

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Nursery Online Safety Statement

Mission Statement

"You are precious in my eyes" - Isaiah 43

- *Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Nursery is committed to the widest and fullest education of all pupils in a partnership between home, nursery, parish and community.*
- *Our nursery aims to create a happy, ordered environment where all members feel secure, valued and respect each other.*
- *Our nursery aims to be a positive force within the Catholic Church inspired by the life of Christ in the Gospels*

What is online safety?

The term 'online safety' is used to encompass the safe use of all forms of information and communication technologies. The aim, through online safety, is to reasonably protect all users of such technologies from potential and known risk. Technology itself is seen as being only one aspect of this; equally as important are the ways in which technology and behaviours are managed.

For safeguarding to be effective, online safety procedures must be clear, agreed and respected by everyone. Online safety practice will involve valuing the opportunities offered through information and communication technologies (ICT), recognising potential risks, and understanding and implementing the control measures that need to be in place to reduce them.

Effective online safety practice enable children to use technology safely, whether at home or in the nursery. It empowers the children to use their acquired skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe, without limiting opportunities for exploration, creativity and innovation. Current research demonstrates that managing risks around technology will provide a better learning experience for children.

As is evidenced in the recent Ofsted report 'Safe use of new technologies', 'locked down' practices do provide effective safeguards. Prohibiting access to online technology within the setting gives a false sense of security. Adults may feel safer, but children are to be more vulnerable as they will not be empowered with the knowledge and skills to keep safe.

The online world is part of our culture, one which includes both benefit and risk; this must be acknowledged. The online world is here to stay and this will invariably lead to a level of concern and risk, by creating a form of communication which is 'permanent, traceable, and accessible to anyone with the knowledge and power to open it'. It must therefore be handled with caution and care. Individuals should endeavour to recognise the whole picture, and appreciate that fundamentally the main risks are not be related to a piece of equipment, but to the behaviours of the individuals using it.

Introduction to Online Safety

Universal efforts are concentrated on minimising risk, whilst empowering children and adults to recognise the potential hazards and signs of online misuse. This will build resilience and the ability to make informed, measured judgments and decisions regarding acceptable use. It is unrealistic and naïve to feel that all risks are to be eliminated.

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Tanya Byron, in the report *'Safer Children and Young People in a Digital World'* highlighted three strategic objectives to be considered when determining the safety of children accessing the internet. These objectives are to reduce availability, restrict access and increase resilience; the result of which is to improve children's knowledge and understanding; whilst building their resilience and empowering the use of online technologies in a safer, more responsible and effective way.

What are the risks?

The difficulty with online safety is that individuals can frequently be afraid to acknowledge risk; it may make people feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed, and it will often be felt that it is simply easier to 'ban' certain aspects of use. Alternatively, people may feel the risk is so small that it will never happen, and will therefore fail to put sufficient procedures in place. Our aim is to create a balance.

Safeguarding is everybody's business and therefore the paramount concern is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children. This is to include online safety.

The risks to be addressed and managed through online safety will often be similar to those experienced in the 'real' world. Safeguarding practice should therefore acknowledge that both 'real' and 'virtual' worlds essentially pose similar risks, challenges and dilemmas. For example, cyber bullying, and physical bullying should both be taken as seriously as each other. The physical effects may well be different, but the emotional effects will often be similar. Therefore consistent consequences and sanctions will be applied.

With an unsecured online environment in particular, it must be remembered that it is a public place. Information shared online on unsecured sites are held in the public domain, and therefore precautions adopted in 'real life' situations should be transposable.

It is also recognised that there could be significant implications around data security should unsecured sites be used. This will include how personal data is to be held and processed and who will have access to it. The sole use of secure sites is therefore recommended; as this will give additional protection by ensuring personal information is not available to the general public.

As with any form of safeguarding, the potential risks to children are recognised.

These are to include the potential risks from:

- prolonged exposure to online technologies, particularly from an early age.
- exposure to inappropriate content, images and language.
- making, taking and distribution of indecent images
- cyber bullying.
- grooming.
- physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
- addiction to gambling and/or gaming.
- pressure from media and advertising.
- theft and fraud from activities such as phishing.
- viruses, Trojans, diallers, key loggers, spyware and other malware.
- social pressure to maintain online networks via texting and social networking sites.

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- identity theft.

Managing the risk

Demonstrating how risk will be managed, and how all 'reasonable' precautions will be taken to protect users should be an essential practice for all early years settings. Our Lady Star of the Sea nursery has clear and effective policies, practices and infrastructures in place; which are monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure they will be able to continue to meet the ever changing needs of our learning community.

The Nursery Management Committee will have the overall legal, personal and moral responsibility to ensure online safety will be effectively considered. This means they will not only be responsible for the safety of children, but also for the behaviours and expectations of any adults who affect or come into contact with the nursery. This is to include the responsibility for monitoring the behaviours of all practitioners, parents and carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not be considered exhaustive.

The Management Committee has the overall responsibility for ensuring online safety practices are managed and implemented effectively, within the requirements of the law. In reality, safeguarding is everybody's business, and therefore an agreed, shared approach must be promoted by all. Effective training and awareness raising, reliable infrastructure and clear acceptable use agreements are considered key to effective practice.

A safer online environment

The Management Committee is responsible for applying a duty of care by creating a safe online environment for all users.

It is recognised by all users that in order to create such an environment, we need to:

- modify behaviours
- change procedures and practices
- provide support, guidance and training for all.

Creating a safer online environment is ongoing and ever changing, this will take time to embed into everyday practice. Clear monitoring, evaluation and review procedures are essential elements for ensuring a safe online learning environment, which is ready to meet the new challenges that advancing technology will continue to provide.

Equality of opportunity

All children and adults are encouraged to use and benefit from the opportunities provided by a range of ICT technologies. However, we also recognize that some children may require additional support and guidance. This may include reminders, prompts and further explanations to reinforce and develop each individual's existing knowledge and understanding of online safety issues.

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Parental involvement

It is considered essential for parents and carers to be fully involved with promoting online safety within the nursery, home and social environment. Nursery will therefore regularly discuss online safety issues with parents and carers. The aim is to encourage a broader understanding of the benefits and risks of ICT and to agree policies and procedures which define acceptable use.

Parents and carers are expected to sign Acceptable Use Agreements on behalf of their children. This will encourage a shared understanding of acceptable use. Such agreements have been developed in line with the Acceptable Use Policy.

Parent or carer permission is obtained for taking and making photographs, video or audio recordings of children in the care of the nursery. Consent is also obtained for the subsequent use of any images or recordings made.

Practitioners work in close partnership with parents and carers, providing assistance in directing parents and carers to the best sources of advice for information on the safe use of ICT in the home and/or social environment.

Designated person responsible: B. Draper

Date:

Ref; Tanya Byron 'Safer Children and Young People in a Digital World' 2008 www.dcsf.gov.uk