guidance for leaders

Becta

improving learning
through technology

safeguarding
children online

a checklist
for Local Authorities and Local Safeguarding Children Boards

about this booklet

This publication highlights for local authorities (LAs) and the newly formed local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) the key questions that they urgently need to consider in safeguarding children and young people in their care from e-safety risks.

This checklist has been designed to give core members of LAs and LSCBs a quick snapshot of the e-safety issues and risks, and to signpost activities that they must develop across all the services within their remit.

Full guidance is available in '*Safeguarding children online: a guide for Local Authorities and local safeguarding children boards*'. This publication gives more detail on the statutory context for e-safety, further discussions of the issues and risks, and recommendations and resources against each of the checklist areas. We encourage you to read it.

You may download or order copies of both versions from Becta's publications area [**http://www.becta.org.uk/publications**].

> **Where we use the terms 'e-safety' or 'online', we refer to all fixed and mobile technologies which children and young people might encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks to their wellbeing and safety.**

policies and practices

In any context, effective policy is the backbone of good practice, and local authorities should consider developing comprehensive and coherent e-safety policies for all services within their remit.

Can you answer the following questions?

Co-ordination of activities

✓ **Who is responsible for co-ordinating e-safety across the area covered by the LSCB to ensure that best practice is developed, implemented and kept up to date?**

We recommend that each LSCB appoint a responsible officer for developing an e-safety agenda across the full range of children's services within its remit. This officer should act as a single point of contact on e-safety issues within the local area and with national agencies such as CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre), ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Becta.

✓ **In individual organisations, who is responsible for co-ordinating the online services provided to and for children and young people?**

Each organisation must have a lead person to co-ordinate and focus activities at a local level and to act as a contact point for the LSCB e-safety officer.

Acceptable use policies (AUPs)

✓ **Do all services have policies for the acceptable use of ICT by children, young people and staff? Is the application of these policies monitored? Are the AUPs kept up to date in line with changing issues and technologies?**

Consider not only the obvious settings such as schools or public libraries, but also places such as youth centres or services where young people may use their own technology.

Are the children and young people that use your services aware of their responsibilities for staying safe when online? Are they aware of their responsibilities to others? Do they know who to speak to if they encounter problems online?

Children and young people should be supported in their use of ICT, through education and rules for using the technology safely and clear routes for accessing help and advice.

Is the privacy of children and young people protected when they are online?

If you include photographs of children on your website, for example, you will need to gain permission from the parents or guardian to use those images.

Reporting procedures

What are the procedures for reporting e-safety incidents (regardless of their setting)? How are incidents escalated? What systems are in place for co-operation between agencies in the local area?

Consider, for example, a serious incident in a school where a pupil was found to be distributing images of child abuse on email via the school network. The school would obviously need to report the incident to the police, and to secure and preserve evidence on the school network. However, the incident could also indicate the existence of wider issues, such as sexual abuse within the home or other setting (so normalising behaviours) or peer abuse (so requiring additional support). Is the school clear about the reporting procedure, and do other agencies have the necessary systems in place to support those involved. How would the reporting procedures differ if the e-safety incident occurred in a different setting, for example a public library or hospital school?

All services need to develop and implement clear reporting and disclosure procedures commensurate with the nature of the e-safety incident, and to make staff aware of the issues and co-ordinate responses as necessary.

The full version of this document contains a flowchart about dealing with e-safety incidents.

infrastructure and technology

As they respond to the challenges of transforming teaching and learning and to the general opportunities offered by new technologies, providers of services to children and young people will face new demands on their technical infrastructures. Increasingly, a strategic response will be necessary.

Can you answer the following questions?

✓ **Are there minimum standards for technical e-safety in all settings where children may access ICT?**

Technical policies and standards should take into account issues such as filtering, the use of accredited ISPs, data security and firewalls. Becta's functional and technical specifications give further information [**http://www.becta.org.uk/industry/techstandards**].

✓ **How are these technical standards implemented? Is there scope for local customisation? Is there scope for authority-wide implementation?**

All services within the remit of the LSCB should take a strategic approach to managing their technical infrastructures, but must also respond sensitively to local issues, risks or circumstances.

✓ **How are technical standards monitored? Are local issues centrally reviewed for evidence of emerging problems or trends?**

Monitoring is essential to ensure that systems and procedures are working effectively to protect children and young people. By sharing knowledge and experience of e-safety issues, LSCBs can take a more proactive approach to protecting the children and young people in their care.

education and training

The responsibility to educate children and young people about the opportunities and risks posed by new technologies belongs to everyone. However, to do this effectively, the educators (whether teachers or other professionals in contact with children and young people) need to be educated themselves.

Can you answer the following questions?

How does the LSCB seek to 'raise awareness about the safe use of the internet' – and other technologies?

As recommended in paragraph 11.62 of *Working together to safeguard children*[1].

Who co-ordinates key partner activities in the 'development and delivery of training and education programmes with CEOP'?

Also as recommended in paragraph 11.62 of *Working together to safeguard children*[2].

What standards and protocols for educating and training staff in e-safety are in place for all services covered by the remit of the LSCB? How are these training programmes implemented? How are they monitored and evaluated, and how are they kept up to date with the changing online environment?

