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1. POLICY INTENT

East Street Farm School is an independent special school providing therapeutic education for children aged 8 to 16 with autism, Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and associated mental health needs, including developmental trauma.

At East Street Farm, we recognise that online technologies are a vital part of learning, communication and engagement. With these opportunities come challenges and risks. This Online Safety Policy forms part of our whole-school safeguarding framework and is written with full consideration of statutory guidance and current best practice.

New technologies continually enhance communication, information sharing, learning, social interaction and leisure activities. While digital communication can greatly enhance education, it also poses risks relating to exposure to harmful

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content, sharing of personal information, inappropriate contact and difficulty evaluating online material critically.

We are committed to educating students on online safety issues and teaching them the behaviours and critical-thinking skills needed to stay safe and act within the law when using digital technologies, both inside and outside the classroom. East Street Farm is committed to meeting the digital and technology standards in schools and colleges to ensure compliance with best practice.

A distinctive feature of our safeguarding approach is our high staff-to-student ratios and small-group learning model. This ensures that online activity is closely supervised in real time, allowing staff to provide immediate intervention, personalised guidance and reinforcement of safe behaviours. Our staffing model complements technical systems such as Securly, providing a layered safeguarding approach that combines proactive human supervision with effective digital monitoring.

We are aware that students accessing our school may be more vulnerable to online safety risks. This policy therefore takes a proactive, inclusive and trauma-informed approach to promoting digital safety.

Intent Behind Our No-Phone Policy
East Street Farm has adopted a no-phone policy during the school day to create a calm, safe and focused learning environment. Research and government guidance highlight that unrestricted mobile phone use in schools can increase exposure to cyberbullying, distraction and online harm, while also negatively affecting concentration and emotional wellbeing. To support travel arrangements students can bring phones to East Street Farm but they will be securely stored away during the school day.

Our intent is to:

- **Protect wellbeing** – reducing anxiety and stress linked to social media and online pressures
- **Promote learning** – removing distractions so students can engage fully in lessons and face-to-face interactions
- **Safeguard students** – limiting opportunities for inappropriate online contact, sharing of personal material and access to harmful content during the school day
- **Support social development** – encouraging respectful communication, positive relationships and belonging within our school community

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This approach aligns with the Department for Education's (DfE) 2026 guidance on mobile phone use in schools which became effective from 1 September 2026.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy aligns with key UK government statutory guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- The Education (Filtering and Monitoring) Standards 2024
- The UK Online Safety Act 2023
- DfE Guidance on Remote Learning and Safeguarding
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Statutory Prevent Duty Guidance 2024
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR obligations relevant to monitoring systems

3. RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Regulation Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use of Information Technology and Telephones Policy (Staff)
- Acceptable Use Agreements (AUA)

4. WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

This policy applies to:

- All staff (including temporary, part-time and agency staff)
- Students
- Parents and carers
- Proprietors and Governance Committee

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- Visitors, volunteers, contractors and service providers
- Any individual using the East Street Farm site

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/ Head of Education is responsible for online safety and will liaise with relevant staff, families and external agencies where appropriate.

5. VISION AND VALUES

This policy is underpinned by the three core values of East Street Farm:

Nurturing Belonging – Creating a safe and respectful digital environment that promotes wellbeing, inclusion and positive relationships.

Supporting Growth – Safeguarding young people and staff from risks associated with technology and ensuring students are ICT literate and use technology effectively to support their education.

Inspiring Change – Fostering responsible online behaviour, preparing students for life in a digitally connected world and raising awareness of cyberbullying, grooming and exploitation.

6. DEFINITIONS

East Street Farm recognises the four main categories of online safety risk as defined by UKCIS:

- **Content** – Exposure to harmful, inappropriate or illegal material
- **Contact** – Inappropriate interaction with others online
- **Conduct** – Harmful personal online behaviour such as cyberbullying
- **Commerce** – Risks from scams, phishing and inappropriate advertising

Other relevant terms include:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** - technology that enables computers and digital tools to perform tasks that would usually require human intelligence, such as generating text, images or videos, answering questions, recognising patterns, or making recommendations.
- **Cyberbullying** – Threatening, intimidating or upsetting behaviour via digital platforms

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- **Grooming** – Manipulative relationships built online to exploit or abuse children
- **Cyber-crime** – Criminal activity committed using computers or the internet
- **On-line hoaxes and harmful challenges** – Activities designed to distress or endanger young people
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – a staff member responsible for safeguarding and child protection in an organisation such as a school
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** – is a trained, senior staff member appointed to support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in managing and overseeing child protection and safeguarding procedures within an organisation, such as a school
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** - a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity.
- **Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)** - the process of adopting extreme views that support terrorist groups or activities.
- **SEND –** Special Education Needs and Disabilities
- **Upskirting** -is the act of taking a photograph or video under a person's clothing, without their consent
- **CAMHS** – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- **Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** – a collaborative team where professionals from different agencies—such as social services, police, health, and education—work together to share information and coordinate responses to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
- **PREVENT team** – a specialist group, usually within local authorities or educational institutions, tasked with identifying, supporting, and referring individuals at risk of radicalisation or extremist influence. Their role involves early intervention, safeguarding and working with agencies/other professionals to prevent individuals from being drawn into harmful ideologies or activities.
- **Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS)** – is a secure, digital platform used by schools and educational settings to record, monitor, and manage safeguarding, welfare, and pastoral concerns for children and young people.

7. POLICY DETAILS

7.1. Supporting Students with Online Safety Through the Curriculum

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At East Street Farm, online safety is not treated as a one-off lesson but as a consistent and embedded part of our whole-school curriculum. We recognise that our students, many of whom have additional vulnerabilities, require a structured, practical and personalised approach to developing digital resilience.

Curriculum Integration

- Online safety is explicitly taught through Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Computing and reinforced in therapeutic and pastoral sessions
- Learning is tailored to each Key Stage and curriculum pathway with practical strategies and real-world scenarios used to build understanding
- Where appropriate, online safety objectives are written into Positive Behaviour Support Plans

Key Themes Taught Across the Curriculum

- Respectful online communication and recognising unacceptable behaviour
- Protecting personal information and understanding privacy settings
- Evaluating online content critically, including misinformation, deepfakes and extremist propaganda
- Understanding healthy and unhealthy online relationships, including consent and peer pressure in digital spaces
- Recognising grooming, radicalisation and exploitation tactics online
- The risks of cyberbullying and how to respond or report concerns
- The emotional impact of social media and strategies for managing wellbeing online
- Awareness of digital footprints, permanence of online information and potential consequences for future education or employment

Practical and Inclusive Teaching Approaches

- Social stories and modelling are used to make online safety accessible to our students
- Small group discussions and role play help students practise safe online decision-making
- Supervised use of devices provides opportunities for staff to teach safe and responsible behaviours in real time

Promoting Digital Resilience

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- Students are encouraged to develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills so they can make safe choices online
- Staff promote a culture where students feel safe to report concerns, knowing they will be supported and listened to
- Online safety themes are revisited regularly, ensuring students can apply their knowledge to emerging technologies and risks

This curriculum-based approach reflects our commitment to preparing students for life in a digitally connected world; while safeguarding their wellbeing and ensuring they can use technology positively and safely.

7.2. **Categories of Online Safety Risks**

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may include:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages, instant messaging or emails
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips sent via mobile phone cameras, this may include AI generated or digitally altered content
- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites
- Abuse between young people in intimate relationships online
- Discriminatory bullying online such as homophobia and racism

Cyberbullying against young people or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Child-on-child abuse

Young people may use the internet and technology as a vehicle for sexual abuse and harassment. Staff will understand that this abuse can occur in or outside of school and that young people are less likely to report concerning online sexual behaviours.

Examples include:

- Threatening, facilitating or encouraging sexual violence

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- Upskirting - the act of taking a photograph or video of a person's body under their clothing without their consent to view their genitals, buttocks or underwear
- Sexualised online bullying such as sexual jokes or taunts
- Unwanted and unsolicited sexual comments and messages
- Consensual or non-consensual sharing of sexualised imagery
- Take It Down service - a service which helps individuals remove explicit images of themselves from the internet by creating a digital "fingerprint" of the content and sharing it with participating tech companies
- Abuse between young people in intimate relationships online

Staff will promote a zero-tolerance approach to sexually harassing or abusive behaviour. Incidents will be managed through the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Grooming and exploitation

Grooming is when an adult builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person to manipulate, exploit or abuse them. Grooming often takes place online.

Indicators include:

- Secrecy about time spent online
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Money or possessions that cannot be explained

Staff will also be trained on:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – including online coercion and manipulation
- Radicalisation (Prevent Duty) – recognising the role of online propaganda and extremist grooming.

