves safeguarding, it should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the nominated deputy, as outlined in the College's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Safe and appropriate use of social media will be part of the educational approach for students and apprentices across the College. They will be advised on the following:

- Consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media that could identify them or their location.
- Approve and invite only known friends on social media sites and make profiles private to deny access to others.
- Avoid meeting online friends without proper consideration of personal safety and inform a trusted adult if under 18.
- Use passwords on all social media accounts.
- Use social media sites that are appropriate for their age and ability.
- Block unwanted communications.
- Report concerns to both the College and external agencies.

Any concerns regarding student or apprentice conduct on social media should be addressed following the guidelines in the relevant policies:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Student/Apprentice Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy

The college's organisational use of social media is guided by internal policies and procedures set by the Head of Marketing and Business Development. This includes creating social media groups using the college name and promoting the college's offerings. All staff should seek advice and guidance from the Head of Marketing and Business Development

### **Safer Use of Technology in the Learning Environment**

Bath College employs a wide range of technology to deliver its services, including:

- Computers, laptops, tablets, and other digital devices.
- Email and other communication systems.
- Games consoles and other game-based technologies.
- Digital cameras, web cameras, video conferencing systems, and video cameras.

All devices provided by Bath College will be used in accordance with the IT Acceptable Use Policy and will have appropriate safety and security measures in place. Internet-connected devices, including Bath College-issued mobile phones, will be managed using mobile and other device management software.

Staff members will thoroughly evaluate websites, online resources, tools, and apps before using them in the learning environment or recommending them for home use.

Bath College will ensure that the search tools provided are appropriate, such as enforcing safe search settings when using Google.

### **Teaching and Learning of Online Safety**

Bath College will develop and integrate a comprehensive online safety tuition via the Personal Development curriculum to promote responsible internet use among students and apprentices by:

- Delivering initial education on safe and responsible internet use during student induction and within the first six weeks of each new academic year.

- Embedding continuous online safety education within the personal development curriculum provided by curriculum teams.
- Reinforcing online safety messages whenever technology or the internet is used.
- Educating students and apprentices of all ages and levels on effective internet research skills, including locating, retrieving, and evaluating information.
- Teaching students and apprentices to critically assess the materials they read and to validate information before accepting its accuracy.

This education will be adaptable and differentiated according to the learning programs, allowing for more specific or less intensive delivery as needed. Specialist technical support will be provided to groups requiring significant internet and technology access, especially where it would typically be restricted.

To ensure students and apprentices understand the acceptable use of IT facilities in a manner suitable for their age and ability, Bath College will:

- Display acceptable use policies in all locations where students and apprentices may access the internet using college-provided technology.
- Inform students and apprentices that network and internet usage will be monitored for safety and security purposes in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Implement peer education approaches where practicable.
- Utilise external visitors to complement the internal online safety education approach.

## **Vulnerable Learners**

Bath College acknowledges that some students and apprentices are more vulnerable online due to various factors, including but not limited to:

- Children in care
- Care leavers
- Students and apprentices with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Students and apprentices with mental health needs



- Students and apprentices with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Students and apprentices experiencing trauma or loss

When developing and implementing online safety education, the college will seek specialist support from staff responsible for safeguarding, mental health, and SEND.

### **Awareness and Engagement with Parents/Carers of Students Under 18 or Those with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)**

Bath College recognises the crucial role that parents and carers play in helping young people become safe and responsible users of the internet and associated technologies. To support this, the college will, where appropriate:

- Provide information on relevant online safety issues to the parents/carers of students under 18 and those with an EHCP.
- Publish the Online Safety Policy on the college website and share online safety messages on social media channels.
- Encourage parents/carers to read the college's IT Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Training and Engagement with Staff**

As part of the induction process, new staff members will be introduced to the Safeguarding Policy, including the Online Safety Policy. Both new and existing staff will be informed that:

- IT systems are monitored, and activities can be traced back to individual users. Staff will be reminded to act professionally and adhere to college policies when accessing College systems and devices.
- Online conduct outside the college, including personal use of social media, can impact their professional role and reputation.
- New resources and tools will be highlighted and developed for staff to use with students and apprentices.
- There is a specific procedure to follow regarding online safety concerns affecting students, apprentices, colleagues, or other members of the College community.

## **Managing Email**

The college email system will be managed in compliance with data protection legislation and internal policies such as the IT Acceptable Use Policy, Information Security Policy, and Codes of Conduct:

- Spam or junk mail should be placed in the appropriate 'Junk Email' folder for processing by ICT Services.
- Personal or sensitive information should be sent externally using password-protected folders, and the transmission of such information via email should be avoided.
- Bath College-generated email addresses should not be used to set up personal social media accounts.
- Any offensive communication received should be reported immediately to the recipient's Tutor (if received by a student/apprentice) or Line Manager (if received by a staff member). When safeguarding is a factor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a nominated deputy should be notified immediately.
- Staff are encouraged to maintain an appropriate work/life balance when checking and responding to email, especially when communicating with students, apprentices, and parents/carers outside of normal working hours.

## **Management of Learning Platforms and Applications Used to Track Student and Apprentice Progress**

Bath College utilises various learning platforms and software packages to monitor the progress of students and apprentices, including:

- ProMonitor
- ShowProgress
- SmartAssessor
- E-Assessor Pro
- MS Teams
- Moodle



As part of its normal business practices, Bath College may adopt new platforms, replace existing ones with suitable substitutes, or discontinue the use of a platform.

### **Platform Monitoring and Access**

- The use and content of learning platforms will be monitored, including messaging, communication, and publishing facilities.
- Access to learning platforms is restricted to current staff members and students/apprentices. Accounts are disabled once an individual leaves the College Group.

### **Data Security and Risk Assessment**

All systems holding student or apprentice data, images, videos, or other digital information undergo risk assessments prior to use and on an ongoing basis to ensure secure storage and compliance with data protection legislation. To safeguard student and apprentice data:

- Staff will use only College -issued devices (not personal mobile phones or other personal devices) to access systems that record and store personal details, attainment, and other digital data.
- Devices used off-site will be encrypted to mitigate the risk of a data security breach in the event of loss or theft.
- All users will be advised on appropriate safety measures, such as using strong passwords and logging out of systems when not in use.

### **Reducing Online Risks**

Bath College acknowledges that the internet is a constantly evolving environment with new apps, devices, websites, and material emerging rapidly. To mitigate online risks, we will:

- Regularly review our methods for identifying, assessing, and minimizing online risks.
- Evaluate emerging technologies for educational benefits and conduct appropriate risk assessments before their use within the College.

- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and take all reasonable precautions to ensure users can access only appropriate material.
- Recognize that due to the global and dynamic nature of the internet, it may not always be possible to prevent access to unsuitable material via the College's systems and networks.

All staff members are informed of our expectations regarding safe and appropriate online behavior. They are reminded of the importance of not posting content, comments, images, or videos that could cause harm, distress, or offense to members of the College community.

### **Responding to Online Concerns**

All responses to online concerns will be managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Policy and/or Anti-Bullying Policy. Concerns may include:

- Student or apprentice welfare
- Online sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes
- Online child sexual abuse and exploitation
- Indecent images of children
- Cyberbullying
- Online hate

### **Safeguarding and Online Safety Responsibilities**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies hold primary responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. However, all members of Bath College play a crucial role in ensuring online safety.

The DSL and deputies will:

- Act as the main points of contact for all online safety issues.

- Collaborate with curriculum colleagues to integrate online safety into Bath College's safeguarding responsibilities, ensuring a coordinated approach.
- Ensure all staff receive regular, up-to-date, and appropriate safeguarding training, including online risks, especially for vulnerable cohorts such as those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Stay informed about current research, legislation, and trends regarding online safety and share relevant information appropriately.
- Coordinate participation in local and national events promoting positive online behavior, such as Safer Internet Day.
- Promote online safety to staff, students, apprentices, parents, carers, and the wider community through various channels and methods.
- Maintain records of online safety concerns and actions taken as part of the College's safeguarding recording mechanisms.
- Monitor online safety incidents to identify gaps and trends, using this data to update the College's educational response, policies, and procedures.
- Report online safety concerns via CPOMS.
- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and take all reasonable precautions to restrict access to appropriate material.
- Acknowledge that due to the dynamic nature of the internet, it may not always be possible to prevent access to unsuitable material via Bath College's systems and networks.

## **Expectations and Responding to Online Concerns**

All members of the Bath College community are informed of the expectations regarding safe and appropriate online behavior and the importance of not posting content, comments, images, or videos that could cause harm, distress, or offense to others.

### **Responding to Online Concerns**

All concerns will be managed in accordance with the college's Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and/or Bullying and Harassment Policy. These concerns may include:

- Student or apprentice welfare
- Online sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children

- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes
- Online child sexual abuse and exploitation
- Indecent images of children
- Cyberbullying
- Online hate

### **Responsibilities of the Senior Management Team and Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Management Team and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Treat online safety as a safeguarding issue, ensuring practices align with national and local requirements and recommendations.
- Maintain up-to-date policies on online safety, including staff and student codes of conduct and the IT acceptable use policy.
- Integrate online safety into the curriculum so that all students and apprentices develop age-appropriate and level-appropriate understanding of online safety.
- Support the DSL and deputies by providing sufficient time and resources to fulfill their online safety responsibilities.
- Establish robust reporting channels for the Bath College community to address online safety concerns, including access to internal, local, and national support.
- Conduct appropriate risk assessments regarding the safe use of technology.
- Audit and evaluate online safety practices to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Responsibilities of ICT Services**

ICT Services will:

- Ensure robust and appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and updated regularly.
- Provide technical support to the DSL and Senior Leaders, particularly in developing suitable online safety policies and procedures, enabling them to take appropriate safeguarding action when necessary.

- Proactively manage the IT infrastructure to safeguard against misuse or malicious attacks while maximising learning opportunities.

### **Responsibilities of All Staff**

All staff have the responsibility to:

- Read and adhere to the Online Safety Policy, IT Acceptable Use Policy, and any associated guidance.
- Take responsibility for the equipment they use and the data they access.
- Model good practice when using technology and maintain a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology, both on and off-site.
- Incorporate online safety education into curriculum delivery whenever possible.
- Be aware of various online safety issues and how they may affect the College's students and apprentices.
- Identify online safety concerns and take appropriate action by following the College's Safeguarding Procedures.

### **Monitoring**

Technology in this area evolves and changes rapidly. Bath College will review this policy at least annually. The policy will also be revised in response to any national or local policy requirements, child protection concerns, or changes to the College's technical infrastructure.

Bath College will regularly monitor internet use and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure consistent policy application. Available audit tools will be used to inform any necessary developments.

