

## THE CHALLENGE

Under the Prevent Programme<sup>6</sup> many schools monitor the internet activity of pupils. The pandemic has meant that pupils are spending an increasing amount of time connected to platforms remotely which may monitor their activity using the school network or school devices but even at home.

Anything that is on screen or visible on camera may trigger a report that is escalated under safeguarding rules and that can include the Prevent Programme - triggers may be made from flagged words used in internet searches, webcam images, videos, emails, chats or social media. Some systems can even capture users' on-screen bank details and passwords.

Companies do not publish these trigger words. Concerns included that these programmes have built in racist or discriminatory bias which can put some pupils at greater risk of being reported for example for potential gang membership based on ethnicity and use of slang.

Additionally, pupils and parents are not made aware if a record has been made connected to the Prevent programme or have seen the information that is being held about them. This information can form part of a larger record on that pupil and could result in placing pupils in the eye of the police for non-crimes.

<sup>6</sup> The Prevent duty  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revise-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>

## YOUR RIGHTS

"84% of 1,004 parents polled through Survation in 2018 agreed that children and guardians should be informed how this monitoring activity works."

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*defend digital me*  
<https://defenddigitalme.com/2018/03/only-half-of-parents-think-they-have-enough-control-of-their-childs-digital-footprint-in-school/>

You can decline to sign 'home-school agreements' that you are not comfortable with especially if they do not give you all of the details about what "I agree my Internet use will be monitored" really means. Ask for more information. Filtering and monitoring are often talked about together as a package, but they do different things. Blocking unsafe or undesirable content to see in schools, and creating profiles about behaviour, need not be done together.

Pupils and their parents have a right to access the records and information held about them by their school or educational institution. It's called making a Subject Access Request (SAR). Rules vary across the UK. See the ICO for the differences: <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/schools/pupils-info/>

## IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT SARs:

- Schools cannot charge for an access request (unless they are excessive or repetitive).
- Parents cannot be given information that the school cannot lawfully disclose if the child or parent has no right of access (about other pupils for example).
- Schools must respond to requests within one calendar month.
- You also have the right to complain to the supervisory authority, the ICO if your request is not met properly, but the first goal should be to have a collaborative and supportive discussion to inform you and older children what is processed.