



# ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

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14 January 2026

Dear Families,

## Ref: Online Safety, Cyberbullying and Safeguarding Responsibilities

I am writing to all families to reaffirm Abbot's Lea School's unwavering commitment to safeguarding our students and to clarify our shared responsibilities in relation to **online safety and cyberbullying**.

Online life is now an integral part of children's social and educational experience. While digital technologies offer many benefits, they also present risks, particularly in relation to cyberbullying, harassment, exploitation and harmful peer interactions. These risks can have a significant impact on children's wellbeing, mental health and sense of safety.

### The School's Role and Responsibilities

Abbot's Lea School takes its safeguarding duties extremely seriously. In line with statutory guidance, the school will:

- Educate students, in an age- and development-appropriate way, about online safety, respectful digital behaviour and how to seek help
- Promote a culture of kindness, respect and responsibility, both online and offline
- Actively investigate and respond to bullying or harmful behaviour **that occurs in school or during school-led activities**
- Provide safeguarding support and pastoral care where online harm impacts a student's wellbeing or relationships in school
- Respond to safeguarding concerns that meet statutory thresholds and refer to external agencies where required.

Where bullying or harmful behaviour occurs **in school**, we will investigate, take appropriate action, educate those involved and support the repair of damaged relationships.

### What the School Cannot Do

It is important to be clear and transparent about the limits of the school's role.

The school **does not have oversight of, nor responsibility for, students' online activity outside school hours**, including activity on personal devices, social media platforms, gaming platforms or messaging services used at home.

Where cyberbullying or online harm occurs **outside of school**, the school will not conduct formal investigations. However, if we are made aware of such incidents, we will:

- Offer safeguarding advice and emotional support
- Reinforce expectations around behaviour and relationships in school
- Provide further education where appropriate
- Support students to recover from the impact on peer relationships.

## The Role of Families

Safeguarding children online is a shared responsibility, and families play a critical role. We strongly encourage all parents and carers to take an active and ongoing interest in their child's online life.

Families are expected to:

- Monitor and supervise their child's online activity appropriately
- Set clear boundaries around device use, platforms and screen time
- Maintain open and supportive conversations about online behaviour and experiences
- Be alert to signs of online harm, such as changes in behaviour, withdrawal, anxiety or reluctance to use devices

If you become aware of inappropriate or harmful online content, you should:

- Block access and preserve evidence (e.g. screenshots)
- Discuss the situation calmly and supportively with your child
- Report the content or behaviour to the relevant online platform
- Inform the school if the matter affects your child's wellbeing or relationships

## When to Involve the Police

In some circumstances, online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence. **Reporting to the Police is appropriate and strongly advised** where online bullying or abuse involves:

- Threats of violence
- Harassment or stalking
- Hate-based abuse
- Sexual exploitation or coercion

You may inform the school that a police report has been made so that we can offer appropriate safeguarding support, but families should not wait for school involvement before contacting the Police where serious harm or risk is present.

## Working Together to Safeguard Children

Safeguarding is most effective when schools and families work in partnership. By remaining vigilant, communicating openly and acting promptly, we can better protect children from online harm and help them develop safe, respectful digital habits. If you have concerns, require advice, or would like further support, please contact the school's **Safeguarding Team** via **st@abbotsleaschool.co.uk**. All concerns will be approached sensitively and in line with statutory safeguarding guidance.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and commitment to keeping our students safe.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Hildrey  
Headteacher