

# The 3-18 Education Trust

## Filtering and Monitoring Policy

*Every individual is in a great school.*

Approved: Spring Term 2024

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## **Introduction**

At The 3-18 Education Trust (Trust), the safety and well-being of our children and young people is our utmost priority. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment where children and young people can learn, grow, and thrive. This policy outlines the Trust's approach to filtering and monitoring to ensure that pupils are protected from inappropriate content while using school-provided technology resources.

The filtering of internet content provides an important means of preventing users from accessing material that is illegal or is inappropriate in an educational context. The filtering system cannot, however, provide a 100% guarantee that it will do so, as online content changes dynamically and new technologies are constantly being developed. It is important, therefore, to understand that filtering is only one element in a larger strategy for online safety and acceptable use. It is important that the Trust has a filtering policy to manage the associated risks and to provide preventative measures which are relevant to the situation in this Trust.

Monitoring user activity on Trust devices is an important part of providing a safe environment for pupils, staff and the whole Trust community. Unlike filtering, it does not stop users from accessing material through internet searches or software. Monitoring allows the Trust to review user activity on school devices. For monitoring to be effective it must pick up incidents urgently, usually through alerts or observations, allowing prompt action to be taken and the outcome to be recorded.

## **Objectives**

The Trust will ensure that it appropriately safeguards its community through an effective online filtering system and monitoring regime by:

- Having a filtering and monitoring system in place that safeguards staff and pupils by blocking harmful, illegal and inappropriate content.
- Having a monitoring system that enables the prompt investigation of a potential safeguarding incident and outcomes are logged.
- Defining and allocating roles and responsibilities for the management of filtering and monitoring systems.
- Reviewing at least annually and regularly checking the filtering and monitoring provision.
- Defining an agreed process for making changes to the filtering or monitoring system that involves a senior leader in the agreement of the change.
- Ensuring mobile devices that access the Trust's internet connection (whether Trust or personal devices) are subject to the same filtering standards as other devices on the Trust systems.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Trust Board**

The Trust Board has a strategic leadership responsibility for ensuring the Trust takes a whole Trust approach to filtering and monitoring as outlined in this policy and that the Trust complies with duties under the related legislation and guidance listed later in this policy. The Trust Board has delegated some responsibilities, although retains accountability, as follows.

### **The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO ensures the Trust's Central Team and Headteachers

- Procure filtering and monitoring systems whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn.
- Consider the age range of pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus risks.
- Conduct a risk assessment as required by the Prevent Duty.
- Are aware of statutory changes of government policy, and that the Trust meets all legal requirements for online monitoring and filtering.
- Implement the relevant statutory arrangements for online monitoring and filtering.
- Document decisions on what is blocked or allowed and why.
- Review the effectiveness of the Trust's provision.
- Oversee reports.
- Ensure that all staff:
  - understand their role
  - are appropriately trained
  - follow policies, processes and procedures
  - act on reports and concerns.
- Work closely with the Link Trustee, the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and IT Department in all aspects of filtering and monitoring.

### **The Filtering and Monitoring Link Trustee**

The Trust Board has appointed a Filtering and Monitoring Link Trustee who is responsible with the CEO for ensuring these standards are met. The Link Trustee will report back to the Trust Board normally by a written report.

Filtering and Monitoring Link Trustee: Darren Payne

### **IT Director**

The IT Director has technical responsibility for

- maintaining filtering and monitoring systems
- providing filtering and monitoring reports
- completing actions following concerns or checks to systems.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads**

The Trust's DSLs have lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety, which could include overseeing and acting on

- filtering and monitoring reports
- safeguarding concerns
- checks to filtering and monitoring systems.

### **All Staff**

All staff need to be aware of reporting mechanisms for safeguarding and technical concerns. They should report if:

- They witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed.
- They can access unsuitable material.
- They are teaching topics which could create unusual activity on the filtering logs .
- There is failure in the software or abuse of the system.

- There are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks.
- They notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material.

## **Changes to Filtering and Monitoring Systems**

There is a clear process for requests to change the filtering and monitoring systems and who makes the decision to alter the filtering system. There is a request form which is available from the IT Director.

## **Filtering and Monitoring Review and Checks**

To understand and evaluate the changing needs and potential risks to the Trust, the filtering and monitoring provision will be reviewed at least annually. The review will be conducted by members of the Central Team.

Additional checks to filtering and monitoring will be informed by the review process so that the Trust Board have assurance that systems are working effectively and meeting safeguarding obligations. How often the checks take place will be based on the context, the risks highlighted in the filtering and monitoring review, and any other risk assessments. Checks will be undertaken from both a safeguarding and IT perspective.

## **Training and Awareness**

It is a statutory requirement that staff receive training, at least annually, about safeguarding, child protection, online safety and filtering and monitoring. Furthermore, in order to protect personal and sensitive data, trustees, local governors, senior leaders, staff and pupils should receive training about information security and data protection, at least annually.

Trustees, local governors, senior leaders and staff are made aware of the expectations of them:

- At induction
- At whole-staff/governance training
- Through the awareness of policy requirements
- Through the acceptable use agreements
- In regular updates throughout the year

Those with specific responsibilities for filtering and monitoring (will receive enhanced training to help them understand filtering and monitoring systems and their implementation and review.

Pupils are made aware of the expectations of them:

- In lessons
- Through the acceptable use agreements

Parents will be informed of the Trust's Filtering and Monitoring Policy through the acceptable use agreement and through and Trust and/or school communication.

## Links with Other Policies

Safeguarding  
On-Line Safety

## Policy Monitoring and Review

### Monitoring

The Chief Executive Officer will monitor the outcomes and impact of this policy on an annual basis.

### Review

Member of Staff Responsible	Chief Executive Officer
Relevant Guidance/Advice/Legal Reference	Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023 DfE Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges January 2024
Policy Adopted By	Trust Board
Consultation	
Date of Policy	Spring Term 2024
Review Period	Annually
Date of Next Review	Spring Term 2025