



TEACHERS AND TECHNOLOGY:

A checklist for trainees and NQTs

For NQTs and Trainee Teachers entering the profession, technology is a vital part of your professional and personal lives. The following checklist has been designed to ensure that you are ready to face these challenges whether at school or at home, in the classroom, or in the wider school community.

AT HOME

1: Have you reviewed and managed your online content?

As a teacher, it is important that you look after your professional reputation, and this is just as relevant online as offline. Before you start your placement or begin to look for employment, it is a good idea to review online content which relates to you. Carrying out a search on your name using public search engines can help identify old posts, websites, images or blogs which might be viewed by a school or training provider. If you are concerned about any of the content which appears, it might be necessary to make it private, to deactivate old accounts or to contact the relevant person or websites involved for further assistance regarding removal. It is also a good idea to make sure the personal e-mail addresses that schools and institutions will use to contact you make a professional impression.

Before you start your placement or begin to look for employment, you should review your social network account(s), particularly the content and the privacy settings in place. Think carefully about the type of photo that you use as your profile picture. Privacy settings on social networking services (SNS) allow you to control who can see your content; including your photos, albums, wall posts, status updates and personal information, and you can limit these to 'Friends only' or customize further. If you are not sure, it is probably best to treat all information that you post as being potentially public and act accordingly.

SNS privacy settings also enable you to control whether your profile is included in public search listings. It is important to be mindful of how potential placement schools; pupils; parents; and employers may view you and your online content. Be aware also, that schools have rules about anything which causes harm or distress to others or brings the name of the school into disrepute, including content posted out of school or out of school hours. Some teachers have lost their jobs as a result of content they have created on SNS, so always think before you post. For further guidance, see the Social Networking Guide for Trainee Teachers and NQTs.

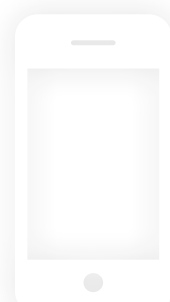
2. Are you protecting yourself when using mobile phones and online services?

It is good practice to set a PIN or passcode for your mobile phone. Phones can carry large amounts of personal data, including photos, and PIN codes can help to keep these protected and prevent others accessing and misusing your content. Some teachers' professional standing has been compromised after losing their phones, as a consequence of personal data being forwarded or made public.

When using SNS such as Facebook or other applications on smartphones, it is important to remember to log out. Not logging out means that you are continually signed in, which again can be compromising if your phone gets into the wrong hands and there is no PIN protection.

In a similar way, when you are at school, take care to prevent others gaining access to your school account, particularly when using PCs in classrooms or terminals that are also accessible to pupils and others – make sure that you log out from your own school account after using it. Don't leave your desk unsupervised while you are logged in.

It is also good practice to ensure that the passwords to e-mail accounts, bank accounts, SNS and other services that you use are strong and secure – with a mixture of lower and upper case letters, symbols and numbers. This is to prevent other users from accessing your accounts and helps to prevent identity theft. Changing these passwords regularly is also recommended. A strong PIN number to protect your mobile is also advisable – 1234 is not a good PIN number or a year of birth if others have access to this information.



There are a range of policies and responsibilities which relate to the use and misuse of technology in school and out of school. Some of these will be referenced in the conditions of employment that you have with the school as well as in wider standards and expectations for the teaching profession. Other relevant policies will include the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), e-Safety policy, and the behavioural and anti-bullying policies.

1. Do you know where to find these policies and have you read them?

Your school may address the misuse of technology across a range of policies and there may be an e-Safety policy which explicitly addresses the issues mentioned. Find out where you can access this information and familiarise yourself with the content, so that you can answer the questions in this checklist. If you are unsure, check with your mentor, e-safety co-ordinator or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). If these policies are not available, your training provider or union representative within the school should be able to offer you advice.

2. Can I access SNS, chat rooms and other websites at school for educational purposes? What about for personal use whilst at school?

