



Framework

Supporting a school decision on classroom video use



Introduction

This framework supports school leaders in making a considered decision about whether teaching and support staff should access open platforms like YouTube as a learning resource. It does not recommend a single position. Instead, it helps you weigh the facts, consider your school context, and set a clear, consistent approach.

Video is now a well-established part of learning and teaching, but how it is used can vary across classrooms. As expectations around digital environments continue to evolve, this is not only an operational decision, but one that reflects how schools model safe, ethical, and purposeful use of digital content in learning.

In the UK, decisions around classroom video may sit with school, MAT or Council guidance and national safeguarding frameworks, meaning consistency and clarity are critical at both school and system level.



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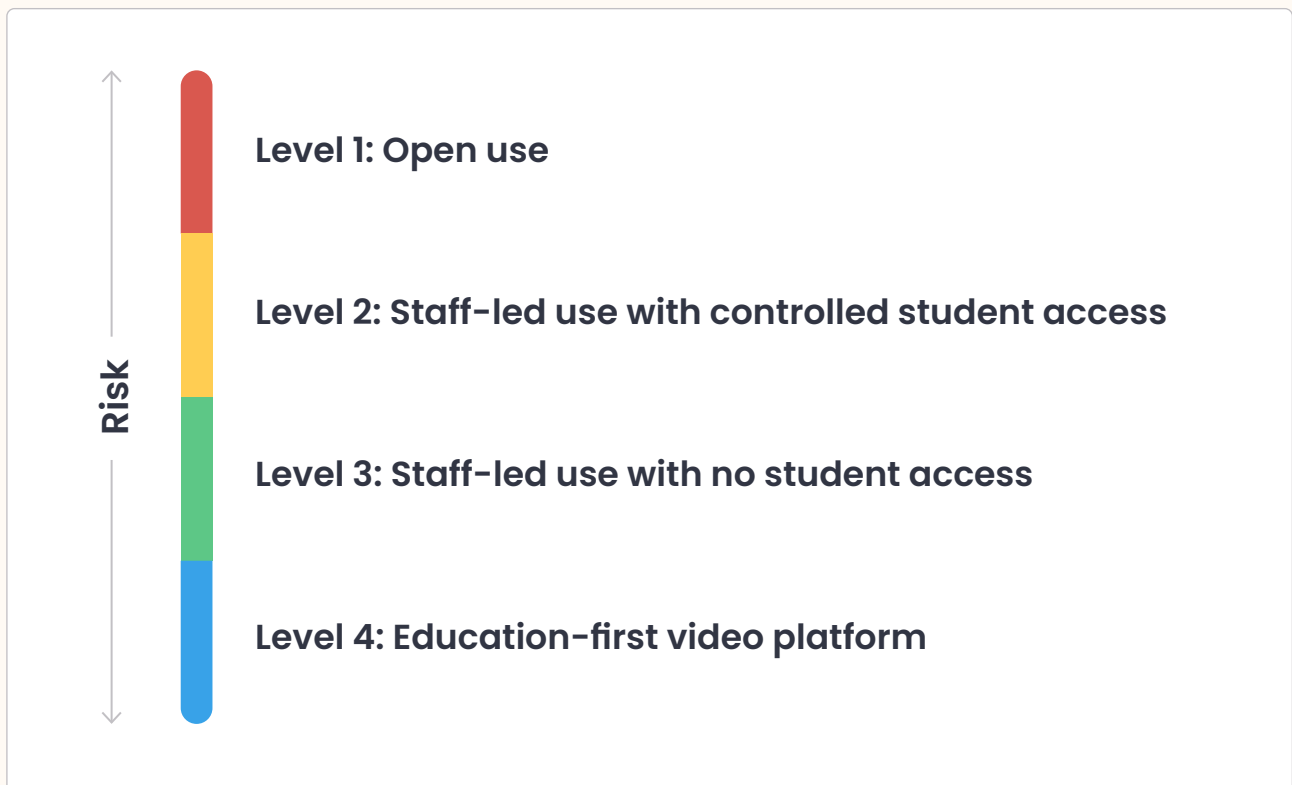
Understanding the School YouTube Use Spectrum

Schools across the UK are taking different approaches to YouTube use depending on safeguarding priorities, staff workload expectations, and education-first video platforms in place.

