



Filtering and Monitoring Systems at Ralph Butterfield Primary School

Keeping our children safe online

Teaching children how to keep safe online is embedded in our curriculum and we take every opportunity to reinforce the importance of this. We also alert parents/carers to any topical issues and signpost to online safety information, including on our designated school website page. We also ensure our own IT systems keep children safe online in school, through effective filtering and monitoring. The importance of effective filtering and monitoring processes in school is referenced several times in '[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](#)'; the designated section on pages 39 and 40 can also be read at the end of this information.

Filtering:

Filtering systems block access to harmful websites and content.

Our school internet is filtered through a Smoothwall Firewall System managed by Vital, using an educational filter. This is a comprehensive filtering platform using dynamic and group-based filtering, including new requirements around child safety and anti-radicalisation. It is designed to protect schools from inappropriate on-line content, as well as meeting or exceeding the current compliance and recommended safeguarding children legislation. The Smoothwall scans the copy, content and context of every web page visited, for unwanted material. It has 120 filtering categories which can be used to tailor the web browsing experience of all audiences, to ensure that harmful content is out of reach. These 120 categories are broken down even further into hundreds of sub categories, giving the system control of what is allowed through the filtering. As it is an educational filter, there are stricter filters applied to all content that is accessed. There are multiple levels of filtered access with the children's access being the most strictly monitored. This filtering system forms part and parcel of our current internet provision, so much so that it is not possible to access the internet via our school connection without passing through this filtering.

Monitoring:

Monitoring systems:

- Identify when someone searches for or accesses certain types of harmful online content on school devices.
- Identify who is searching for or accessing the harmful content.
- Alerts the school about it so we can intervene and respond.

Smoothwall Monitor is a real-time, digital monitoring solution that flags incidents as they happen. Monitoring both keystrokes and screen views, designated individuals are informed, when users try to view or type harmful content. Should anyone enter something inappropriate, this is flagged up and can be tracked to the individual workstation and the person using it at that time. Detailed alerts and reporting are configured to alert the local authority (York) of an incident at a school, enabling a fast response to ensure children's safety. However, this is highly unlikely to happen because the filtering is designed to block everything automatically.

A document provided by Smoothwall is available, which provides more detailed and specific information on their solution.

Ralph Butterfield Primary School Internet Provision and Services

Provision and management of the internet and online systems such as Integris are through the Local Authority (York). SMD (Solutions Systems Management & Development) support and service in school IT provision e,g wireless system, PCs and laptops, Smart panels, and liaise with other third parties e.g. photocopiers.

Staff Responsibilities and Awareness

All staff in school are responsible for filtering and monitoring as no filtering and monitoring system can be perfect. Staff understand that they have a responsibility to make sure the internet is used appropriately by children and they know how to report any concerns about what a child is accessing online, immediately. Staff have a good awareness of the types of inappropriate content.

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Filtering and monitoring (Page 39 and 40)

140. Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They should ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

141. The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

142. To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published [filtering and monitoring standards](#) which set out that schools and colleges should:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.

143. Governing bodies and proprietors should review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.

144. Additional guidance on "appropriate" filtering and monitoring can be found at: UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-schoolstaff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring>. The UK Safer Internet Centre produced a series of webinars for teachers on behalf of the Department. These webinars were designed to inform and support schools with their filtering and monitoring responsibilities and can be assessed at [Filtering and monitoring webinars available – UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

145. South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) has created a tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content).

146. Support for schools when considering what to buy and how to buy it is available via the: schools' buying strategy with specific advice on procurement here: [buying for schools](#).

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