Yeovil Area Community Academy Trust
Online Safety Policy Statement

At the Yeovil Area Community Academy Trust, we want every user to be safe, confident and supported when using technology - whether learning in school, at home, or in the wider community. Online safety is part of safeguarding and wellbeing. It is not "just an IT issue": it is about people, relationships, behaviour, learning, and protection.

Our online safety strategy is built around four outcomes-focused areas that strengthen day-to-day practice:

- Leadership and policy that make expectations clear
- Education that builds skills, resilience and positive behaviour
- Technology that protects users and supports safe learning
- Impact review that proves what's working and what we will improve

Leadership and policy: clarity, consistency and accountability

- When leadership is strong, online safety becomes part of "how we do things here"—not a one-off initiative.

Clear responsibilities

- We make sure roles are defined and understood across senior leaders, the Designated Safety Lead, an Online Safety Lead, governors/trustees and technical staff/providers. This ensures safeguarding decisions and technical safeguards work together.
- What this improves: decisions are quicker, concerns are escalated correctly, and actions don't get "lost" between teams.
- Benefit for users: children and adults get safer, more consistent support.

A joined-up Online Safety Group

- We involve the right voices—leaders, staff, governors, and (where appropriate) learners and families—to keep online safety responsive to real experiences and emerging risks.
- What this improves: shared ownership and a whole-school approach.
- Benefit for users: safer practice is reinforced across school and home.

A policy that is understood and used

- Our online safety policy is aligned with safeguarding expectations and linked to related policies so that staff and families can see one clear, consistent approach.
- What this improves: fewer grey areas and more confident decision-making.
- Benefit for users: clear boundaries and predictable responses.

Acceptable use expectations that protect everyone

- We set out simple, age-appropriate expectations for learners and clear professional expectations for staff, so everyone understands what safe and respectful use looks like.
- What this improves: behaviour, consistency, and fairness.
- Benefit for users: safer online spaces and fewer harmful incidents.

Reporting and responding that leads to action

- We promote a culture where people feel able to speak up, and we respond consistently, recording concerns, acting promptly, and learning from patterns and new risks.
- What this improves: early identification and effective safeguarding intervention.
- Benefit for users: children get help sooner; everyone feels listened to and protected.

Education: confident learners and informed adults

- We teach online safety to build knowledge, skills, attitudes and resilience—so learners can enjoy the benefits of technology while managing risks.

Planned learning for learners

- Online safety education is progressive, inclusive and revisited regularly. We use learner voice to shape what we teach and to keep it relevant.
- What this improves: safer choices, healthier online behaviour, and confident help-seeking.
- Benefit for users: learners become better prepared for real-life online challenges.

Staff training that supports safeguarding practice

- All staff receive induction and ongoing updates so they can spot concerns, respond appropriately, and model safe practice. Key roles receive enhanced training to lead and make informed decisions.
- What this improves: confidence and consistency across the workforce.
- Benefit for users: concerns are handled calmly, correctly and promptly.

Governors trained to provide challenge and support

- Governors/trustees understand their duties and can ask the right questions about policy, training, curriculum, filtering/monitoring, and cyber security.
- What this improves: accountability and sustained improvement.
- Benefit for users: online safety stays a priority over time, not just after incidents.

Strong partnerships with families and agencies

- We communicate practical guidance to families and work with relevant partners. We also share effective practice beyond our school where it supports safer communities.
- What this improves: joined-up messages and earlier support.
- Benefit for users: children experience consistent expectations across school and home.

Technology: protection that enables learning

- We use proportionate technical controls to reduce exposure to harm while supporting teaching and learning.

Effective filtering

- Filtering reduces the risk of access to harmful and illegal content and is reviewed to ensure it stays fit for purpose.
- Benefit for users: safer browsing and research.

Safeguarding-led monitoring

- Monitoring helps identify concerns early and supports timely intervention, handled with appropriate governance and data protection.
- Benefit for users: timely intervention when risk is emerging.

Secure systems and cyber resilience

- We protect networks, devices and accounts, and we prepare for threats like phishing and ransomware—so learning is not disrupted and users are protected.
- Benefit for users: safer services, fewer incidents, faster recovery.

Data protection that builds trust

- We handle personal and sensitive information carefully and lawfully, with clear processes and accountability.
- Benefit for users: privacy is respected and risks from misuse are reduced.

Safe day-to-day practice

- We manage devices consistently (including expectations around personal devices where relevant), apply safeguarding and consent to digital content, and communicate responsibly through our public channels.
- Benefit for users: fewer avoidable mistakes and a safer, more responsible digital culture.

Impact: proving what works and improving what doesn't

- We regularly review how well our policies and practice are working, what the evidence tells us, and what we will improve next. This keeps our approach current, targeted and effective.

How to raise a concern or get help

If something online worries you, we want to know.

- Learners: talk to a trusted adult, your tutor/class teacher, or the safeguarding team.
- Parents/carers: contact [DSL name / safeguarding email/phone].
- Staff: follow safeguarding procedures and record concerns promptly.

Our commitment

We will keep strengthening leadership, education, technology and impact review so that technology at the schools within the Yeovil Area Community Academy Trust is used safely, respectfully and positively—and so our community can be confident that online safeguarding is robust, consistent, and always improving.

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