



British International Remote School (BIRS)

Online Safety Policy

Academic Year 2026–2027

Document Version: 1.0

Policy Owner: The Principal

Approval Date: 13 July 2026

Review Date: 13 July 2026

Next Review: July 2027

Effective Date: 14 July 2026

1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that all students and staff at BIRS use online technologies safely, responsibly, and respectfully. It works in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and our Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The term "online safety" encompasses internet safety and other risks associated with digital technologies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the BIRS community (staff, students, volunteers, and contractors) when using school-provided or school-related digital technologies, platforms, and communication tools, whether on school-owned devices or personal devices used for BIRS educational purposes.

3. Key Online Safety Principles

3.1 Education

BIRS integrates age-appropriate online safety education into its curriculum across Key Stages 2, 3, and 4. This covers responsible online behaviour, privacy, critical evaluation of online content, and recognising online risks.

3.2 Safe Practices

BIRS actively promotes the following safe practices:

- **Passwords & Security:** Students and staff must use strong, unique passwords for all BIRS accounts and keep them strictly private. Multi-factor authentication is enforced where available.
- **Personal Information:** Users must exercise extreme caution when sharing personal information online, understanding what constitutes sensitive data and the risks of digital oversharing.
- **Risk Awareness:** Students are taught to identify risks such as cyberbullying, online grooming, sexting, exposure to inappropriate or harmful content (e.g., extremist, violent, or pornographic material), and online scams.
- **Critical Evaluation:** Students are guided on how to critically evaluate online information for accuracy, bias, and reliability.
- **Secure Learning Environment:** Both staff and students must ensure their physical learning environments are free from inappropriate background visuals or sounds. Webcams must be used appropriately, with consideration for privacy (e.g., using virtual backgrounds or ensuring neutral backgrounds, and avoiding private spaces like bedrooms for teaching).
- **Digital Footprint & Reputation:** Emphasising the permanence of online actions and the importance of maintaining a positive digital footprint.

- Copyright & Plagiarism: Students must respect copyright, intellectual property rights, and academic integrity in all digital coursework.

3.3 Reporting

Clear, accessible procedures are in place for students, staff, and parents to report any online safety concerns (e.g., cyberbullying, unwelcome contact, harmful content, or security breaches) immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or other designated staff members. All reports are taken seriously, handled confidentially, and investigated thoroughly.

3.4 Technical Measures

BIRS implements robust security settings on school platforms, utilises vetted educational tools with strong privacy features, and applies filtering on BIRS-managed networks to enhance online safety and secure student data.

3.5 Professional Communication

All online communication between staff and students must take place exclusively via official BIRS channels (such as the VLE and official BIRS email) and must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

4. Responsibilities

BIRS (Leadership & Management)

- To provide and maintain a safe online learning environment.
- To ensure this policy is implemented, communicated, and regularly reviewed.
- To provide appropriate online safety education and training for students and staff.
- To ensure clear and effective reporting and response mechanisms are in place.

Staff (Teaching and Non-Teaching)

- To read, understand, and adhere to this Online Safety Policy, the AUP, and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- To model safe, responsible, and professional online behaviour.
- To integrate online safety education within their teaching where appropriate.
- To remain vigilant for online safety risks and follow reporting procedures promptly.
- To manage online classroom environments safely and professionally.

Students

- To act responsibly and respectfully online, adhering to this policy and the Student AUP.
- To protect their personal information and respect the privacy of others.
- To report any online safety concerns or incidents to a trusted BIRS staff member immediately.
- To never engage in, encourage, or condone cyberbullying or any form of online harm.

Parents/Guardians

- To read and support this Online Safety Policy and discuss online safety with their child.
- To encourage their child to use online technologies responsibly and safely.
- To monitor their child's online activity at home as appropriate for their age and maturity.
- To report any online safety concerns related to BIRS or its community to the school.

5. Responding to Online Safety Incidents

BIRS responds to online safety incidents promptly and appropriately, in line with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, disciplinary procedures, and relevant legal requirements.

Responses may include:

- An immediate investigation of the incident.
- Providing pastoral support to any students or staff affected.
- Taking disciplinary action against those responsible, where appropriate.
- Removing inappropriate content from BIRS platforms immediately.

- Liaison with parents/guardians.
- Referral to external agencies (e.g., child protection services, local police, or CEOP) if necessary.
- Reviewing internal practices to prevent future incidents.

6. Review

This Online Safety Policy will be reviewed at least annually by the DSL and BIRS Senior Leadership, in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, or sooner if required by new legislation, DfE guidance, or emerging online risks.

Related Policies & Contact

- BIRS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- BIRS Student Withdrawal & Refund Policy
- BIRS Complaints Procedure for Parents & Guardians
- Contact Email for Reports: contact@thebirs.co.uk

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