

# UKCCIS Education Working Group:

## Online Safety in Education Report

December 2015

### UKCCIS Education Working Group

This report has been produced by the UKCCIS Education Working Group. It is not reflective of UK Government or individual departmental policy.

The group focuses on how education settings in the UK are responding to the challenges of keeping their pupils safe online and the role that UKCCIS can play in supporting them. The group is comprised of:

CEOP  
Childnet  
Department for Education  
Kent County Council  
NEN  
NSPCC  
ParentZone  
The PSHE Association  
The UK Safer Internet Centre

### Introduction

1. As online technologies have become increasingly integral to daily life over the last decade, online safety has become a growing concern and focus for schools. Schools have had to respond to the challenges of greater use of these technologies in school, as well as needing to prepare their pupils for the risks and opportunities such digital tools present in daily life.
2. This report reviews current online safety activity in UK schools and provides a range of recommendations for the UKCCIS Executive Board to consider taking forward.
3. This report draws heavily on two pieces of research - the South West Grid for Learning 'UK Schools Online Safety Policy and Practice Assessment 2015' and Ofsted's Online Safety Inspection Data – and the analysis of the UKCCIS Education Working Group.
4. Online safety in this report refers both to protecting pupils whilst using technology within school, and educating pupils about the risks and opportunities of online technology in daily life.

## What should schools be doing?

5. Although there has been plenty of good practice by schools, until the last few years there was no statutory guidance or national expectations of schools with regards to online safety. A range of national and local organisations, including Becta, CEOP, UK Safer Internet Centre, Childnet and the regional broadband consortia worked to provide policy guidance and resources to help schools provide a safe environment for their pupils and support them in providing education on staying safe online.
6. Expectations of schools in England with regards to online safety have now been laid out by Ofsted. In September 2012 Ofsted included online safety within their inspection regime and in September 2015 explicitly included online safety within their new inspection framework for safeguarding – ‘inspecting safeguarding in early years education and skills settings’
7. Whilst this only covers those schools in England which are inspected by Ofsted (excluding, for example, schools in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales), evidence suggests that it has had a positive impact on school online safety provision and performance. It is understood that other inspectorates are working on reviewing online safety in their own contexts.
8. The 2015 Ofsted Safeguarding framework states that in schools with successful safeguarding arrangements:
  1. *Adults understand the risks posed by adults or learners who use technology, including the internet, to bully, groom, radicalise or abuse children or learners.*
  2. *They have well-developed strategies in place to keep children and learners safe*
  3. *They have well-developed strategies in place to support them to develop their own understanding of these risks and in learning how to keep themselves and others safe.*
  4. *Leaders oversee the safe use of technology when children and learners are in their care and take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying or children’s well-being.*
  5. *The framework also asks inspectors to consider ‘children’s and learners’ understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks such as exploitation and extremism, including when using the internet and social media’ and ‘investigate what the school or further education and skills provider does to educate pupils in online safety and how the provider or school deals with issues when they arise.’*
9. This indicates that to respond to online safety successfully schools should:
  1. Have engaged leadership and robust governance arrangements around online safety.
  2. Provide training and continuous professional development opportunities to all staff.
  3. Develop incident reporting mechanisms, together with policies and procedures tackling online safety issues.
  4. Deliver online safety education to their pupils.
10. This mirrors previous guidance from Becta which described online safety in schools as needing a whole school approach, considered across four domains - ‘Policy, Infrastructure, Education and Standards.’

11. It also broadly mirrors the requirements set out for schools in England described in statutory guidance - [Keeping children safe in education](#). This sets out training requirements for staff with regards to safeguarding, the reporting mechanisms for safeguarding concerns and the broad management responsibilities of the governors and proprietor. It also states that schools should *consider* how children are taught about safeguarding, including online. The DfE are about to launch a consultation into whether this should be changed to 'schools should *ensure* children are taught about safeguarding, including online.'
12. All schools also have a duty to comply with the Government's Prevent strategy, aimed at preventing the radicalisation of adults and young people who may then engage in acts of terrorism. Whilst online radicalisation is unusual, schools are expected to recognise that young people may seek information about current conflicts and political situations online, and thus risk being exposed to extremist and manipulative material. Schools should include online activity when they assess the risk of radicalisation faced by pupils. In the consultation mentioned above the DfE are considering including in 'Keeping children safe in education' a requirement for schools (in England) to have "appropriate filters and content management" to try and minimise the risks of children being exposed to harmful content online whilst at school.
13. Online safety was also included within the statutory English computing curriculum for the first time from September 2014. This means that in those schools which teach the computing curriculum all pupils will be taught about online safety within their computing lessons.
14. 'Online safety' is then a safeguarding issue which affects the whole school. It requires effective policies, safe infrastructure, cross curricular education and robust monitoring.