Online hoaxes and harmful challenges

An online hoax is a deliberate lie designed to distress or scaremonger. Harmful challenges encourage young people to engage in risky behaviours. Staff will report concerns immediately to the DSL.

Cyber-crime

Cyber-crime includes:

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- Cyber-enabled crime – made easier online, such as fraud or sexual exploitation
- Cyber-dependent crime – only possible using technology, such as hacking or malware

The school recognises that some students with advanced IT skills may be at increased risk of involvement. This is addressed through individual risk assessments.

Risks for young people with SEND

Young people with SEND, may be more vulnerable due to:

- Social naivety
- Difficulty recognising manipulation
- Emotional regulation challenges
- Obsessional interests leading to excessive online activity
- Literal interpretation of language
- Higher likelihood of being targeted for abuse

7.3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Head of Education/Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Lead on online safety
- Appoint filtering and monitoring lead
- Liaise with police or social care as required
- Provide annual staff training
- Establish reporting systems
- Supported to complete the above actions by the wider Senior Management team

Staff

- Complete training and model professional behaviour
- Use work issued devices for making any contact with families, professionals or students
- Leave personal devices in secure staff areas during the school day
- Follow the Staff Acceptable Use Policy for further guidance on use of personal devices
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism online
- Embed online safety in teaching

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- Guide students on the safe and appropriate use of AI
- Working with the DSL and DDSL's to ensure that all online safety incidents are logged and managed in line with this policy
- Ensuring that incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with in accordance with associated policies, including but not limited to: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy and the Behaviour Policy
- Responding appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or harassment, both online and offline and maintaining an attitude of "it could happen here"
- Understanding that this list is not exhaustive and that online safety responsibilities extend to all professional duties

Students

- Follow Acceptable Use Agreements
- Use devices responsibly
- Report unsafe content or experiences

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the Head of Education of any online safety concerns
- Ensure their child has read, understood and agreed to the terms of the Acceptable Use Agreements

Visitors and members of the community:

- Visitors and community members who use the ICT systems or internet will be made aware of this policy when relevant
- Will be expected to read and follow the policy and where appropriate, to agree to the Acceptable Use terms

7.4. **Managing Online Safety**

A range of strategies are utilised at East Street Farm to manage online safety:

Digital resilience and education – Embedded across PSHE, RSE, computing and therapeutic sessions.

Internet access – Staff access is secure; students and visitors use a filtered network.

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Use of devices – School devices are password protected and monitored. VPN use and bypassing filters is prohibited.

No-phone policy – Phones are not permitted during the school day. A lockbox system will be used.

Parental engagement – Workshops, resources and advice are provided.

Filtering and monitoring – Securly logs regularly reviewed. High staff supervision reduces risk alongside technical tools.

Cybersecurity – Annual audits, strong passwords, multi-factor authentication and staff training.

Email communication – Students and staff are provided with a school email account.

Social media use – Restricted during school sessions. Staff may use personal accounts only during breaks.

Remote learning – Safeguarding principles apply, including appropriate attire, parental consent, recording where necessary and immediate reporting of concerns.

7.5. **Use of Securly Filtering and Monitoring**

East Street Farm uses Securly as its primary online filtering and monitoring system to support safeguarding and promote safe, responsible use of technology.

Securly is configured in line with the DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2024) and enables the school to identify, respond to and manage potential online safeguarding risks at an early stage.

Securly provides:

- **Web Filtering**
  Access to websites and online content is filtered to block material that is illegal, harmful, or age-inappropriate. Filtering settings are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain proportionate, effective and appropriate to the needs of our pupils.
- **Real-Time Monitoring**
  Securly monitors student online activity in real time to identify concerning searches, language or behaviours that may indicate safeguarding concerns. This includes indicators linked to cyberbullying, self-harm, depression, suicidal ideation, sexual exploitation and potential violence. Monitoring applies across multiple platforms, including web browsers, school email accounts and online documents.

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- **Safeguarding Alerts**
  Where high-risk content or behaviours are detected, Securly generates instant alerts which are sent directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and or a nominated safeguarding lead. Alerts are prioritised according to risk level to ensure timely and appropriate responses.
- **User-Level Visibility**
  Monitoring operates at individual user level, enabling safeguarding staff to view activity in context rather than in isolation. This supports informed professional judgement, early intervention and proportionate responses, particularly for students with additional needs or known vulnerabilities. User-level visibility helps staff to identify patterns, escalation of risk, or changes in behaviour over time.
- **Reporting Tools**
  Securly provides detailed reporting functions to support oversight and accountability.
  - The Deputy DDSL reviews safeguarding alerts and reports daily to the DSL ensure prompt follow-up and action
  - The Senior Management Team (SMT) reviews anonymised trend data termly to identify emerging risks, patterns of concern, or areas requiring additional teaching, support or policy review

Securly is used to support, not replace, professional judgement, staff supervision or effective relationships with students. All alerts are triaged daily, with immediate action taken where safeguarding risks are identified, including concerns relating to self-harm, suicide, sexual exploitation or violence.

