Teaching Online Safety in school

Guidance supporting schools to teach their pupils how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subject

June 2019

(What this means to Online Safety Awareness)

From September 2020, Relationships Education will be compulsory for all primary aged pupils, Relationships and Sex Education will be compulsory for all secondary aged pupils and Health Education will be compulsory in all state-funded schools in England.

Damian Hinds MP – Secretary of State for Education

Damian Hinds MP (June 2019) - … *"A fusion of the Relationships Education Curriculum – the Citizenship Curriculum - & the Commuting Curriculum"*

This guidance is for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies. It applies to all local authority-maintained schools, academies and free schools

Main points

I. It is important to **teach pupils** about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help pupils **to navigate the online world safely** and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app (page 6).

II. However, **schools also need an understanding of the risks** that exist online so they can tailor their teaching and support to the specific needs of their pupils (page 8).

III. Schools can refer to the **Education for a Connected World Framework** for age specific advice about the online knowledge and skills that pupils should have the opportunity to develop at different stages of their lives.

IV. When planning their curriculum, and **how online safety fits within it**, there are a number of areas we recommend schools consider, for example how to support vulnerable pupils (page 24).

V. We recommend that **schools embed teaching about online safety and harms within a whole school approach** (page 26).

Underpinning knowledge and behaviours

How to evaluate what they see online - How to recognise techniques used for persuasion   - Online behaviour - How to identify online risks – Online Reputation - How and when to seek support

The Potential Harm or Risk

Age restrictions - Content: How it can be used and shared - Disinformation, misinformation and hoaxes - Fake websites and scam emails - Fraud (online) - Password phishing - Personal data - Persuasive design - Privacy settings - Targeting of online content Including on social media and search engines.

The Potential Harm or Risk (continued)

Abuse (online) - Challenges - Content which incites - Fake profiles - Grooming – Sexual / Psychological / County Lines - Live streaming - Pornography - Unsafe communication

The Potential Harm or Threat

I. Impact on confidence (including body confidence)

II. Impact on quality of life, physical and mental health and relationships.

III. Online vs. offline behaviours

IV. Suicide, self-harm and eating disorders.

Teaching about Online Harms and Risks in a Safe Way

I. As with any safeguarding lessons or activities, **schools must consider the topic they are covering** and the potential **that a child (or more than one child) may be suffering from online abuse or harm in this way**. Impact on quality of life, physical and mental health and relationships.

II. It is important to **create a safe environment in which pupils feel comfortable** to say what they feel.

III. Where schools are already aware of **a child who is being abused or harmed online, they should carefully plan any lesson to consider this.**

IV. In some cases, **a pupil will (may) want to make a disclosure** following a lesson or activity

Whole School Approach

I. **Creating a culture that incorporates the principles of online safety across all elements of school life.** It is important to create a safe environment in which pupils feel comfortable to say what they feel.

II. Proactively **engaging staff, pupils and parents/carers**. In some cases, a pupil will want to make a disclosure following a lesson or activity

III. **Reviewing and maintaining the online safety principles**

IV. **Modelling the online safety principles consistently**. This includes expecting the same standards of behaviour whenever a pupil is online at school - **be it in class, logged on at the library or using their own device in the playground**.

Use of external visitors

Online safety can be a difficult and complex topic which changes very quickly. Schools using external expertise should ensure the guidance supports & enhances a school's online safety approach. Additionally, schools must ensure experts are qualified, experienced, competent and up to date.
Children & young adults are over-sharing through direct messaging, picture messaging, social media, gaming & technology. Children & Young adults can become intentional victims by behaving illegally or inappropriately. The evolutional of technology & connectivity allows for unintentional victims through lack of awareness & education.