### **What's currently happening in UK schools?**

15. It is beyond the scope of the UKCCIS Education Group to conduct primary research into school practice. This report is therefore based on two sources:
  - South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) UK Schools Online Safety Policy and Practice Assessment 2015
  - Ofsted's Online Safety Inspection Data.
16. Apart from these reports, there is limited research into current activity on online safety in UK schools as most research focuses on how children and young people are using technology, the risks they face, the likelihood of exposure to these risks and how to mitigate them.

## **South West Grid for Learning - UK Schools Online Safety Policy and Practice**

The SWGfL UK Schools Online Safety Policy and Practice 2015 report is based on self-review data drawn from the 'SWGfL 360 degree safe' audit tool. 360 degree safe enables schools to: evaluate their own online safety provision; benchmark that provision against others; identify and prioritise areas for improvement; and find advice and support to move forward. There are 7000 schools signed up to the tool, over 4500 of which have embarked on self-review.

Since 2009 SWGfL has undertaken an annual review of data from the 360 tool. This annual review provides a snap shot of current practice in the schools that are using the tool. Given the large number of schools now accessing the tool, the data may be used to draw some conclusions about practice across the UK, though it is likely that schools using this tool are particularly engaged in online safety issues and this presents a 'best case picture' of practice. Having said that, many of the schools have reviewed their practice as inadequate or improving and where SWGfL have undertaken accreditation visits these have demonstrated that self-review ratings have been generally accurate.

This fifth annual analysis shows, in general, an improving picture compared to previous years, with the data demonstrating increases in performance against 28 aspects related to online safety in schools. Improvement seems to be consistent across different areas, i.e. all areas have improved though areas which were weak remain weak. Similarly to previous years, strengths lie in policy and technical infrastructure, and weakness around training, evaluation and community engagement.

## **Ofsted's Online Safety Inspection Data**

Ofsted's Online Safety Inspection Data provides the results of a survey on online safety practice carried out during HMI-led S5 school inspections in 84 schools across England (39 primary and 45 secondary schools). These were conducted in March 2015.

In contrast to the 360 degree data which is taken from schools who have participated in a self-review process, these schools were asked questions about their online safety practice as part of inspections in which they were obliged to participate. The findings from these inspections may be more representative of what is actually happening in schools in England.

## Findings

17. As noted, UK Schools Online Safety Policy and Practice 2015 measures 28 areas of practice and shows, in general, an improving picture compared to previous years. The strongest aspects are:

- having effective connectivity and filtering in place
- the scope of online safety covered in school policies;
- having effective Acceptable Usage Agreements in place;
- having policy addressing issues around digital images and video;
- having effective online safety policy in place.

18. Similarly, the Ofsted data shows many areas of good practice but also identified a number of areas of weakness.

19. Whilst the improving picture of online safety practice is certainly something to be celebrated, the purpose of this report is to identify areas where UKCCIS may be able to undertake work to support schools in their online safety practice. What follows considers how schools are performing against the four areas identified by Ofsted as evidencing successful practice:

1. Delivering online safety education to their pupils
2. Training
3. Policies, procedures and reporting.
4. Leadership and good governance arrangements around online safety

## Delivering online safety education to pupils

20. Both the SWGfL and Ofsted reports suggest that the vast majority of schools are providing online safety education in some form. This is supported by an NSPCC survey of primary schools which found that 74% of pupils felt they had learnt 'a lot' about online safety. A Techknowledge survey also found that 89% of secondary pupils and 94% of secondary pupils said that their school talked to them about staying safe online.

21. This is extremely good news, however, Ofsted data highlighted considerable disparity between what Senior Leadership Teams and staff thought was being delivered and pupils' perceptions of online safety. 50% of senior staff felt that online safety was embedded across the whole curriculum, compared with 23% of pupils. Pupils particularly reported that online safety was either limited or primarily taught in assemblies. This is worrying as it suggests that schools may be using one off assemblies to deliver online safety messages rather than a progressive and engaging curriculum delivered through regular lessons.

22. A number of questions remain then about what constitutes online safety education namely: How and where is it taught in the school timetable? What is being delivered?  
***How and where is it taught in the school timetable?***

23. Schools have been teaching online safety either as part of ICT/Computing, PSHE or one off safety sessions for many years. In September 2014 online safety was also included within the statutory computing curriculum for the first time. This means that all pupils taking the computing curriculum will be taught about online safety within their computing lessons.

24. There is, however, considerable debate about whether computing is the appropriate place for much of the delivery of 'online safety' education. For example, whilst it may be the right place to learn about technical issues such as how to use privacy settings, is it the right place to discuss online pornography? Many of the issues which come under 'online safety' are more about behaviour and understanding risk than they are about technology. It should also be noted that in Key Stage 4 pupils will move into their GCSE subjects. For pupils who are not studying GCSE computing, although schools have an obligation to build on these pupils' computing knowledge, PSHE is likely to become the main provider of online safety education. Many schools, therefore, use PSHE lessons to deliver online safety education sessions as PSHE is a much broader subject, predicated on the principle of preparing children for life.
25. This is supported by statutory guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education,' which states that, '*Schools should consider how children may be taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities. This may include covering relevant issues through PSHE.*'
26. The UKCCIS Education Group agrees that online safety education fits naturally within PSHE. If PSHE, however, is to be the vehicle for online safety education then it is important to note concerns about the quality of current PSHE delivery. Ofsted's report into PSHE provision titled 'Not Yet Good Enough?' found that 40% of PSHE provision was poor or inadequate. The Commons Education Committee has also suggested that this position may be 'deteriorating'. Data from the PSHE Association Annual survey of over 4,000 schools in 2014 suggested that PSHE provision had decreased in two-thirds of schools in recent years.
27. PSHE is currently a non-statutory subject. The links between non-statutory status and reduced quality of provision have been made by leading teacher unions including the National Association of Headteachers, the Association for Teachers and Lecturers, Voice, the National Union of Teachers and the NAHT Edge, as well as the National Governors Association. Decisions about the future of PSHE's statutory status may have a significant impact on the delivery of online safety education.

***What is being delivered?***

28. Wherever on the timetable online safety is addressed, one thing which is clear to the UKCCIS Education Group is that there is no shortage of resources for teachers to use. Resources such as films, cartoons, lesson plans and schemes of work are provided both by online safety specialists such as Childnet, CEOP and the UK Safer Internet Centre, as well as by the BBC and certain sectors of industry. There has also been some curriculum mapping undertaken to link these resources to Key Stages, for example in the work undertaken by SWGfL and Common Sense Media.
29. Despite this, concerns have been raised by young people about the delivery of online safety education. In focus groups, young people from the NSPCC participation group reported that online safety was not being discussed helpfully or in an engaging way. This was mirrored in focus groups undertaken by the Sheffield Local Safeguarding Children Board with 180 pupils in 5 primary and 4 secondary schools. A consistent message from these young people was that they received the same messages over and over again.
30. In discussion, the UKCCIS Education Group reflected that there is a lack of clarity about exactly what pupils should learn at each stage of the journey. The Computing Curriculum only outlines what pupils should be taught in the broadest terms.

31. This means that teachers may struggle to develop a progressive curriculum which changes as children grow and develop. Many online safety messages which children receive at different ages are just repetitions of simple rules in different contexts, for example, 'think before you post' repeated across key stages.
32. The UKCCIS Education Group recommends the production of a framework identifying the learning all pupils (regardless of whether they are taking the computing curriculum) should have received by the end of each key stage. This could take the following form, asking the question:

*'In order to be well-educated about online safety by the end of this key stage every pupil in our schools will:*

- *Know...*
- *Understand...*
- *Feel...*
- *Be able to say...*
- *Be able to do...*
- *Recognise they are responsible for...*

Such a framework would sit midway between the national curriculum statements and the available resources. It could be helpful for curriculum leaders and teachers to reflect on, audit their current provision and better assess progress. It helps to 'ground' what can sometimes seem ambiguous statements. This type of framework has been used successfully in other topics such as drug use and misuse and sex and relationships.