Some schools, MATs and Councils are already exploring more structured approaches to classroom video use, reflecting a wider focus on safeguarding and consistency. This includes measures such as restricting access to certain platforms, including YouTube, for pupils in school.

The School YouTube Use Spectrum outlines these approaches, ranging from open access through to structured, education-first video delivery.

These approaches are shaped not only by student access decisions, but by how staff make safe, ethical and purposeful use of video content, including the conditions under which students engage with content, and the impact this has on workload and responsibility in practice.



As you work through this framework, each section explores considerations that may influence where your school currently sits on this scale.

By the end of this document, you should be able to identify the position that best reflects your school's context and priorities.



1

Start with the facts

Before defining an approach, it is important to understand how classroom video is currently used.

In UK classrooms, video is often selected in the moment, within the flow of teaching, and under time pressure. Teachers frequently rely on YouTube to quickly access content that supports learning and teaching.

While this enables flexibility and responsiveness in lessons, it also means decisions about suitability, accuracy and appropriateness are often made in real time and in some cases may be bypassed altogether.

Recent Teacher Tapp¹ insights highlight the scale of this challenge, with **88% of teachers reporting issues when using platforms like YouTube in the classroom**, including inappropriate, biased and distracting content, while many spend limited time reviewing content before use.

These patterns are explored further in the independent research insights from Teacher Tapp¹, the UK's largest survey of educators. A clear school approach begins with recognising these practical realities.



Key takeaways

- ✓ Classroom video is often selected in real time
- ✓ Open platforms such as YouTube are widely used in practice
- ✓ A clear approach starts with understanding current use

2

Weigh the educational benefits

Consider why YouTube has been widely used by teachers in the first place.

For many educators, YouTube offers speed, convenience, and free access to an extensive library of content across almost every subject area. Teachers are often familiar with the platform, and it can reduce preparation time when a quick visual explanation or real-world example is needed.

However, it is also important to recognise that YouTube is not designed specifically for education. Content is not vetted for accuracy or suitability before being published, and anyone can upload material to the platform.

An estimated tens of millions of videos are uploaded each day, a figure expected to grow further with the rise of AI-generated content.

Teacher Tapp insights show that **25% of teachers report encountering AI-generated content**. As the volume of content continues to grow, this highlights the increasing challenge of identifying high-quality, reliable material for classroom use.



Questions to consider

- How central is YouTube to classroom practice?
- Are we confident that current use delivers high-quality teaching and learning experiences?
- Does convenience outweigh consistency and quality?
- Are suitable alternatives already available?

3

Consider the risks and ethical implications

Alongside the benefits of classroom video, there are important considerations for schools.

YouTube is not designed specifically for education. Features such as algorithm-driven recommendations, advertising, and autoplay can introduce distractions or unsuitable content, even when users are logged out. Advertising remains visible and is not tailored to educational settings. Autoplay and suggested videos can also undermine lesson flow and classroom focus.

There are also broader ethical and consistency questions to consider. If your school is encouraging students to limit or avoid social media use because of known risks, allowing YouTube as a classroom tool may create mixed messages. Teachers modelling the use of the platform may unintentionally signal that the risks do not apply in educational contexts.

Recent UK policy discussions have placed greater emphasis on both safeguarding young people from online harms and supporting them to develop media literacy. In this context, the way video is used in teaching becomes part of what is modelled to students.



Leadership reflection

- What behaviours are we modelling through classroom video use?
- Are expectations for staff clear and consistent?
- How does this align with our approach to safeguarding and media literacy?



4

Staff workload and responsibility

When determining whether your school will encourage YouTube use, it is important to consider the impact on staff workload and the practical realities of classroom preparation.

In practice, the selection and checking of video content often happens quickly, during lesson planning or in the moment, as teachers rely on YouTube to access content that supports teaching and learning.

Unlike education-designed platforms, YouTube places responsibility for content quality, accuracy and suitability on the individual teacher. If your school continues to allow access, this requires clear expectations around how content is selected and reviewed.

Teachers need to ensure content is:

- ✓ Accurate and aligned with curriculum goals
- ✓ Age-appropriate and suitable for a school context
- ✓ Free from inappropriate language, imagery, or messaging
- ✓ Not accompanied by advertising, comments, or recommended content that could distract or expose students to risk

Recent Teacher Tapp insights highlight the practical challenge, with **55% of teachers spending under 5 minutes searching for and checking videos before use.**

With many educational videos running between four and six minutes, this suggests content may not always be fully reviewed before use. Reviewing and checking content takes time, often at the expense of lesson design, feedback and direct support for students.

Where expectations are unclear, teachers may make rapid decisions under pressure, leading to inconsistency and increased risk of unsuitable content across classrooms.

A clear, supportive school approach helps reduce ambiguity, protect teacher time, and ensure consistency.

? Key decision question

Is individual teacher vetting of open-platform content an effective and sustainable use of professional time?



5

Consistency and clarity for staff

Regardless of the decision you make, consistency matters.

In the absence of clear guidance, teachers may make individual judgments about YouTube use, leading to varied practice across classrooms. This can cause confusion for students and families and place teachers in difficult positions.

In the UK context, where expectations around digital use and safeguarding are continuing to evolve, clarity at a whole-school level is increasingly important.

A clear school-wide position, whether YouTube is permitted under defined conditions (such as expectations around how content is selected and reviewed), or replaced with approved alternatives, can support staff by removing uncertainty and ensuring shared expectations.



Key takeaway

Clear, shared expectations reduce ambiguity, support professional judgement, and help schools model a consistent approach to digital content use.

6

Assess the availability of alternatives

Your decision may also be shaped by what alternative resources are already available in your school.

If your school has access to ClickView or other education-designed video platforms, teachers may already have curriculum-aligned, ad-free content that meets classroom video needs.

In this context, reliance on open platforms such as YouTube may be reduced, helping to minimise risk and reduce the need for individual content vetting.



Questions to consider

- Are education-designed video platforms available and consistently used across our school?
- Does reliance on “free” platforms create hidden costs in staff time, consistency, and risk?
- What support would staff need to transition confidently?
- How does your approach align with safeguarding expectations?



7

Key questions to guide your decision

As you define your approach, consider:

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Are we comfortable with the level of risk associated with YouTube in learning?

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What best aligns with our school's values and approach to staff and student wellbeing?

?

Will our decision be clear, consistent, and easy for staff to apply in practice?

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What behaviours are we modelling through classroom video use?

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What support will teachers need to adapt their practice if expectations change?

There is no universally "correct" answer — but a considered, well-communicated decision is preferable to ambiguity.



8

Determine and communicate your school position

After considering safeguarding, educational benefits, staff workload, and available alternatives, schools may arrive at different approaches to classroom video use depending on their context and priorities.

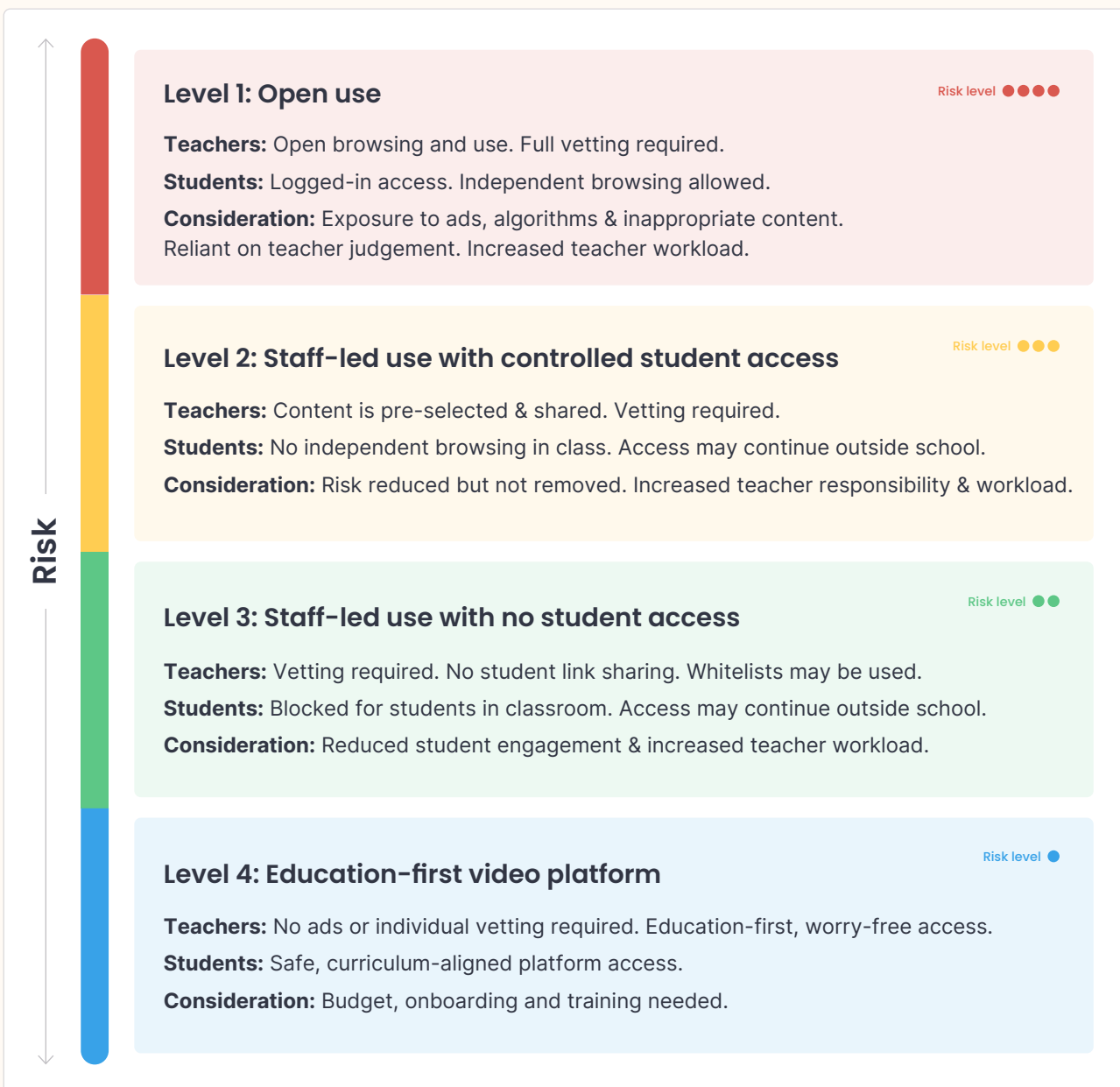
The School YouTube Use Spectrum brings these considerations together into a clear visual model to support leadership decision-making.

The goal is not to identify a single “correct” position, but to define an approach that is clear, consistent, and supports both staff and students in practice.

See where your school lands on the risk scale



School YouTube Use Spectrum



Once a position is identified, schools may wish to consider:

- How expectations will be communicated to staff
- What guidance or onboarding may be required
- How consistent classroom practice will be supported
- When the approach should be reviewed

A clear and well-supported school position helps promote consistent learning experiences, support teacher confidence, and protect student wellbeing.



Next step: Policy Communication Template

Internal guidance to support consistent staff messaging and classroom practice.



**If you'd like to explore how
other schools are approaching
classroom video use, we're
happy to share more**

[→ Start the conversation](#)