



Online Safety Policy

September 2026-September 2027

1. Introduction

1.1 Acorn Childcare Centre recognises the benefits that the internet and technology can bring to children's learning, development and communication. We also recognise the potential risks and are committed to keeping children, staff and families safe online.

1.2 We have regard to current Department for Education guidance on online safety and screen use in early years settings.

1.3 The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is responsible for online safety concerns. Any concerns must be reported as soon as possible to:

DSL: Donna Downs/Lorna Hodgett

1.4 Online safety concerns will be managed in accordance with our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

2. Online safety risks

2.1 Online safety concerns can include:

- **Content** – children accessing inappropriate, harmful or illegal material.
- **Contact** – inappropriate or harmful communication with others, including grooming or exploitation.
- **Conduct** – unsafe or inappropriate behaviour online, including bullying, sharing personal information or inappropriate images.

3. Keeping children and staff safe online

3.1 Acorn Childcare Centre will:

- Use appropriate security, filtering and password protection on nursery devices.
- Keep devices, software and applications appropriately updated.
- Ensure nursery devices are stored securely.

- Only use age-appropriate and suitable websites, apps and digital resources.
- Supervise children when using internet-connected devices.
- Use nursery-owned devices for photographs and recordings of children.
- Follow the nursery's procedures for storing and sharing photographs and videos.
- Ensure staff do not use personal devices to photograph, record or communicate with children or families.
- Ensure staff use official nursery communication channels when communicating with parents/carers.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries when using social media and other online services.
- Ensure personal and confidential information is kept secure.
- Report any suspected data breach or online safety concern promptly.
- Provide staff with appropriate online safety training and guidance.
- Support parents/carers with information about keeping children safe online.

4. Children's use of technology

4.1 Technology will only be used where it supports children's learning, development, communication or individual needs.

4.2 Children will be appropriately supervised when using digital devices and will not be given unrestricted access to the internet.

4.3 We will follow current Department for Education guidance regarding children's screen use and will ensure that screen use does not replace important experiences such as physical activity, outdoor play, social interaction, creative activities, sleep or adult interaction.

4.4 Online safety will be discussed with children in an age-appropriate way. Children will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult if something they see, hear or experience online makes them feel worried or uncomfortable.

5. Personal devices

5.1 Staff, students, volunteers and visitors must follow the nursery's arrangements for mobile phones, smart watches, cameras and other personal devices.

5.2 Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record children or to communicate with children or parents/carers about nursery business unless specifically authorised.

5.3 Staff must not use personal social media accounts or messaging services for nursery communication.

6. Photographs and videos

6.1 Photographs and videos of children will only be taken for appropriate nursery purposes and in accordance with our data protection, consent and safeguarding procedures.

6.2 Images and recordings will be stored securely and will only be shared through approved channels.

6.3 Children's images must never be shared through staff members' personal social media accounts or personal devices.

7. Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following this policy and reporting concerns promptly.

Staff must:

- Use nursery technology appropriately and professionally.
- Protect children's personal information.
- Maintain professional boundaries online.
- Report concerns to the DSL.
- Follow the nursery's safeguarding, data protection and acceptable-use procedures.
- Never deliberately access, download, possess or distribute material they know to be illegal.

7.1 Reporting concerns

7.1.1 Any online safety concern involving a child, member of staff, volunteer, visitor or parent/carer must be reported to the DSL.

7.1.2 Concerns may include inappropriate online contact, grooming, bullying, harmful content, inappropriate images, exploitation or misuse of technology.

7.1.3 The DSL will ensure concerns are recorded, assessed and dealt with in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding procedures and referred to external agencies where appropriate.

7.2 Parents and carers

7.2.1 We will work with parents/carers to promote children's online safety and will provide information and signposting to appropriate sources of advice and support.

7.2.1 Parents/carers are encouraged to talk to their children about safe and appropriate use of technology and to report any concerns to the nursery where appropriate.

8. Monitoring and review

The nursery will regularly review its online safety arrangements and will update this policy when there are relevant changes to legislation, guidance, technology or safeguarding practice.

Policy review date: September 2027

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>15th October 2024 Reviewed September 2026 - DD</i>	<i>Lorna Hodgett</i>	<i>September 2027</i>