Records of alerts, actions taken and outcomes are maintained securely as part of the school's safeguarding logs. These records are reviewed termly to support continuous improvement and ensure the school's online safety arrangements remain robust, responsive and effective.

7.6. **Acceptable Use Agreements (AUA)**

All staff and students must sign and follow the AUA. Agreements are reviewed annually.

7.7. **Responding to Online Safety Concerns**

- All disclosures are treated seriously
- Staff are trained to recognise barriers that impact disclosure of concerns
- Concerns are escalated to the DSL and recorded

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- Police are informed where illegal activity is suspected
- Support is provided to students and families
- East Street Farm avoids criminalising curiosity-driven behaviour
- DSL will respond immediately to high-risk Securly alerts in line with safeguarding procedures.

7.8. Action Plan for Emerging Digital Threats

The school continually monitors evolving digital risks, including viral challenges, AI-driven abuse and dark web activity.

The DSL and Senior Management Team review Securly updates to ensure new threats are appropriately blocked or monitored.

Annual cyber risk assessments and termly reviews ensure procedures remain effective and current.

8. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

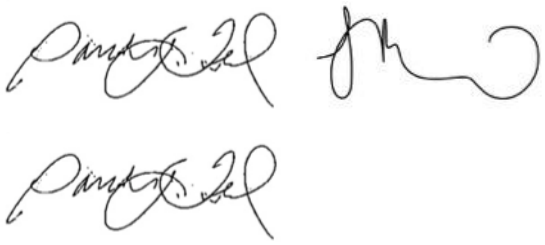
- Statutory or regulatory requirements are updated or
- The needs of students change
- A significant online incident occurs
- Legislation or statutory guidance changes
- A pattern of online safety concerns emerges

The Head of Education and Proprietors are responsible for overseeing the review process, evaluating outcomes and implementing any necessary updates.

Any revisions to this policy will be communicated to staff, parents/carers, the Governance Committee and other relevant stakeholders.

This policy is available to all individuals upon request from the admin office.

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Proprietors Signature: Head of Education Signature:	
Date:	05/01/2026
Review Date:	01/09/2027

Date reviewed	Reviewed by	Changes made	Approved by	Next review date
30/03/2026	Ali Gould	WTTSC update	Sandy Teal / Fiona Macdiarmid	05/01/2027
01/09/2026	Ali Gould	Updates in line with KCSiE 2026	Sandy Teal / Fiona Macdiarmid	01/09/2027

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APPENDIX 1 – SECURLY ALERT MONITORING AND ESCALATION FLOWCHART

Step 1 – Alert Received

- **System:** Securly generates an alert (e.g. concerning search, flagged keyword, self-harm, suicide, grooming, extremist content, violence)
- **Recipient:** DSL and DDSL automatically notified by email and dashboard

Step 2 – Initial Review

- **Responsible:** DDSL reviews the alert the same day with DSL
- **Action:**
  - Assess the alert content (context, severity, frequency)
  - Check whether this is a repeat behaviour or an isolated incident

Step 3 – Categorisation of Alert

- **High-Risk (Immediate Safeguarding Concern):**
  - Examples: self-harm, suicide, sexual exploitation, grooming, extremist content, violence
  - **Action:** Immediate intervention. DSL contacts parents/carers and external agencies (MASH, CAMHS, PREVENT team, police) as required. Record actions on CPOMS safeguarding file
- **Moderate-Risk (Pastoral/Behavioural Concern):**
  - Examples: repeated access attempts to blocked social media, inappropriate language, accessing age-inappropriate content
  - **Action:** DSL records alert. Pastoral/behavioural follow-up with student. Possible parental discussion
- **Low-Risk (Isolated or Accidental):**
  - Examples: single accidental search, minor curiosity-based attempts
  - **Action:** Record in monitoring log. No further action unless pattern develops

