The Mercian Trust
Queen Mary's Grammar School

E-Safety Policy	
Implementation date:	December 2025
Next review date:	December 2026

Change Log	
Changed to reflect changes from inhouse IT to Managed Service, alignment of some local IT Manager Responsibilities moved to Director of Information Systems	
5.6	DSLs have added responsibility of
	Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged (see Appendix 4) and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.
	Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the academy's behaviour policy.
5.13	Resource links updated
7.1	Virtual Learning Environments terminology removed
9.1	Added to reflect changes in KCSIE
11.2	Added to cover 1:1 device pilots
13	Added to cover 1:1 device pilots
Appendix 5	Added to cover 1:1 device pilots

1. Introduction

1.1 The Mercian Trust (TMT) has outlined its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils/students in its Childs Protection and Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies. Safeguarding determines the actions taken to keep children safe and protect them from harm in all aspects of their school life to ensure that they have the best outcomes. This is underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, able to talk, and believe that they are being listened to.

1.2 **The Mercian Trust is committed to:** fulfilling its moral and statutory responsibility, ensuring that robust procedures are in place, outlining the actions that it will take to prevent harm, to promote well-being, to create safe environments and to respond to specific issues and vulnerabilities.

1.3 TMT will meet its commitment by:

- Having robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils/students, staff, volunteers, trustees and governors.
- Delivering an effective approach to online safety, which empowers TMT to protect and educate the whole TMT community in its use of technology
- Establishing clear mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate an incident, where appropriate.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to safeguard pupils/students, staff, volunteers, governors and trustees from the many issues that can arise as a result of using electronic media.

3. Compliance with Legislation and Guidance

3.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and its advice for schools on preventing and tackling bullying and searching, screening and confiscation. It also refers to the Department's guidance on protecting children from radicalisation.

3.2 It reflects existing legislation, including but not limited to the Education Act 1996 (as amended), the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010. In addition, it reflects the Education Act 2011, which has given teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by, if necessary, searching for and deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils'/students' electronic devices where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

3.3 The policy also takes into account the National Curriculum computing programmes of study.

4. Compliance with related policies and agreements

4.1 This policy complies with TMT's funding agreement and Articles of Association.

4.2 This online safety policy is also linked to the following TMT policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding

- Health and Safety
- Information Security and Acceptable Use
- Behaviour (Code of Conduct)
- Social Media
- Disciplinary
- Data Protection and privacy notices
- Complaints Policy

4.3 It should also be read in conjunction with academy pupil/student behaviour policies and procedures.

5. Governance

Board of Trustees

5.1 The Board of Trustees (BoT) has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy and for holding the TMT Executive Team and Headteachers to account for its implementation. TMT has a designated Trustee who oversees the governance arrangements for safeguarding and liaises with the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) Designated Safeguarding Governors (DSG). The governance arrangements are outlined further in TMT's Child Protection and Safeguarding and also reference to the TMT Health and Safety Policies which should also be referred to in conjunction with this policy.

Local Governing Bodies

5.2 The Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) will co-ordinate regular meetings with appropriate staff to discuss online safety and monitor online safety logs as provided by the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) as part of their responsibilities for Child Protection and Safeguarding.

5.3 All LAG members will:

- Ensure that they have read and understand this policy.
- Agree and adhere to the terms on acceptable use of TMT's ICT systems and the internet (appendix 2).
- Discharge their responsibilities outlined in the Scheme of Delegation and LGB Terms of Reference.

The Headteacher

5.4 The headteacher is accountable to the Chief Executive and the BoT and is responsible for ensuring that staff understand this policy, and for its consistent and effective implementation in their academy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

5.5 The details and roles of each academy's DSL are set out in TMT's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

5.6 The DSLs have lead responsibility for online safety, in particular:

- Supporting the headteacher in ensuring that staff and volunteers understand this policy and that it is being implemented consistently throughout the academy and across TMT.
- Working with the headteacher, Director of Digital Development, Director of Information systems, the IT service provider and other staff, as necessary, to address any online safety issues or incidents.
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged (see appendix 4) and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.

- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with the academy's behaviour policy.
- Updating and delivering staff training on online safety (Appendix 3 contains a self-audit for staff on online safety training needs.)
- Liaising with other agencies and/or external services if necessary.
- Providing regular reports on online safety in academies to the headteacher and/or Local Advisory Bodies.
- Ensuring that any online safety incidents are logged (see Appendix 4) and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the academy's behaviour policy.

5.7 This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

TIO

5.8 The Trust have outsourced IT Support to Turn It On (TIO). TIO are responsible for:

- Putting in place appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, which are updated on a regular basis and keep students/pupils and staff safe from potentially harmful and inappropriate content and contact online while at school, including terrorist and extremist material.
- Ensuring that ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware, and that such safety mechanisms are updated regularly.
- Conducting a full security check and monitoring TMT ICT systems on a regular basis.
- Blocking access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files.

5.9 This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Trustees, LGB member, staff, and volunteers

5.10 All staff, including contractors, agency staff, volunteers, trustees and LGB members are responsible for:

- Maintaining an understanding of this policy.
- Implementing this policy consistently.
- Agreeing and adhering to the terms on acceptable use of TMT's ICT systems and the internet (Appendix 2) and in accordance with TMT's Information Security and Acceptable Use Policy, and for ensuring that pupils/students follow the terms on acceptable use (Appendix 1 and Appendix 5).
- Working with the DSLs to ensure that any online safety incidents are logged (see Appendix 4) and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.
- Ensuring that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the academy's behaviour policy.

5.11 This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Parents/Carers

5.12 Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this policy.
- Ensure their child has read, understood and agreed to the terms on acceptable use of the ICT systems and internet (Appendix 1).

5.13 Parents/carers can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- What are the issues?, UK Safer Internet Centre: https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/what-are-issues
- Hot topics, Childnet International: http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics
- Resources for parents and carers, Childnet International: https://www.childnet.com/resources/parents-and-carers

Visitors and members of the community

5.14 Visitors and members of the community who use TMT's ICT systems or internet will be made aware of this policy, when relevant, and expected to read and follow it. If appropriate, they will be expected to agree to the terms on acceptable use (Appendix 2).

6. Educating pupils/students about online safety

6.1 The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in relevant subjects and the academy will raise pupils'/students' awareness of the dangers that can be encountered online and may, for example, invite speakers to talk to pupils/students about this.

6.2 Pupils/students will be taught about online safety as part of the curriculum.

6.3 In **Key Stage 3**, students will be taught how to:

- Understand a range of ways to use technology safely, respectfully, responsibly and securely, including protecting their online identity and privacy.
- Recognise inappropriate content, contact and conduct, and know how to report concerns.

6.4 Students in **Key Stage 4** will be taught how to:

- Understand how changes in technology affect safety, including new ways to protect their online privacy and identity.
- Report a range of concerns.

6.5 Students in **Key Stage 5** will be taught how to:

- Live safely in an online and connected world protecting their privacy; protecting their 'online presence'
- Appreciate how social media can expand, limit or distort their view of the world.
- Set and maintain clear boundaries around their personal privacy; protect their online privacy and identity.
- 6th form students will be taught how to use their BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) appropriately

7. Educating parents/carers about online safety

7.1 TMT will raise parents'/carers' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home, and in information via TMT websites or other means and this policy will also be made available to parents/carers.

7.2 If parents/carers have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised in the first instance with the headteacher and/or the DSL.

7.3 Concerns or queries about this policy can be raised with any member of staff or the headteacher.

8. Cyber-bullying

8.1 Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying

8.2 To help prevent cyber-bullying, TMT will ensure that pupils/students understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. TMT will ensure that pupils/students know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

8.3 The academy will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils/students, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be.

8.4 Form/Tutor group/ class teachers will discuss cyber-bullying with their tutor groups, and the issue will be addressed in assemblies.

8.5 Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.

8.6 All staff, governors, trustees and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils/students, as part of safeguarding training.

8.7 The academy also provides information/leaflets on cyber-bullying to parents/carers so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.

8.8 In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the academy will follow the processes set out in the academy's behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils/students, the academy will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

8.9 The DSL will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so. They may liaise with the TMT DSL if appropriate to do so.

9. Online sexual harassment

9.1 We take sexual harassment or any type of inappropriate sexualised behaviour online very seriously. Our child protection and safeguarding policy follows DfE's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). This policy clearly sets out how incidents of

such nature will be managed. All The Mercian Trust schools teach age-appropriate content about the sorts of online behaviours that are unacceptable and students are given clear guidance of how to report incidents if they arise.

10. Examining electronic devices

10.1 TMT staff have the specific power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which has been increased by the Education Act 2011) to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on pupils'/students' electronic devices (including BYOD), including mobile phones, iPads and other tablet devices, where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

10.2 When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine or erase data or files on an electronic device, staff must reasonably suspect that the data or file in question has been, or could be, used to:

- Cause harm, and/or
- Disrupt teaching, and/or
- Break any of the school rules

10.3 If inappropriate material is found on the device, it is up to the staff member in conjunction with the DSL or other member of the senior leadership team to decide whether they should:

- Delete that material, or
- Retain it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline), and/or
- Report it to the police.

10.4 Any searching of pupils will be carried out in line with the DfE's latest guidance on screening, searching and confiscation.

10.5 Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils'/students' electronic devices will be dealt with through the TMT's Complaints Policy.

11. Acceptable use of ICT systems

11.1 All pupils/students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers, trustees and governors are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the school's ICT systems and the internet (Appendices 1 and 2). This includes how students use their BYOD on school premises. Visitors will be expected to read and agree to the school's terms on acceptable use if relevant.

11.2 Use of TMT's internet must be for educational purposes only, or for the purpose of fulfilling the duties of an individual's role.

11.3 TMT will monitor the websites visited by pupils/students, staff, volunteers, trustees, governors and visitors (where relevant) to ensure they comply with the above.

11.4 More information is set out in the acceptable use agreements in Appendices 1 and 2.

12 Pupils/students using personal mobile devices in school

12.1 In academies where mobile devices are allowed to be brought into school. Pupils/students are only permitted to use these when authorised to do so by a member of

teaching staff or at any other time or situation identified within the academy's Behaviour Policy. They are not permitted to use them during:

- Lessons
- Tutor group time
- Clubs before or after school, or any other activities organised by the school

12.2 Any use of mobile devices by pupils/students must be in line with the acceptable use agreement (see Appendix 1).

12.3 Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a pupil/student may trigger disciplinary action in line with the academy's behaviour policy, which may result in the confiscation of their device.

12.4 Where a pupil/student misuses the ICT systems or internet provided by TMT, TMT will take action as outlined in the behaviour policy. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature and seriousness of the specific incident, and will be proportionate.

13. BYOD

13.1 All Sixth Form students use these devices regularly in their timetabled lessons; these will be monitored by staff.

Students should follow the BYOD Guidelines document as set out in Appendix 5.

13.2 TMT schools will use an agreed e-safety system to monitor and filter content accessed at school and at home. This will ensure that pupils/students are kept safe from potentially harmful or inappropriate content.

14. Staff using work devices outside of TMT

14.1 Staff members using a work device outside of TMT must not install any unauthorised software on the device and must not use the device in any way which would violate the terms of acceptable use, as set out in the TMT Information Security and Acceptable Use Policy and Appendix 2 of this policy.

14.2 Staff must ensure that their work device is secure and password-protected, and that they do not share their password with others. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure the security of their work device when using it outside of TMT.

14.3 If staff have any concerns over the security of their device, they must seek advice from the OLC helpdesk/onsite staff.

14.4 Where a staff member misuses TMT's ICT systems or the internet,or misuses a personal device where the action constitutes misconduct, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with TMT's Disciplinary Policy. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, nature and seriousness of the specific incident.

14.5 TMT will consider whether incidents which involve illegal activity or content, or otherwise serious incidents, should be reported to the police.

15. Training

The DSLs will complete regular child protection and safeguarding training as outlined in the TMT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The training will also include online safety, at least every 2 years.

The DSLs will update their knowledge and skills on the subject of online safety at regular intervals, and at least annually and will ensure that all staff are trained and up to date with policies and procedures.

15.1 TMT will be assured that each academy complies with training requirements as defined in KCSIE 2025. All staff will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation.

15.2 All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year as part of safeguarding training, as well as relevant updates as required (for example through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings). A suggested staff self-audit is included in appendix 3.

15.3 Trustees and LGB members will receive training on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues as part of their safeguarding training.

15.4 Volunteers will receive appropriate training and updates, if applicable.

16. Monitoring arrangements

16.1 The DSL logs behaviour and safeguarding issues related to online safety. An incident report log can be found in Appendix 4.

16.2 This policy will be reviewed and agreed as a minimum on a biennial basis and in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This may be more frequent if national guidance requires ensuring that key statutory requirements are incorporated.

Appendix 1

Acceptable Use Agreement (pupils/students and parents/carers)

.**Acceptable use of the ICT systems and internet provided by The Mercian Trust (TMT)**	
Name of pupil/student:	
When using TMT ICT systems and accessing the internet in the academy or on any other TMT premises I will not: • Use them for a non-educational purpose • Use them without a teacher being present, or without a teacher's permission • Access any inappropriate websites • Access social networking sites (unless my teacher has expressly allowed this as part of a learning activity) • Use chat rooms • Use any inappropriate language when communicating online, including in emails • Share my password with others or log in to the academy's network using someone else's details • Give my personal information (including my name, address or telephone number) to anyone without the permission of my teacher or parent/carer • Arrange to meet anyone offline without first consulting my parent/carer, or without adult supervision **If I bring a personal mobile phone or other personal electronic device (BYOD) into the academy:** • I will not use it during lessons, tutor group time, clubs or other activities organised by the school, without a teacher's permission • I will use it responsibly, and will not access any inappropriate websites or other inappropriate material or use inappropriate language when communicating online • I will connect it to the academy's Wi-Fi, if available. • I will follow the BYOD Guidelines as previously communicated **I understand that the trust will monitor the websites I visit.** **I will immediately let a teacher or other member of staff know if I find any material which might upset, distress or harm me or others.** **I will always use the ICT systems and internet responsibly.**	
Signed (pupil/student):	**Date:**
Parent/carer agreement: I agree that my child can use the ICT systems and internet provided by The Mercian Trust (TMT) when appropriately supervised by a member of school staff. I agree to the conditions set out above for pupils using the TMT ICT systems and internet, and for using personal electronic devices in school, and will make sure my child understands these.	
Signed (parent/carer):	**Date:**

Appendix 2

Acceptable Use Agreement (trustees, LGB, staff, volunteers, trustees, and visitors)

Acceptable use of the ICT systems and internet provided by The Mercian Trust (TMT)	
Name of trustee, LGB member, staff/volunteer/visitor:	
When using ICT systems provided by The Mercian Trust (TMT)and accessing the internet on TMT premises or using TMT devices, I will not: • Access, or attempt to access inappropriate material, including but not limited to material of a violent, criminal or pornographic nature • Use them in any way which could harm the reputation of the trust • Access social networking sites or chat rooms • Use any improper language when communicating online, including in emails or other messaging services • Install any unauthorised software • Share my password with others or log in to the TMT network using someone else's details	
I will only use TMT ICT systems and access the internet on TMT premises or outside on a TMT device, for educational purposes or for the purpose of fulfilling the duties of my role. Alternatively, a Windows 11 device as a minimum to ensure encryption is in place or any other device where appropriate has the same level of security. I understand that TMT will monitor the websites I visit. I will take all reasonable steps to ensure that work devices are secure and password-protected when using them outside school, and keep all data securely stored in accordance with this policy and TMT Data Protection Policies including the Information Security and Acceptable Use Policy. I will let the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and IT service provider know if a pupil/student informs me they have found any material which might upset, distress or harm them or others, and will also do so if I encounter any such material. I will always use TMT's ICT systems and internet responsibly, and ensure that pupils/students in my care do so too.	
Signed (trustee, LAB member, staff/volunteer/visitor):	**Date:**

Online safety training needs – self-audit for staff

Online safety training needs audit	
Name of staff member/volunteer:	**Date:**
Do you know the name of the person who has lead responsibility for online safety in your academy?	
Do you know what you must do if a pupil/student approaches you with a concern or issue?	
Are you familiar with the TMT acceptable use agreement for staff, volunteers, governors and visitors?	
Are you familiar with the school's acceptable use agreement for pupils/students and parents/carers?	
Do you regularly change your password for accessing the TMT ICT systems?	
Are you familiar with TMT's approach to tackling cyber-bullying?	
Are there any areas of online safety in which you would like training/further training? Please record them here.	

Appendix 4 - Online Safety Incident Report Log

(*To be completed if information not captured on electronic recording system)*

Online safety incident report log				
Date	**Where the incident took place**	**Description of the incident**	**Action taken**	**Name and signature of staff member recording the incident**

Appendix 5

QMGS BYOD Guidelines

1. Students must bring their device to school every day and must have it on them, ready to be used in every lesson.

2. Devices must be charged sufficiently to allow it to be used for the School day. Any charging onsite must be done using the lock and charge towers.

3. Students using their own device in school must adhere to the IT Acceptable Use Policy.

4. All students must connect to the School BYOD network. The school's network filters will be applied to any device connected, and any attempt to bypass the network filter is prohibited.

5. When in lessons, all devices must be flat on desks and the screens visible to teachers. No privacy screens should be used.

6. Screens should be turned off until the teacher explicitly directs students to use their devices in the lesson.

7. All devices must be in silent mode while on school site unless otherwise allowed by a member of staff.

8. Headphones may only be used with staff permission (including SPS)

9. Unless permission is granted by a member of staff, devices must not be used to take photos or record a video or audio during school lessons, outside lessons, on the school site and during school activities

10. Students must refrain from using any electronic devices whilst walking around the school, unless permission has been obtained

11. Devices may only be used to access files or internet sites which are relevant to the classroom curriculum.

12. Devices are not allowed to be used in potentially sensitive areas such as toilets and changing rooms.

13. Students and parents should be aware that devices are subject to search by any authorised member of staff, if the device is suspected of a violation of the school rules. If the device is locked or password protected, the student will be required to unlock the device at the request of a member of SLT or any other authorised member of staff.

14. No wireless medium must be used to send inappropriate images or files to other devices (i.e. Bluetooth, Airdrop, etc).

15. The school will not be liable for any loss, damage or theft of a personally owned device on site.

Parent/Carer Agreement

I understand that this agreement applies to the use of the device inside and outside school and that all rules apply at all times.

- I will ensure that my child cares for and respects the device, accessories and any loan devices.
- I will ensure that my child brings the device to school fully charged each day.
- I will ensure that my child uses the device in line with this document and all applicable laws.
- I will report any damage to the device promptly to school.
- I will report if the device has been lost or stolen to the school and the police immediately and obtain a crime reference number to aid in this investigation.
- I understand that if it's clear that my child has maliciously damaged the device or accessories, I will be charged for the cost of the repair or a replacement.
- I understand that where there has been accidental damage on more than one occasion, I may have to make a contribution to the cost of repair or replacement.
- It is intended that this agreement is provided to supplement and work to support the school's existing e-safety policy.
- If my child is found to be misusing the device in any way, they will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- I understand that the device has monitoring software installed to protect my child from accessing potentially harmful online content. However, I still recognise the importance of making sure my child is using the device responsibly, safely and respectfully at school and at home.
- I will ensure that the device, case and accessories and/or any loan devices are returned to the school when my child leaves the school or at any time upon the request of a member of school staff.
- If my child loses or breaks the charging lead and plug, I will replace it.
- I will ensure that my child does not download films or other media directly to the device. If they are watching films or other media, they will do so on home or public WIFI.
- I agree to the Terms and Conditions as outlined on page 4 - 7 of this document.

Parents signature: _____

Date: _____