



# Online Safety Policy

2025/2026

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## Policy issue and updates

Pages	Issue number	Date
New policy	1	December 2025

The following policy has been approved by the CEO, COO, and Governing Board of Directors.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis unless circumstances arise requiring the policy to be reviewed earlier.

Approved by CEO: December 2025

Board signatory: 

Planned Review: August 2026

## 1. Policy Overview

- 1.1 This policy explains how Progress Community keeps students safe online, and sets out the responsibilities of staff, students, parents and carers in creating a safe, respectful and legally compliant online learning environment.

This policy applies to:

- All Progress Community staff and volunteers.
- All enrolled students.
- Parents, carers and any other adults supporting students' learning at home.
- Any contractors or partners who provide services via Progress Community's platforms.

It should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Participation Policy (behaviour)
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- GDPR and Data Protection and Privacy Policy (including UK GDPR).
- Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use expectations.

## 2. Aims and principles

- 2.1 Progress Community will:
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is paramount whenever they use the internet, digital devices or online platforms for learning.
  - Provide secure, well-managed online platforms (for example our learning management system, virtual classroom tools and any approved third-party platforms) that are robust, reliable and age-appropriate.
- 2.2 The policy aims to:
- Protect students and staff from online risks linked to content, contact, conduct and commerce (e.g. harmful content, grooming, bullying, fraud).
  - Provide clear rules and guidance so that staff, students and parents/carers know what is expected and how to respond to concerns or incidents

## 3. Online risks: content, contact, conduct, commerce

Progress Community recognises that online risks can be grouped under four headings and that these apply in an online-only school as much as in any physical setting.

### 3.1 Content

- Exposure to illegal, extremist, pornographic, hateful, misleading or inappropriate material (including conspiracy theories and “fake news”).
- Risks linked to sharing, storing and processing personal data incorrectly, including breaches of data protection law.

### 3.2 Contact

- Being contacted by, or establishing relationships with, people who may not be who they claim to be, including grooming, exploitation or radicalisation.
- Unwanted contact through chat, messaging, email or social media, including attempts to move conversations to unmonitored platforms.

### 3.3 Conduct

- Cyberbullying, harassment, hate incidents, online abuse and child-on-child abuse (including upskirting and sharing abusive images or videos).
- Creating or sharing illegal or inappropriate content, including sexual images of anyone under 18 (sometimes called “sexting”).

### 3.4 Commerce

- Financial abuse, fraud, scams or misleading commercial offers encountered while online.
- Misuse of school-linked platforms for personal financial transactions not authorised by Progress Community.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 Governing body/Proprietors

The Governing body/Proprietors will:

- Approve this policy and review it at least annually, or sooner if there are significant changes in technology, legislation or practice.
- Ensure that online filtering and monitoring are effective for all platforms used, age-appropriate, and reported to them annually, including incidents, themes and improvements

### 4.2 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

SLT will:

- Approve and oversee the selection, configuration and safe use of all online platforms used by Progress Community, including filtering and monitoring arrangements.

- Ensure all staff receive induction and regular training on online safety, remote teaching expectations, incident reporting and the use of any safeguarding recording systems.

#### 4.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies

The DSL and deputies will:

- Lead and coordinate online safety practice across Progress Community, ensuring it aligns with current statutory guidance.
- Understand filtering and monitoring systems, review alerts and reports, and ensure online concerns are recorded in CPOMS or Arbor, triaged and escalated appropriately (e.g. to children's services or Police where needed).

#### 4.4 Staff

All staff will:

- Use Progress Community's online platforms professionally, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct, this policy and all relevant safeguarding and data protection requirements.
- Supervise and monitor students' online learning, including live lessons and asynchronous activities, responding promptly to any concerning content, conduct or contact and recording concerns on the agreed safeguarding system.

#### 4.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Support Progress Community by helping create a safe home learning environment, including supervising students' online activity as appropriate to age and need.
- Ensure that devices used to access Progress Community's platforms are appropriately protected (e.g. updated software, antivirus, parental controls where appropriate) and that concerns are reported promptly to the school.

#### 4.6 Students

Students are expected to:

- Use Progress Community's platforms, accounts and devices responsibly, follow e-safety rules, and show respect for staff and peers.
- Report anything online that makes them feel worried, unsafe or uncomfortable to a trusted adult (parent/carer or staff member) as soon as possible.

## 5. Curriculum and education

Online safety is taught explicitly and embedded across the curriculum at Progress Community.

- 5.1 Students will receive age-appropriate teaching on:
- Staying safe online at home and in other settings, including safe use of social media, messaging apps and gaming platforms.
  - Recognising and responding to cyberbullying, grooming, exploitation, radicalisation, and pressure to share images or personal information.
  - Evaluating online information critically, including misinformation and disinformation.
  - Understanding their rights, responsibilities and digital footprint.
- 5.2 Key 'golden rules' for students include:
- Never share personal information (such as full name, address, phone number, school login details or passwords) online, except where clearly required for school and with parental oversight.
  - Never arrange to meet anyone met online without parental knowledge and agreement and the involvement of Progress Community where appropriate.
  - Use a nickname rather than a full real name on platforms where this is possible and appropriate.
  - If something online feels wrong, upsetting or confusing, tell a trusted adult and use "block and report" functions where available.
- 5.3 Staff will also:
- Model safe and respectful online behaviour in all interactions
  - Reinforce online safety messages in subject teaching whenever technology is used.

## 6. Remote teaching and virtual classrooms

All lessons at Progress Community are delivered remotely through approved virtual classroom (Vedamo) and learning platforms (Cypher).  
To keep everyone safe and uphold professional standards:

- 6.1 Expectations for staff
- Staff must use only school-approved accounts and platforms to deliver teaching or contact students (e.g. school email, learning platform messaging, virtual classroom tools).

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- Staff should preferably deliver lessons from a professional or designated workspace; when teaching from home, backgrounds should be the Progress Community screen and not reveal personal information.
  - Staff must be appropriately dressed, as they would be in a physical school, and always maintain professional boundaries.
  - Staff must maintain control over the virtual classroom (e.g. being able to mute microphones, manage chat, remove disruptive participants and control screen-sharing).
  - Staff must always have their camera on to promote sustainable, consistent relationships.

#### 6.2 Expectations for students

- Students should join lessons from an open family space wherever possible (for example, living room or study area), not from a bedroom unless there is no reasonable alternative and this has been discussed with parents/carers.
- Cameras are to be on where it possible due to the provision being closed except for students enrolled and class sizes being small. As part of the onboarding risk assessment with a Community Teacher, any concerns will be addressed and camera-off agreed if there is a safeguarding or similar risk.
- Students must be dressed appropriately for learning (e.g. day clothes rather than sleepwear) and follow normal classroom behaviour expectations.
- Students may not record lessons, take screenshots or share content from lessons without explicit permission from Progress Community.

#### 6.3 Recording of sessions

- All taught lessons are recorded by the system and deposited into the lesson resources to allow students to recap or watch if they were absent. Any person not allocated to this lesson cannot see the recording.
- Any other recording of lessons must have a clearly defined educational or safeguarding purpose, approved by SLT, and comply with data protection and privacy requirements.
- Where recordings (outside of the system) include student images or voices, written consent from parents/carers will be obtained if required and recordings will be stored securely and retained only for as long as necessary.

## **7. Devices and “bring your own device” (BYOD)**

- 7.1 All students on Progress Community will be provided with a laptop and access to secure systems using their user account. Platforms are single sign on from this account only so cannot be accessed by other accounts.

