



# Assistive Technology Policy

**Draft:** September 2025

**Ratified:** October 2025

**Review:** October 2026

**Chair of Governors:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line and a loop.

**Headteacher:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. H. Smith'.

## Ethos of The Orchard School

At The Orchard School, **Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares**. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that every child has the potential to grow, thrive, and succeed when provided with the right environment, relationships, and support. **The Orchard Way** guides everything we do, ensuring that our approach is therapeutic, inclusive, and centred on understanding behaviour as communication. We are committed to nurturing the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs of our pupils, recognising their unique challenges while celebrating their individuality. Through strong relationships and a culture of care, we create a school where every pupil feels safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

### Principles of Our Ethos:

1. **Respect for the Individual:** Every pupil deserves respect, dignity, and the opportunity to be heard.
2. **Relationships at the Heart of Learning:** Positive, trusting relationships form the foundation of our work.
3. **Equity and Inclusion:** We ensure all pupils have access to the support they need to succeed.
4. **Therapeutic and Nurturing Approaches:** We integrate trauma-informed strategies to promote resilience.
5. **High Expectations with Compassion:** Balancing aspirations with understanding and personalisation.
6. **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Families, carers, and agencies work together to support pupils.
7. **A Safe and Predictable Environment:** Structure and boundaries foster trust and confidence.
8. **Restorative Practices:** Addressing conflicts through understanding, accountability, and growth.

## **Introduction**

This Relational and Therapeutic Behaviour Policy outlines the principles and procedures for fostering a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment that supports the SEMH needs of all pupils at The Orchard School. This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that all practices at The Orchard School promote equality and inclusivity while eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

## **Policy Vision**

The Relational and Therapeutic Behaviour Policy aims to foster a respectful and nurturing environment grounded in relational and therapeutic principles. The policy promotes equitable, inclusive, and accessible practices for pupils, staff, families, and the wider school community. The policy is underpinned by the principles of the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that all pupils, staff, and stakeholders are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their characteristics.

### **1. Mission**

At The Orchard School, Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that every child has the potential to grow, thrive and succeed when provided with the right environment, relationships and support. Assistive Technology (AT) is a key part of this environment. By embedding iPads, adaptive software, and other digital tools across the curriculum, we ensure that pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs have access to meaningful learning experiences that are inclusive, therapeutic, and future-focused.

This policy outlines our approach to implementing Assistive Technology to:

- Remove barriers to learning.
- Empower pupils to express themselves and access the curriculum.
- Support regulation, communication, and independence.
- Embed our values of Trust, Belonging, Aspiration, Voice, Pride, and Curiosity.

### **2. Aims of the Policy**

1. To define how Assistive Technology is used to support curriculum access and personal development.

2. To ensure equity of access through iPads and appropriate software.
3. To provide staff training and confidence in using AT to enhance teaching and learning.
4. To safeguard pupils when using technology, following statutory guidance.
5. To evaluate and adapt AT use as needs and technologies evolve.

### **3. Scope**

- Applies to all pupils, staff, governors, and visitors using Orchard-issued devices.
- Covers the use of iPads, specialist software (e.g. speech-to-text, text-to-speech, mind-mapping, regulation apps), and accessibility settings.
- Extends to classroom, therapeutic, pastoral, and off-site learning.

### **4. Principles**

- Equity not Equality: Devices and software are deployed based on individual need.
- Therapeutic Thinking: Technology supports regulation, self-expression, and relationships.
- Curriculum Access: AT is embedded into teaching so that learning is inclusive and Personalised.
- Future Readiness: Skills with technology prepare pupils for adulthood, independence, and employment.

### **5. Implementation at The Orchard School**

#### **1. iPads for Pupils**

- Each pupil is provided with an iPad as a learning tool.
- Devices include accessibility features such as guided access, voiceover, magnification, and dictation.

#### **2. Software and Apps**

- Core apps: Microsoft Office 365, Google Workspace, Arbor integration.

- Specialist apps: Clicker, Proloquo2Go, Zones of Regulation, visual timetables, and curriculum-specific adaptive software.
- Regulation and wellbeing apps (e.g. journaling, mindfulness).

### 3. Curriculum Adaptations

- Staff plan lessons to incorporate AT.
- AT used to scaffold learning (reading support, visual prompts, speech recognition).
- Enables alternative assessment and evidence of learning.

