

# Online Learning Policy

## HARRIS PRIMARY SCHOOL



<b>Approved by:</b>	Ian Groom (Head teacher)	<b>Date:</b> September 2023
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	July 2023	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2025	

**Intent:**

Just like with face-to-face teaching, safeguarding and child protection is vital when teaching remotely, especially as the usual child protection systems are under increased pressure during the pandemic. It's important that steps are taken to ensure children and adults are protected from potential harm.

This policy is written to ensure that, when online, children and adults act in a way which shows respect for themselves and others. It intends to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship between peers and adults, including protecting the privacy of others using the online platforms.

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**Implementation:****Live Online Class Meetings (staff/parents/carers see Appendix 1 for Code of Conduct)**

Teachers will hold daily online meetings with children in their class and all children are encouraged to attend these. One will take place in the morning and one in the afternoon. There are a number of important ground rules for these meetings to which all adults and children must adhere:

- The camera function must be switched on during meetings unless asked to do otherwise. If a child or family is uncomfortable with this, or if the camera function is not working, they should speak directly with the class teacher.
  - The children should be muted unless asked to unmute themselves.
  - Children should not 'present' or share their screen during online meetings unless explicitly asked to do so by the meeting leader/teacher.
  - Children and adults must be suitably dressed for the meeting – this means no pyjamas, dressing gowns, or anything which would not be suitable to be worn in school (this does not need to be school uniform).
  - Children and adults should not be eating during the meeting, unless the teacher has specifically said otherwise.
  - Pets should not attend the meetings – unless invited by the leader of the meeting.
  - TVs, computers, mobile phones and other electronic devices (apart from those used to access the meeting) should be switched off or out of reach to all children to concentrate and get the most out of the session.
  - Children and adults should have their normal background, rather than a virtual background, unless told otherwise by the teacher. People disappear and become distorted when using these backgrounds and this becomes a distraction.
  - Children and adults should therefore be aware of their backdrop and background sounds when attending an online meeting and ensure that there are no additional distractions taking place. Teachers working from home should be aware of their background and ensure it appears professional at all times.
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- Children should only have the meeting screen active during the session. No games being played simultaneously.
  - Children should stay in their seat (and not swing round in swivel chairs) when the teacher is speaking. The teacher may ask children to complete activities which involve being up and about, but other than these cases, children should remain seated.
  - There should be no instant messaging in the 'chat' function of the meetings unless told otherwise by the teacher. Teachers should turn this off when they set up the meeting if they do not want the children to use it.
  - Children must not record online meetings under any circumstances. They must not take photographs or screenshots of the meeting through the use of any browser extensions, recording software or mobile phones.

### **Maintaining professional boundaries**

Teaching online is different to teaching face-to-face. But adults should always maintain professional relationships with children and young people. Staff are reminded of the Harris Primary School Staff Code of Conduct and should follow these guidelines, behaving accordingly at all times.

If recording or live streaming lessons, teachers should be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background.

Staff and volunteers should never give children their personal contact details or add, follow or interact with them using a personal social media account.

### **Adult to child ratios**

It's best practice to have at least two adults present when working with children and young people. This applies both on- and offline. The number of adults needed for online lessons will vary depending on the children's age and stage of development, and the activities being carried out.

- Whole-class video meetings, where several children are present, will be carried out by the teacher who can request an additional person if they feel it is necessary depending on the specific needs of the children in the cohort.
- If attending a 1:1 video meeting with a child or a family (for example, for wellbeing purposes), there must always be an additional staff member present. It should be considered who this would be to ensure it does not negatively impact on the meeting outcome. If appropriate, following introductions, the additional staff member can have their camera function off and can be muted. They will then be attending the meeting 'in the background' for safeguarding purposes only. In some cases, it will also be appropriate for them to be present in the meeting for support.
- If staff are using 'breakout rooms' on an online platform, consideration must be had for how these will be appropriately supervised.
- When using Google Classroom, staff should be aware of using private comments for giving feedback and ensure they maintain professional boundaries at all times. The school Learning Mentor will be a second adult on the classrooms and will have access to all comments as an additional safeguard for teachers.

### **Managing behaviour**

All children should feel safe using video meetings and other online learning platforms. When conducting online meetings, lessons or contact with children, staff should follow the school's behaviour management policy.

- Remind the child about the code of behaviour and ask them to comply with it.
- Give them an opportunity to change the way they're behaving.
- If the inappropriate behaviour continues, a formal warning should be issued. Record the incident and inform their parents or carers as appropriate.
- Talk about what happened and agree what support is needed to improve behaviour in the future.
- Decide whether a sanction, like restricting the use of certain facilities, is appropriate.
- If the young person's behaviour continues to be a problem, issue a final warning. Record the incident and inform their parents or carers as appropriate.
- At this point, staff may need to talk with them and their parents about other services that might be better able to give them the support they need.

### **Contacting children at home**

Sometimes staff might need to contact children individually, for example to give feedback on their remote learning or for wellbeing purposes. According to DfE guidelines, all children will have weekly contact from their teacher to check on their wellbeing while they are spending more time at home than usual. Each child will have different needs and circumstances while they are spending more time at home than usual, so it is important that staff consider how best to do this in a way that is suitable for each child and their family whilst also making sure the child is safe and supported. Online video meetings are an appropriate way to have contact with children in the class in most cases.

School staff should only contact children during normal school hours, or at times agreed by the school leadership team (DfE, 2020).

Any one-to-one sessions, for example pastoral care meetings, should be risk assessed and approved by the school's leadership team (DfE, 2020). Make sure staff know what safeguarding measures to take if they are having a one-to-one conversation with a child, and what to do if they have any concerns about a child's welfare (see above – 'Adult to child ratios').

Staff will use parents' or carers' email addresses or phone numbers to communicate with children, unless this poses a safeguarding risk. Staff must use school accounts to communicate via email or online platforms, never personal accounts. Any phone calls should be made from a blocked number or the school telephone so that teachers' personal contact details are not visible.

If staff members are accessing families' contact details at home, they must ensure they comply with the Data Protection Act 2018.



## **Livestreaming**

Livestreaming can be used to broadcast an event taking place in school or to view external events such as Science sessions, live P.E. sessions, community sessions or those which would normally have involved a visitor to school. It's also a valuable educational medium which can allow teachers to host live lessons (although this is not part of the current remote learning provision).

To create a safe environment for children and young people when watching or engaging in a livestream, there are several things that should be considered.

Before starting any livestream, staff should remind children:

- Not to share private information.
- Not to respond to contact requests from people they don't know.
- Who they should tell if they see or hear anything upsetting or inappropriate.

## **Hosting a livestream**

Hosting a livestream means any situation where the school instigates, publishes and is responsible for streaming online content. This includes livestreaming lessons, assemblies, announcements, activities, and if external visitors livestream on the school site.

- Consider which platform to use since free platforms such as YouTube or Facebook Live do not allow a host to restrict the audience.
- Consider inviting the audience to register to watch the stream and issue a log in and password if not using Google Classroom which is only accessible to those with logins.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with the privacy settings and know how to report any offensive or abusive content.
- The stream should take place in school time and on school premises and must be supervised by appropriate adults at all times.

## **Joining a livestream**

If joining a livestream that is hosted by someone outside the school, it may be possible to participate through posting audio or written comments and liking or sharing the stream.

If joining a livestream:

- Be familiar with the type of content to be used in the stream and check it is appropriate and relevant.
- Check with the provider on how they will use the stream in future. For example, will it be kept for archive purposes and will it be broadcast as a recorded event?
- Remind pupils that any comments posted will be seen by others and cannot be edited or deleted and this can become a part of their digital footprint.

## **What to do if there are concerns**

Understandably, remote learning involved an increased use of the internet, electronic devices and online platforms. Our Safer Internet Use and Remote Learning policy run alongside this policy, as does the Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

If an adult has any concerns about a child or young person, or about the way that another adult is behaving, then they should report this following the Harris Primary School safeguarding procedures. If an adult is concerned that a

child or young person's behaviour suggests that they may be at risk of significant harm or may present a risk to others, they must follow the Harris Primary School safeguarding procedures.

Staff should know and understand the school safeguarding procedures and know how to respond if a child tells them that something isn't right at home – this is especially salient when on a video or telephone call during which other adults may be present.

Any allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or young person will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly.

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**Impact:**

The impact of this policy is that staff, parents and children are protected from potential harm and all users of online learning resources and platforms are clear on how to stay safe, use the software appropriately and the children have freedom in this safety to learn, grow and develop through remote and blended provision.

Impact will be measured through regular reviews of this policy.

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