- 7.2 Should a student wish to use their own device, this will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. The device must be capable of running Office 365 as every student can only access accounts with their Microsoft log in, provided by Progress Community.
- 7.3 To manage risks:
- School rules and this policy apply regardless of whether the device used is owned by the school, the student, family or staff member.
  - Progress Community cannot accept responsibility for loss, damage or theft of personal devices used for online learning.
- 7.4 Parent/carers should ensure that:
- Devices are password protected and kept up to date with security patches and antivirus software.
  - Devices are not used to display or share illegal or inappropriate content during any school-related activity; suspected illegal content may need to be reported to the Police and devices may need to be secured for investigation.
  - Any damage (malicious or accidental) or loss of Progress Community property is reported immediately.

## **8. Use of technologies, social media and communication**

- 8.1 Users (staff and students) must not, when using Progress Community's platforms or in connection with school activity:
- Create, access, download, upload, share or comment on content that is illegal or inappropriate, including pornography, extremist material, hate content, discriminatory material, harassment or threats.
  - Use abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or otherwise discriminatory language.
- 8.2 Staff must:
- Keep communication with students within clear professional boundaries and avoid one-to-one social media contact or using personal accounts.
  - Use agreed channels to contact students and parents/carers (e.g. school email, learning platform messaging, official communication tools).
- 8.3 Students and parents/carers should:
- Use school channels to communicate about lessons, concerns or support needs and not staff personal accounts.

- Understand that cyberbullying, abusive messages or sharing harmful content will be taken seriously and may result in school sanctions and/or referral to external agencies.

## **9. Filtering, monitoring and supervision**

Progress Community uses technical and procedural measures to help keep students safe online.

### 9.1 Technical measures include:

- Secure, role-based access to learning platforms and virtual classrooms.
- Age-appropriate filtering and monitoring of online activity where it is within Progress Community's control (for example, traffic to and from school managed platforms).

### 9.2 Procedural measures include:

- Staff supervision of live online lessons, including monitoring of chat, audio, video and collaborative tools.
- Regular review of filtering and monitoring reports by DSL and SLT, with annual reporting to governors.

Parents/carers are encouraged to implement and manage home filtering and parental controls on domestic broadband and devices and to discuss these with the school where support is needed.

## **10. Data protection and privacy**

### 10.1 Progress Community will:

- Process personal data in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring data is collected and used only where necessary, stored securely and kept only for as long as required.
- Ensure that any third-party platforms used for learning are subject to appropriate data protection checks, including terms of service, data processing agreements and security standards.

### 10.2 Staff, students and parents/carers must:

- Keep passwords secure and not share them with anyone except where parents/carers need to support younger children's access.
- Avoid sharing personal or sensitive information in public areas of online platforms and be cautious when sharing images or videos.

## **11. Responding to incidents and concerns**

Any member of the Progress Community (staff, student, parent/carer) who becomes aware of an online safety concern should report it as soon as possible.

### 11.1 Progress Community will:

- Follow safeguarding procedures for responding to all forms of abuse, including online abuse, bullying, exploitation and concerns related to radicalisation.
- Record concerns using the agreed safeguarding recording system and maintain accurate, secure records.

### 11.2 Incidents that may need referral to the Police or other agencies include:

- Child sexual abuse images or videos, including self-generated imagery by anyone under 18.
- Criminally racist or extremist content.
- Evidence of criminal conduct such as child-on-child abuse or serious harassment.

Where “sexting” or the sharing of sexual images involving anyone under 18 is suspected, staff will follow national guidance and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which may involve confiscation or securing of devices, risk assessment and referrals as appropriate.

## **12. Support and guidance for families**

### 12.1 Progress Community will provide parents and carers with information, training and signposting on online safety.

This may include links to:

- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection).
- Childline and NSPCC.
- UK Safer Internet Centre and Childnet.
- Other reputable organisations providing up-to-date advice on privacy settings, reporting, and talking to children about online life.

Parents/carers will be encouraged to:

- Talk regularly with their child about their online activities and experiences.
- Set clear expectations and boundaries around time spent online and appropriate content.