### 4. Staff Training

- Ongoing CPD delivered by SLT and ICT lead.
- Focus on pedagogy and therapeutic application, not just technical skills.

### 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular audits of device use and effectiveness.
- Pupil voice captured termly on AT impact.
- Linked to appraisal and school improvement planning.

## 6. Safeguarding and Data Protection

- Use of AT follows statutory safeguarding guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) and DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2024).
- Devices are filtered and monitored (via Arbor and IT support systems).
- Staff must not upload identifiable pupil information into external AI or unsecure applications.
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 compliance is mandatory.

## 7. Pupil Expectations for Safe Use of Assistive Technology

At The Orchard School, we recognise that pupils need guidance and boundaries to use technology responsibly. Assistive Technology is provided to help pupils regulate, learn

and communicate. Pupils are expected to:

1. Use devices and equipment for learning and regulation purposes only

- iPads, laptops and related software are to be used in line with teacher or staff guidance.
- Games, social media or unapproved websites/apps are not permitted.

2. Follow the Ready, Respectful, Safe rules when using technology

- Ready: Keep devices charged, ready for lessons, and use them as directed.
- Respectful: Use technology to support your own learning and allow others to learn.
- Safe: Keep personal details private, report anything worrying, and never attempt to bypass filters or monitoring.

3. Care for equipment responsibly

- Handle iPads, keyboards, chargers and accessories carefully.
- Do not damage, deface, or lend devices to others without permission.
- Report faults or breakages immediately to staff.
- Pupils, families, and the school will sign a Device Use Agreement (see Appendix) to confirm shared responsibility for appropriate and safe use of equipment.

4. Understand monitoring is in place

- Pupils are taught that their activity is filtered and monitored for safety.
- Any misuse will be addressed through our Relational and Therapeutic Policy, with restorative approaches taken where appropriate.

5. Contribute positively to the Orchard community

- Pupils are encouraged to use AT to express their voice, develop independence, and show aspiration.
- Safe, respectful use of technology and equipment is part of building trust and pride within our school values.

## **8. Legal and Statutory Framework**

This policy is informed by:

- Equality Act 2010 (reasonable adjustments)
- Children and Families Act 2014 (SEND provision)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2025)

## **9. Related Policies**

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- SEND Policy
- Relational and Therapeutic Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- ICT and Digital Strategy

## **10. Review**

The Assistive Technology Policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body to ensure:

- Compliance with statutory requirements.
- Responsiveness to emerging technologies.
- Ongoing alignment with The Orchard School's Mission, Vision, and Values.

## **Appendix: Device Use Agreement**

This Device Use Agreement sets out the expectations and responsibilities of pupils, families, and The Orchard School in relation to the safe, responsible and effective use of assistive technology devices (e.g. iPads, laptops, chargers and accessories). The agreement must be signed by all parties before a device is issued.

### **1. Responsibilities of The Orchard School**

- Provide each pupil with an appropriate device to support learning, regulation, and communication.
- Ensure devices are installed with approved software, filtered and monitored in line with safeguarding requirements.
- Provide technical support, repairs, and training for staff and pupils.
- Model and promote safe, respectful, and therapeutic use of technology.
- Review usage regularly and update families on expectations.

### **2. Responsibilities of Pupils**

- Use devices only for learning, regulation, and communication, as directed by staff.
- Follow the Ready, Respectful, Safe rules when using technology.
- Take care of equipment and report any faults, breakages or concerns immediately.
- Do not attempt to bypass safety settings, filters, or monitoring systems.
- Keep devices safe and bring them to school charged and ready for use.

### **3. Responsibilities of Families**

- Support pupils in caring for devices responsibly at home.
- Ensure devices are returned to school each day and kept safe outside school hours.

- Monitor use at home to ensure devices are used for learning, regulation, and positive engagement.
- Report any concerns or breakages promptly to the school.
- Reinforce The Orchard School's Ready, Respectful, Safe values.
- Accept responsibility for covering the cost of repair or replacement if a device or accessory is damaged due to negligence or misuse, with payment to be submitted upon receipt of an invoice from The Orchard School.

#### 4. Agreement

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms of this Device Use Agreement and accept their responsibilities in ensuring safe and appropriate use of assistive technology provided by The Orchard School.

Pupil Name:

Signature:

Date:

Family Representative Name:

Signature:

Date:

Headteacher/School Representative:

Signature:

Date: