

# London Steiner School

## Statement of Online Safety

To state that the internet is huge and overwhelming is as an understatement comparable to saying that the Grand Canyon is simply a small dent in the ground. It is understandable, therefore, that adults responsible for a child's online life may flounder when faced with such a plethora of, everchanging, information.

However, it is precisely at this point of hesitation where predators slip in and almost imperceptibly, they tether themselves to a child's plane of online existence.

Not so long ago, predators, at the very least, were a visible presence. Children were taught to be vigilant by 'not talking to strangers', 'not getting into cars' and understanding, 'that which is in your underwear', is your own. This is sound advice which still stands today. Even then though their physical presence meant there was a possibility of discovering them, it is increasingly clear, many were not and/or not prosecuted.

Today, however, the ways in which predators now have access to a child is more diverse than ever before. What is more, it is easy.

Now, they do not have to force you to meet them, you do so, willingly.

Now, they do not have to force you to make them pictures, you put them online, willingly.

Now, they do not have to appear as a 'stranger', you talk to them as your 'online friend', willingly.

Social media is a veritable sweet shop for predators. It is a platform to exchange child pornography, to groom children and to gather information and useful disguises; all, almost entirely, anonymously.

Instagram is a prime culprit for this type of behavior and as a company, takes absolutely no responsibility for the type of sexual abuse inflicted on the children who use it. They WILL NOT HELP you. It is up to us as guardians to protect our children, not to rely on others to help only when something has happened.

Along with the more widely known social media platforms (*Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube*) there are thousands more, increasing in number each day. There is now also *TikTok, Ask.fm, 9gag, Reddit* and many gaming platforms whereby players can communicate via microphone or instant messaging with no security checks or support for children who are 'gamers'.

There still remain chat '**fan**' forums for every subject under the sun. These are, to predators, something akin to the simplicity of 'shooting fish in a bucket'. These forums are no longer confined to the shadiest parts of the internet but have now unfurled into gaming and social media platforms.

Apart from studies which have shown that too much two-dimensional screen viewing is detrimental to children's physical, emotional and spiritual development as well as their sleep, the increasing extent of digital media and internet use in our society also has the following concerns:

- Cyber Bullying linked with social media and SMS
- Grooming and Sexual Exploitation
- Excessive Gaming
- Online Gambling
- Unregulated Advertising
- The Dark Web and Drug Purchase
- Radicalisation
- Sexting

Children who have grown up with the internet know how to use it, but not how to protect themselves. The adults in their lives, mainly, have not grown up with the internet, but have learnt how to protect themselves from danger.

How, then, do we bridge that gap in a space of education?

For the London Steiner School we aim to work in partnership with our parents, students and staff members to create a proactive culture of learning and teaching to impress upon the members of our community the importance of awareness and self-protection in the online world.

### **Inclusivity**

Teaching is tailored to the children in the class. It is taken into account that children with SEND may be more vulnerable or less able to communicate difficulties.

### **Related Policies**

LSS Curriculum Policies: Parts 1,2,3

LSS Inclusion and Equality Policy

LSS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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<b>Review by/date</b>	<b>Helen Kinsey May 20</b>
<b>Approved by/date</b>	<b>Trustees May 20</b>
<b>Next review</b>	<b>June 2021</b>