In many schools, Social Networking Sites and chatrooms may be blocked due to the filters in place on the school network. If such sites are currently blocked but you want to use these sites for educational purposes, seek advice or written authorisation from a relevant member of staff before proceeding to ensure that best practice guidelines are followed. Some schools actively support the use of SNS for learning, teaching and communicating, (see the Social Networking Guide for Trainee Teachers and NQTs).

The school's Acceptable Use Policy should contain information with regard to using technology for personal use. Other documentation such as your job description and conditions of employment might also refer to this, as well as detailing the content that staff are prohibited from accessing in school or on school technology (such as school laptops for example) even out of school. For example, you will be expected to follow a code of conduct and adhere to the Data Protection Act with regard to e-mails that are sent from school accounts. You may be permitted to use e-mail, the web and SNS for personal use during breaks, in accordance with the school's policies.

3. How can I use technology to contact pupils? Can I use e-mail or my mobile phone to contact pupils outside school hours?

Technology plays a key role in daily school life and in the classroom. Many schools have Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) and/or Managed Learning Environments (MLE), which enable teachers to communicate with their class, and can be useful for setting and receiving homework or assignments for example. VLEs also have facilities such as forums and message boards which enable pupils and teachers to communicate publicly. Staff should agree codes of conduct or community rules with their pupils.

Find out about the protocols at your school and the etiquette for contacting pupils inside and outside the classroom using e-mail and mobile phones. Most schools specify that staff do not give out personal mobile numbers or e-mail addresses to pupils and parents. This advice would also apply to instant messenger (IM) services, including those accessible on your smartphone such as Blackberry Messenger (BBM) – as with other personal contact

information, it is not a good idea to share your BBM PIN, for example, or its corresponding barcode with pupils, or post it online where it is publicly visible.

If pupils do need to contact you with regard to assignments or exams, always use your school e-mail address. On occasions such as a school trip, for example, members of staff might be provided with a school mobile phone to use, rather than relying on personal devices and require that only school phones should be used for contacting pupils and parents. Further information might be detailed in the Acceptable Use Policy. See the Social Networking Guide for Trainee Teachers and NQTs for advice for teachers on not befriending pupils on personal social networking accounts.

4. What are the guidelines for using school laptops at home and bringing and using personal USBs, digital cameras and mobile phones in school?

Some schools provide staff with laptops; these are school property and are intended for professional use. Some schools may allow staff to take laptops home. If this is the case, be aware of acceptable use when connecting to the internet at home. If you have information about your learners on your laptop, you should ensure that no one unauthorised to do so uses your computer.

Most schools have cameras and it is advised that school cameras are used for taking photos of pupils on trips and in the classroom. If you do take photos using your own phone or camera, make sure you remove any images from your own equipment and transfer these onto a school hard drive as soon as possible because you should not have pictures of your pupils on personal devices.

If you are bringing personal USBs, cameras and mobile phones to school, make sure that they are kept in a secure location at all times and be aware of photos that are already on these devices – consider removing any content that should not be viewed by pupils or other staff.

5. Are there any restrictions about the information I can share about pupils or staff? For example, can I publish images of my pupils?

Photos and video can be a great record of school work and events, as well as great means of communication. Both children and parents like to see themselves in action, and evidence of achievement and progress. There are rules about taking and using photos of children and young people – photos taken for official school use, for example, may be covered by the Data Protection Act – so check with the school and the policy in place about the taking and sharing of images before using any images.

Before videoing or photographing students ensure you are clear about the school policies and procedures, and that parents and carers have completed relevant consent forms.

There are good practice guidelines in relation to child protection about how photos of children can be used. This includes not using the full name of the child with the photo, as well as considering the appropriateness of the photo. Caution may be needed in taking photos at sporting events, for example, during swimming events and lessons.

To find out more, check the school's data protection policy or seek advice from a mentor or member of the SLT.

The policy at your school might also specify the type of information that it is acceptable to pass onto other staff/ parents/ carers about pupils, and the ways in which such information should and should not be passed on. Ensure you are clear about what kind of information you can discuss with or share with parents or carers in e-mails or via other electronic channels.

