



Online Safety Policy

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1. PURPOSE

The Fowler Education & Football Academy (The Fowler Academy or 'The College') recognises that the use of digital technologies is essential to learning, communication and development. This policy sets out how we ensure that all members of the college community use digital technologies safely, responsibly and lawfully.

We are committed to safeguarding learners from harm online in line with statutory guidance and promoting an environment where technology enhances rather than compromises safety, wellbeing and achievement.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All learners under and over 18
- All staff (teaching, coaching, support, and admin)
- Volunteers, contractors and visitors
- All digital devices used on college premises or in connection with college activities (including personal devices where permitted)
- Online platforms used for learning, coaching, communication or marketing

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Ofsted Inspection Framework

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Principal
 - Ensure an effective online safety culture
 - Approve and review the policy annually
 - Provide appropriate resources and staff training
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
 - Acts as the Online Safety Lead
 - Responds to incidents and concerns
 - Liaises with external agencies (e.g. police, social care)
 - Maintains up-to-date safeguarding knowledge
 - Keeps records of online safety concerns via safeguarding systems
- Network Manager
 - Maintains filtering and monitoring systems
 - Ensures safe configuration of networks
 - Reports safeguarding risks to the DSL
- Staff & Coaches
 - Role model professional behaviour online
 - Challenge unsafe practice

- Report concerns immediately to DSL
- Do not accept students as “friends” on personal social media
- Use only approved communication methods
- Students
 - Act responsibly online
 - Report concerns to staff
 - Respect others’ privacy and wellbeing
 - Use devices in line with college rules

5. EDUCATION & TRAINING

The College provides:

- Online safety induction for all new learners
- Regular safeguarding and online safety training for staff
- Awareness of:
 - Cyberbullying
 - Grooming and exploitation
 - Extremism and radicalisation
 - Sexting and image sharing
 - Online gambling
 - Fake news and misinformation
 - Mental health and social media pressures

Students are taught how to:

- Protect personal data
- Recognise unsafe content
- Seek help
- Report concerns

6. ACCEPTABLE USE

All Users

Must:

- Use technology for educational purposes only
- Respect others
- Protect login credentials
- Report harmful content
- Follow college rules

Must not:

- Access extremist, illegal or adult content
- Bully or harass others online
- Share explicit images
- Use VPNs or bypass filtering
- Post harmful or defamatory content
- Record others without consent
- Download illegal materials

7. FILTERING & MONITORING

The College, via its provider of IT services:

- Uses filtering systems (Smoothwall) to block harmful content

- Monitors network activity to identify safeguarding risks
- Reviews filtering annually
- Ensures monitoring is proportionate and legal

Students and parents are informed that:

“Use of college systems is monitored to ensure safety and security.”

8. CYBERBULLYING & ONLINE ABUSE

Cyberbullying will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

This includes:

- Threats
- Harassment
- Sharing images without consent
- Hate speech
- Online intimidation

Sanctions may include:

- Removal of access
- Disciplinary procedures
- Referral to safeguarding agencies
- Police involvement if necessary

Support will be provided to victims.

9. SEXTING / YOUTH-PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY

The College follows UK national guidance when dealing with youth-produced sexual imagery.

- Students will NOT be punished for being victims
- Images will NOT be circulated
- Incidents will be treated as safeguarding concerns
- The DSL will decide on police/social care involvement

10. SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff must not:

- Accept learners on personal social media
- Communicate privately via unofficial platforms
- Post content that could bring the College into disrepute

Students:

- Must not use social media to abuse others
- Must respect the College’s reputation
- Are encouraged to maintain privacy settings

11. DATA PROTECTION

All users must:

- Keep personal data secure
- Not share confidential information
- Store data using approved systems
- Report breaches immediately

The College is registered with the ICO and complies with UK GDPR.

12. REPORTING CONCERNS

Concerns should be reported immediately to Keri Hannigan (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Email: Keri.Hannigan@fowleracademy.co.uk

Tel: 0151 458 7373

Students may also use:

- Anonymous reporting box
- Trusted staff

13. SANCTIONS

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Restricted access
- Behavioural sanctions
- Disciplinary procedures
- Referral to external agencies

14. POLICY REVIEW

This policy is evaluated annually or following new national guidance or serious incident.

15. DECLARATION

All members of the College community are expected to read, understand and comply with this policy.

18 OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

The following documents and procedures are available from Main Reception or on the College website:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- IT Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy