

Digital Safety & Ethics Handbook

A practical guide for parents to protect their children online with faith, dignity, and wisdom





Executive Summary

This handbook summarises guidance into a short, usable reference for parents. It covers how to keep yourself and your children safe in homes, schools, and local community settings from online harm. It focuses on how Muslims should conduct themselves online with dignity, truthfulness, modesty, and spiritual awareness.

The report brings together official government guidance and the corresponding Islamic teachings. The main principles can be summarised as keeping worship ahead of distraction, avoiding indecent or risky online interaction, protecting privacy, verifying information before sharing it, and responding wisely to abuse or harmful content. Note though that the handbook is not a technical manual. It does not cover specific platforms, apps, or software. Instead, it provides a framework for making informed decisions in an ever-changing digital landscape.

The aim is not merely technical safety. It is moral and spiritual safety as well: a digital life that protects faith, family, reputation, and peace of mind.

“We have become more sensitive to technological loss than to spiritual loss.”¹

¹Al Islam, “Wi-Fi and the Presence of God.”
<https://www.alislam.org/articles/wi-fi-presence-of-god/>





Digital Ethics & Faith

AI, social media, and other online technologies are just tools. The benefits and harms of such tools on how they are used, and what the users intention is. The central principle we need to keep in mind is that digital behaviour must remain subordinate to faith, worship, modesty, and moral discipline.

A believer should therefore ask not only whether something is possible online, but whether it is beneficial, decent, truthful, and pleasing to Allah. Only then should the question of whether it is technically possible or socially acceptable be considered. Following this principle leads to a digital life that is fulfils the spiritual purposes of technology:

- Represent Islam with dignity and restraint in every digital space
- Avoid indecent content and interactions that erode modesty
- Do not let online life displace worship, especially Salat
- Use technology as a servant, not as a master

“Where modern technology has been a force for good, it has also been used as a force for evil and destruction.”²

²Review of Religions, “Justice in an Unjust World.”
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/12764/justice-in-an-unjust-world/>





Social Media Use

Do	Do not
Use online platforms for learning, service, and constructive tabligh.	Do not use private chat or video interaction to create inappropriate familiarity between men and women.
Keep communication purposeful, modest, and limited.	Do not post profile images that expose women and girls to misuse, circulation, or blackmail.
Review privacy settings before posting and sharing.	Do not treat visibility, likes, or constant posting as a social objective in itself.

“Men and women should not chat on Skype and Facebook and look at each other..”³

“Women should not display their pictures on their profiles ... because that can harm them.”⁴

³Friday Sermon (2 August 2013), “Approach Not Foul Deeds.”
<https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/2013-08-02.html>

⁴PAAMA UK members meet Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V through (27 February 2022)
<https://www.alhakam.org/paama-uk-meeting-with-huzoor/>





Privacy & Security

Official guidance does not separate morality from practical caution. A harmful online action can begin with an apparently small decision such as joining the wrong page, posting too freely, or trusting the wrong contact.

A safer digital routine combines modesty with basic security discipline:

- Use strong, unique passwords and enable two factor authentication where available
- Lock devices and messaging apps
- Be cautious with requests for pictures, personal details, payment, or urgent action
- Review app permissions and remove apps that ask for more access than they need
- Treat impersonation and fake accounts as red flags

“I have individually been saying to people that Facebook leads to wrong actions and can be a source of worry for an individual.”⁵

⁵Al Islam, “Lies and Deceit through Media.”
<https://www.alislam.org/book/social-media/lies-deceit-through-media/>





Misinformation and Online Harassment

Truthfulness online is a religious duty. Before forwarding a claim, screenshot, or emotionally charged message, pause and verify it.

Official Ahmadiyya channels should be treated as the reference point when a matter relates to the Jamaat, Huzoor, or religious guidance.

When abuse occurs, the response should be calm and methodical. Preserve evidence, block access, report the offender, and escalate when necessary.

Verifying Information Workflow

The following workflow can help guide the process of verifying online information before sharing it. It emphasizes the importance of checking sources, verifying through official channels, and making informed decisions about sharing content.

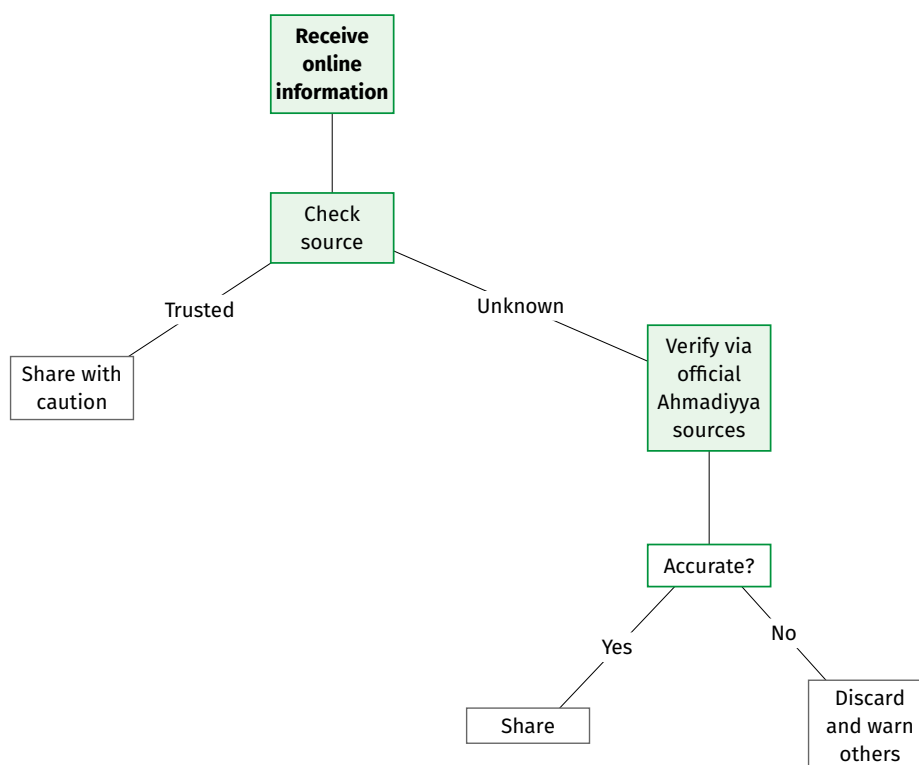


Figure 1. Verifying online information workflow

“Allah the Almighty has prohibited engaging in gossip, spreading false information, and speaking ill of others.”⁶

Reporting Abuse Workflow

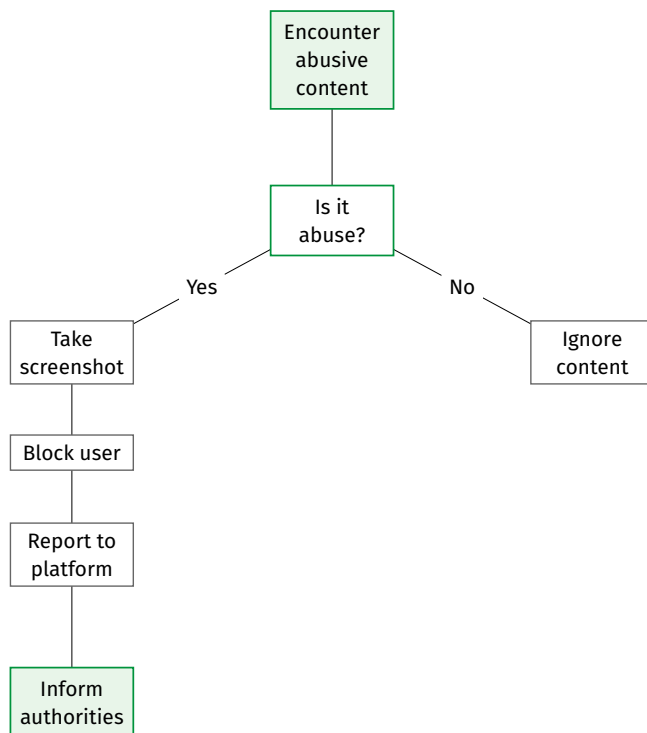


Figure 2. Reporting abuse workflow

⁶Al Hakam, “‘This is not the objective’: Appropriate use of social media.” <https://www.alhakam.org/appropriate-use-of-social-media/>





Digital Well-being

Digital well-being begins with spiritual order. If screens dominate the evening, they often weaken the morning.

Official guidance repeatedly warns that unchecked viewing, scrolling, and late-night habits reduce attention to Fajr, prayer quality, and family balance.

A healthy routine includes:

- Fixed offline times
- No aimless scrolling before sleep
- Prioritising Salat over entertainment

Online Risks in Digital Environments

The following categories combine widely recognised international frameworks for digital safety, including EU Kids Online, OECD, UNICEF, and World Bank guidance. These categories align with concerns highlighted in Ahmadiyya teachings regarding moral conduct, truthfulness, and responsible use of technology.

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Category	Explanation
Content risks	Exposure to harmful or misleading material, including misinformation, extremist content, or indecent media. ⁷
Contact risks	Harmful interactions with others online, including grooming, coercion, or inappropriate communication. ⁸
Conduct risks	User behaviour that contributes to harm, such as cyberbullying, harassment, or sharing harmful content. ⁹
Privacy and data risks	Misuse of personal data, identity theft, tracking, or unauthorised sharing of private information. ¹⁰
Well-being risks	Negative impacts on mental, emotional, or spiritual well-being due to excessive or unhealthy digital use. ¹¹
Emerging technology risks	Risks from AI and new technologies, including deepfakes, manipulation, and algorithmic bias. ¹²

Table 1. Online risk categories

⁷EU Kids Online defines “content risks” as exposure to harmful online material. OECD and UNICEF also highlight misinformation and harmful content as key risks.

⁸EU Kids Online defines “contact risks” as harmful interaction initiated by others. UNICEF includes exploitation and coercion.

⁹EU Kids Online defines “conduct risks” as peer-to-peer harm. OECD includes cyberbullying in this category.

¹⁰OECD and World Bank emphasise privacy, identity protection, and data governance as core digital risks.

¹¹UNICEF and OECD highlight screen overuse, addiction, and mental health impacts as key concerns.

¹²OECD and World Bank identify AI misuse, automated bias, and misinformation amplification as emerging risks.



“Evils of these days include television and the Internet... they do not even realize that they have to get up for Salat in the morning.”¹³

¹³Al Islam, “Excessive use of TV and Internet leads to Neglect of Worship.”
<https://www.alislam.org/book/social-media/excessive-use-of-tv-internet-leads-to-neglect-of-worship/>





Quick Reference Checklist

- Offer prayers on time and do not let late night screen use undermine Fajr
- Use technology with purpose, dignity, and restraint
- Avoid private online familiarity and immodest interaction
- Do not display profile pictures that create avoidable risk
- Use strong passwords, app locks, and two factor authentication
- Be cautious with fake accounts, impersonation, and suspicious requests
- Verify information through official Ahmadiyya channels before sharing
- Take screenshots, block, report, and escalate serious abuse when needed