

UTC Reading Filtering and Monitoring Procedure

2025-2026

Objective

The objective of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the effective implementation of filtering and monitoring systems to ensure online and internet safety at UTC Reading.

This procedure is an operational procedure relating to other specific policies:

- ALET Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ALET Online Safety Policy
- UTC Reading IT Acceptable Usage Agreement

Day to day responsibilities

IT Team

The IT team is responsible for the setup, maintenance, and monitoring of the filtering and monitoring systems.

This encompasses EE as the service provider, Smoothwall as the filtering provider and the onsite technician for daily support.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL is responsible for monitoring the reports from Smoothwall on a daily basis and a weekly basis to identify concerns and trends.

The DSL is responsible for disseminating this information to the rest of the safeguarding team as appropriate.

The safeguarding team will receive weekly reports of alerts from the Smoothwall system.

Teaching and support staff

Teachers and support staff are responsible for educating students on safe internet usage, visually monitoring usage of internet enabled devices and reporting any concerning online activities to the appropriate members of the safeguarding team and via CPOMS.

Students

Students are expected to adhere to the school's acceptable use policy and report any inappropriate content or behaviour encountered online to an appropriate member of staff or using the anonymous reporting system – The Whisper Button.

Filtering System Information

The filtering system utilised at UTC Reading is Smoothwall.

The DSL is responsible for upholding the filtering and monitoring procedure to ensure all members of the community use

This filtering system blocks access to websites containing inappropriate content such as violence, pornography, gambling, etc (this list is not exhaustive).

The filtering system filters activity on all devices that can connect to the internet using the UTC Reading WiFi service – including phones, laptops and other devices. The system filters all internet traffic including search terms, websites, apps and blogs.

Regular meetings are held with Smoothwall and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to health check the system and its utilisation – meetings happen at least 3 times per academic year, with one full audit carried out and recorded per year.

Smoothwall automatically updates their websites of concern and adds them to the system nationally when there are new concerns about a website or it identifies websites of note that need further monitoring.

Monitoring Information

Instant High Risk Alerts

The Smoothwall system is set up with immediate concern alerts in a graduated response.

Smoothwall will send immediate alerts to the safeguarding team when the system detects any internet activity related to “bullying”, “abuse” or “suicide”.

The safeguarding team will then assess the content and take action as appropriate.

Daily monitoring of filtering alerts

Smoothwall will produce daily reports of all alerts on the system and this is sent to the safeguarding team in the early hours of the following morning.

The team can analyse breaches such as searching information categorised as adult content, criminal activity, weapons etc daily to identify any concerns that arise.

Weekly monitoring of filtering alerts

Smoothwall produces a weekly report of filtering alerts, sorted by student so that patterns can be monitored on student internet usage over the course of a week.

Both the daily and weekly alert patterns are a part of the safeguarding team meeting on a weekly basis to identify if any concerns need to be escalated or addressed for individual students, themes or specific websites.

Individual student monitoring

The Smoothwall platform allows reporting on individual students and all of their internet access history over a specific period of time for analysis and monitoring.

Any of these reports taken out of Smoothwall are saved against the student's safeguarding records in CPOMS.

Individual category monitoring

The Smoothwall platform allows reporting on specific filtering categories for a specific period of time and will allow analysis of trends in particular themes such as adult content or criminal activity.

Documentation

Documentation has been provided by Smoothwall, our filtering provider to state how they meet all of the statutory requirements laid out by the Department for Education.

Documentation is held with the DSL and is updated annually.

Communication about Filtering and Monitoring

The usage of filtering systems is required by law, but the specifics of how this is implemented at UTC Reading is outlined in this procedure.

Students are addressed yearly through assemblies to explain how the procedure works, and this is shared with parents and carers through the policies on the website and through weekly communications.

All stakeholders are encouraged to use the normal safeguarding reporting procedures to report any concerns they have about filtering, monitoring or internet usage.