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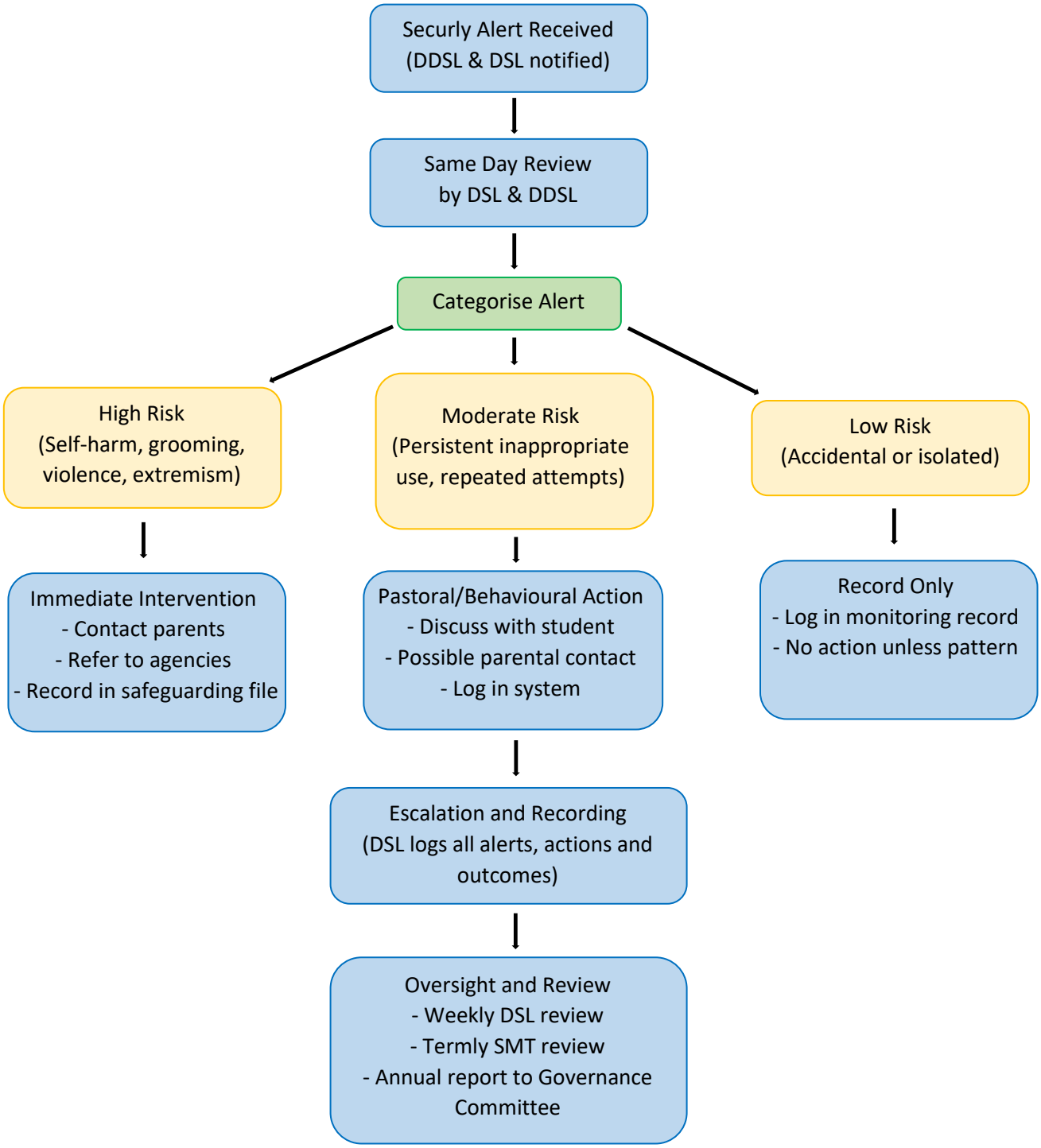
Step 4 – Escalation and Recording

- **Immediate escalation:** If risk of harm is present, DSL acts at once
- **Log:** All alerts recorded in safeguarding monitoring log, with action taken
- **Follow-up:** DSL ensures proportional responses, avoiding unnecessary criminalisation of curiosity-driven online behaviour

Step 5 – Oversight and Review

- **Weekly:** DSL reviews all alerts for patterns or repeated concerns
- **Termly:** Senior Management Team reviews anonymised alert logs to identify emerging risks and ensure filtering/monitoring remains effective
- **Annual:** Governance Committee /Proprietors receive summary report as part of safeguarding monitoring

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