This should include induction of new staff, plus ongoing support and supervision of existing staff. Staff should be aware of appropriate local, regional and national issues with regard to e-safety, and should be confident in their abilities to escalate an incident as necessary and appropriate.

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[1]Full title: *Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* – see Every child matters website [http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/AE53C8F9D7AEB1B23E403514A6C1B17D.pdf]

[2]As above

E-safety and digital literacy skills development should be a continuous process – both for those who are educators (in the formal and informal sense), and also for the children and young people in their care.

Is existing good practice within the authority shared across the LSCB?

Many schools may already be giving extensive e-safety education to their pupils and staff. LSCBs may wish to look at current provision, and assess whether existing knowledge, experience and materials can be shared across other services.

What role is the LSCB playing in ensuring that children and young people outside of mainstream education receive the support and advice they need?

Access to ICT can be particularly beneficial to pupils who are unable to attend school regularly, such as those in pupil referral units (PRUs), Traveller children or children attending hospital schools. It can allow them to feel that they remain part of the school environment and to retain some continuity in their work. However, they must also learn how to use the technology safely and appropriately.

What role is the LSCB playing in ensuring that children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) receive appropriate and/or additional support on e-safety issues?

A young person who has a learning difficulty or disability may be especially vulnerable to e-safety risks. They are therefore likely to need additional advice on safe behaviours and what they should never disclose to others online, and they may also need closer supervision. LSCBs must respond to these needs.

What role are non-educational establishments, for example public libraries or youth clubs, playing in educating children and young people in their care and/or using their services?

All services providing ICT access to children and young people have a duty to ensure that they use the technology safely and appropriately.

How will the impact of education and training on children and young people be monitored and evaluated?

Again, e-safety and digital literacy skills development should be a continuous process for children and young people as well as for those who care for them.

What role is the LSCB playing in giving e-safety information and guidance to parents and carers?

Consider what information the LSCB should make available to parents and carers, and how to distribute it. Look for existing opportunities to share information and guidance with parents – for instance via schools, libraries and Sure Start centres – or for emerging opportunities like the distribution of computer equipment such as Computers for Pupils[3] or other local schemes.

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[3] See the Becta website [**http://www.becta.org.uk/schools/computersforpupils**]

standards and inspection

The inspection of e-safety measures and the monitoring of practices and procedures are essential to ensure that policy is effective, that risks to children and young people are minimised and that, where incidents do occur, all responsible agencies deal with them appropriately.

Under *Every child matters*[4], children's services are to be inspected to ensure that the five outcomes are being met. Becta urges LSCBs, in association with other inspection bodies, to evaluate local e-safety measures as part of this process.

Can you answer the following questions?

✓ **Who is responsible for monitoring e-safety measures across the services covered by the remit of the LSCB? What is the extent of their authority?**

As discussed in the policies and practices section, a responsible officer should take the lead in developing an e-safety agenda across the full range of children's services that fall within the remit of the LSCB. This involves monitoring the effectiveness of the e-safety measures in place – including out-of-school and out-of-hours provision.

✓ **How is activity monitoring co-ordinated, particularly where several agencies have responsibility in this area?**

Here again, it is important for a single responsible officer to take the lead. Co-ordination is essential in order to incorporate recommendations and guidance from all agencies involved in child protection into local e-safety policies and practices.

[4]See Every child matters website [**http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk**]

How is performance measured, and how is progress benchmarked? How is good practice shared? How is poor performance managed? Who drives forward recommendations?

LSCBs may wish to consider developing a set of measures against which to monitor and review e-safety practices. Benchmarking against other LSCBs can help to make sure that everyone involved follows and shares good practice.

How often is monitoring taking place?

Monitoring must be a frequent and ongoing process to ensure that all services are able to respond to changing issues and risks, and that children and young people continue to be safe and protected.

Who is ultimately responsible? Who inspects the LSCB?

Becta recommends that the evaluation of e-safety measures be included as part of the statutory inspection process.

further information and advice

The full version of this publication, contains further information and guidance on the issues raised here. Both versions and all Becta publications, can be ordered or downloaded from [**http://www.becta.org.uk/publications**]

Other e-safety publications:

E-safety: Developing whole-school policies to support effective practice
Guidance for schools on developing appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the e-safety of the children and young people in their care.

Safeguarding children in a digital world: Developing a strategic approach to e-safety
A strategic overview of e-safety issues for policy makers, outlining a model for a co-ordinated approach by all of the key stakeholders in a child's education.

Signposts to safety: Teaching e-safety at Key Stages 1 and 2
Signposts to a selection of resources to help teachers of Key Stages 1 and 2 teach e-safety messages in the classroom, along with appropriate curriculum links.

Signposts to safety: Teaching e-safety at Key Stages 3 and 4
Similar to the publication above, but for Key Stages 3 and 4.

You can also find further information on the Becta Schools e-safety website [**http://www.becta.org.uk/schools/safety**].

Additional support is available from the Safeguarding Team at Becta and from the Safetynet online mailing list [**http://lists.becta.org.uk/mailman/ listinfo/safetynet**].