6. What should I do if a pupil makes a disclosure?

Schools should provide staff with Child Protection training, and there will be procedures and policies in place to respond to disclosures and reports of bullying for example, or if you have concerns about a young person. Here are some courses of action you should consider:

1. If this disclosure happens in the school setting, it is important not to promise confidentiality to the child. Explain to the child what you are going to do with the information and why.
2. Your first point of contact following disclosure by a child should be the designated Child Protection Officer within the school or organisation. Don't attempt to handle the situation on your own. Remember to write down exactly what the child has disclosed, as soon as possible, using their own words.
3. The child who has disclosed is likely to feel worried, distressed or frightened, and that the process is out of their control. They need to feel involved and you should offer them the opportunity of being alongside you when you report to the designated officer in the school. Should an investigation commence, involving others in the school and outside agencies, it is important to remember that the child or young person may still need your support.

It is useful to be aware of some external agencies that can help: the children's helpline, Childline, where children can go online or call to talk to a counsellor on 0800 1111 (or www.childline.org.uk): Cybermentors (for bullying, see www.cybermentors.org.uk), where children can talk online to other children and young people: and CEOP (for reporting grooming) at www.ceop.police.uk.

7. What should I do if I am the target of cyberbullying or negative online behaviour?

Don't retaliate, keep the evidence (screen print outs, e-mails, websites, and text messages for example) and report what has happened to your line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Schools have a statutory duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of school staff and should therefore take reasonable steps to support staff experiencing cyberbullying. You can also make a report to the service provider. This could be your mobile phone operator, or the social networking service on which this abuse is taking place. If content breaks their Terms of Service or is illegal, the service provider should remove it and take appropriate action.

You can also seek advice from your Union, professional association, or the Teacher Support Network. There is a new helpline for professionals working with children, "The Professionals Online Support Helpline" and you can find out more details of this at www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline, where there is a useful FAQ section.

IN THE CLASSROOM

1. What do I need to be aware of if I am using the internet with pupils in the classroom?

The internet provides a wealth of information, as well as teaching material and resources, and using the internet with pupils in the classroom is an excellent way to create and publish content, and to learn collaboratively. There are many positive ways in which good quality technology use can enhance, extend and support pupil learning. Whenever possible, always check online content that you are intending to use with pupils in the classroom beforehand – to see if the site is accessible through the school's filtering system, and to check the appropriateness of both the content and surrounding content. For example, if you are using online video clips, ensure they are clear of any unsuitable content, including surrounding links and adverts, and know how to flag and report. Consider embedding clips in school web pages. Similarly, if you are going to conduct an online search in front of pupils, do a 'dry run' and check the search results are appropriate before hand. Even if school filtering is in place, it is not guaranteed to be 100% effective and so prior checks are still essential.

2. What about setting homework or independent research?

If a Virtual or Managed Learning Environment (VLE or MLE) is available at your school, you could use this to guide your pupils to useful websites and to set homework. However, where possible, it is good practice prior to giving the homework to check the search engine results for any tasks which require internet use. It is important to be aware that pupils may not have filtering at home when using the internet, and therefore recommend that they utilise the search provider's "Safe Search" setting. You can also inform the parents/carers of the children of this option.

3. Which e-safety issues should my pupils and I be aware of? Where can I find this information?

There is plenty of accessible and up to date information available online to support new teachers and education professionals and resources to use with pupils of all ages. The potential risks facing children and young people online are classified as the 3 Cs of Contact, Content and Conduct, and learning to manage these risks is a key part of the skills children and young people need to become and be a responsible digital citizen. E-safety and digital citizenship include issues like grooming, cyberbullying, the safe use of social networking, privacy, personal information and reputation management, copyright, sexting and plagiarism. For some further information on e-safety issues as well as resources that can be used with children and parents, see the Matrix for Trainee Teachers and NQTs which provides suggested useful resources for use with different key stages.