**Recommendation: The UKCCIS Education Group work with stakeholders to produce a detailed framework for teachers to identify the key learning pupils should have received by the end of each key stage (regardless of whether they are taking the computing curriculum)**

## **Training**

33. Staff training in online safety is highlighted as a weakness by both the SWGfL report and the Ofsted data.
34. The SWGfL report found that over 50% of schools had carried out no online safety training for their staff. The Ofsted inspection data presented a stronger picture but training was still found to be inconsistent, and suggested that what senior leadership teams saw as training was not always seen as such by staff.
35. This was also supported by interviews the NSPCC conducted in a small number of schools. The teachers they spoke to said they lacked confidence in addressing online safety and wanted more training.
36. It is unsurprising that training is highlighted as a weakness as this is not unique to online safety. There are numerous barriers to schools accessing training on any topic, including balancing different training priorities, pressure on CPD and INSET time, budget and staff cover.
37. Having said this, further investigation may be worthwhile to establish whether there are specific barriers or challenges in accessing online safety training. Consideration should also be given to what sort of training schools are able to access and need. Online safety covers a wide variety of issues, from educating pupils to protecting your

own professional reputation. It would be useful to know whether schools are able to access training which covers the breadth of the topic.

38. The NSPCC interviews and reports from UKCCIS Education Group members suggest that there is a question as to whether schools are aware of and able to access quality training on online safety. There are a number of courses provided by CEOP, UK Safer Internet Centre, NSPCC and other organisations nationally. Whether there is currently enough capacity and diversity in the marketplace, however, is unknown.

**Recommendation: The UKCCIS Education Group explore in more detail the assessment that online safety training for staff is a weakness for schools, researching the current online safety training market and identifying barriers to accessing online safety training.**

### **Policies, procedures and reporting**

39. The SWGfL report found that online safety policies were an area of strength for schools, not just in terms of having a policy but also the scope of policies and their effectiveness.
40. Despite this, the Ofsted Inspection Data reported that 5% of schools didn't have an online safety policy. Further, only 74% of pupils spoken to were aware that their school had an online safety policy.
41. At this stage the UKCCIS Education Group feels that there are enough good practice examples available from organisations such as the South West Grid for Learning and Kent County Council which schools can access for support in policy development. There may be a role, however, for UKCCIS to reinforce the fact that not having a policy is unacceptable.
42. Reporting mechanisms are considerably weaker, with Ofsted finding that reporting is generally poorly understood and inconsistent. Many pupils were unclear about how to report when things went wrong or they needed support. The UKCCIS Education Group felt that more could be done to support schools in understanding how to report online safety incidents, how to integrate this into child protection procedures, and when to seek support from national organisations.

**Recommendation: The UKCCIS Education Group to review current reporting guidance available to schools and update reporting flowcharts developed by Becta**

### **Leadership and good governance arrangements around online safety**

43. It is clear from the level of engagement with the 360 degree safe audit tool and reporting from Ofsted that senior leadership teams within schools are engaged in online safety issues. An area of considerable weakness, highlighted by both reports, is engagement of school governors.
44. Ofsted data found only a very few cases in which governors' responses to questions about online safety were consistent and in line with other responses from the school, and there was very little convincing evidence that governors had a good grip on school practice.

45. The SWGfL report similarly found that 55% of schools had carried out no governor training on online safety issues and 30% had no involvement from governors in the development of online safety policy or practice.
46. As governors are increasingly relied upon (and indeed responsible) to ensure schools are meeting their safeguarding responsibilities, the UKCCIS Education Group recommends that work is undertaken to raise their awareness of online safety issues and what they should be doing to ensure their schools are meeting their responsibilities. The UKCCIS Education Group could develop tools, for example, a simple checklist or framework for a governor workshop, to support governing bodies in exercising their responsibilities.

**Recommendation: The UKCCIS Education Working Group should work with stakeholders, including the National Governors' Association, to raise awareness of online safety as a whole school issue with governors and provide tools to support governing bodies in addressing issues with their schools.**

### **Supporting schools to access quality online safety services**

47. As well as considering the four areas explored above, the UKCCIS Education Working Group has engaged in wide ranging discussions about online safety in schools. One issue which all members raised was the growth of the independent market of online safety service providers. This is evidenced by the increased number of independent organisations providing online safety services to schools. This is a natural response to the changed education landscape which has seen an increase in Academies and free schools and a reduction of local authority service provision such as school improvement partnerships.
48. There is certainly a need for support services for schools and it is important that the market for online safety services can continue grow to support the needs of schools. In an increasingly diverse marketplace, however, schools have questioned the quality of some of the provision they have received. Schools may then need support in accessing online safety services and being assured of their quality.
49. Whilst it is outside of the scope of UKCCIS to quality assure services provided to schools, it may be possible to help schools assess the services they are buying in. A simple example is helping schools assess external speakers before they invite them in. The PSHE Association has produced a guide 'Working with External Visitors/Contributors to PSHE' and the UKCCIS Education Group recommends the development of a similar guidance document specific to online safety.

**Recommendation: The UKCCIS Education Group produce guidance for schools on working with external organisations providing online safety services.**

### **Conclusion**

50. This report has focused on areas of weakness and challenges for schools but it is crucial to recognise the immense improvements and the huge amount of good practice being undertaken. The picture is a broadly positive one and pupils in today's schools are significantly more likely than ever before to be given opportunities to explore the issues new technologies raise in the modern world.

51. One final question, however, is what world we are preparing them for. Children entering the school system in 2015 will graduate from it in 2030. They are likely to be entering a very different world, one radically altered by technology and our relationship to it. The Education Reform Act states schools have a statutory responsibility to prepare children for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. This means we have a statutory responsibility to prepare our reception infants for the world of 2030. By then the degree of connectivity will be far (far) in advance of today.
52. Whilst no one can predict the future, is there more we could be doing to ensure that schools are not only preparing young people for today's challenges but also for those that they will face in the future?

**Recommendation: UKCCIS Education Group to convene a roundtable to explore the implications of future technology for online safety education today.**

### **Recommendations**

1. The UKCCIS Education Group work with stakeholders to produce a detailed framework for teachers to identify the key learning pupils should have received by the end of each key stage (regardless of whether they are taking the computing curriculum)
2. The UKCCIS Education Group should explore in more detail the assessment that online safety training for staff is a weakness for schools, researching the current online safety training market and identifying barriers to accessing online safety training.
3. The UKCCIS Education Group to review current reporting guidance available to schools and update reporting flowcharts developed by Becta
4. The UKCCIS Education Working Group should work with stakeholders, including the National Governors' Association, to raise awareness of online safety with governors and provide tools to support governing bodies in addressing issues with their schools.
5. The UKCCIS Education Group should produce guidance for schools on working with external organisations providing online safety services.
6. UKCCIS Education Group to convene a roundtable to explore the implications of future technology for online safety education today.

## Useful links for schools

### Keeping children safe in education

*Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

### Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills from September 2015

Guidance for Ofsted inspectors to use when inspecting safeguarding under the common inspection framework.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015>

### National curriculum in England: computing programmes of study

The statutory programmes of study and attainment targets for computing at key stages 1 to 4.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-computing-programmes-of-study>

### Preventing bullying

*Departmental advice for schools on preventing and responding to bullying.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

### Buying ICT for your school

Departmental advice for schools on ICT buying practice and how to achieve better value for money.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buying-ict-for-your-school>

### Cloud software services and the DPA

*Departmental advice on data protection for schools considering cloud software services.*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/480589/Cloud-services-software-dept-advice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480589/Cloud-services-software-dept-advice.pdf)

### Prevent Duty guidance

*Prevent duty guidance for Scotland and England and Wales.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

### Channel guidance

*Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. The process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

## UKCCIS Education Working Group organisations

CEOP

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Childnet

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

Department for Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

Kent County Council e-safety group  
[www.e-safety.org.uk](http://www.e-safety.org.uk)

The NEN (National Education Network)  
<http://www.nen.gov.uk/>

NSPCC  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

ParentZone  
<http://parentzone.org.uk/>

PSHE Association  
[www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)

UK Safer Internet Centre  
<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>