

The role of the Online Safety Lead in Education Settings

All Schools and settings are encouraged to appoint an e-Safety or online safety lead, who is responsible for coordinating the whole school/setting online safety approaches, supporting and raising awareness with the wider community, promoting a safe and responsible online safety culture and acting as the lead for dealing with online safety issues that arise. The online safety lead must have appropriate training, support and authority to carry out the role.

'Keeping children safe in education' 2016 highlights that online safety is a safeguarding concern; therefore the ultimate responsibility for online safety falls within the remit of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff with appropriate skills, interest and expertise regarding online safety should be encouraged to help support the DSL and any deputies as appropriate, for example when developing curriculum approaches or making technical decisions. However schools and settings must be clear that ultimate responsibility for online safety sits with the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

- It will not be appropriate for the online safety lead to be another member of staff unless they have accessed appropriate training, such as that of the DSL, to be able to act as a deputy.
- The online safety lead must be a member of the leadership/management team due to the requirements and expectations of the role (directing resources and advising/supporting other staff).
- Online safety leads do not need to have vast technical knowledge as it is a safeguarding and not a technical role. It is however helpful if the online safety lead has some basic knowledge of current technology and ICT and has a clear understanding of the benefits as well as the risks that technology poses.
- The DSL must always be made aware of and involved with any child protection disclosures or incidents.
- The DSL must be aware of and involved in all staff online safety training to enable them to keep up-to-date records.
- The DSL must be involved in online safety policy development.

If a deputy DSL takes responsibility for online safety then settings should ensure that sufficient time and resources are in place to enable the lead DSL to be kept informed on any issues of concerns. Some schools/settings may wish to implement regular meetings to allow time to reflect on the school/settings needs and identify and implement any action as appropriate.

Key Tasks of the Leadership and Management Team:

- Developing an online safety culture as part of safeguarding, which is in line with national best practice recommendations (e.g. Ofsted, DfE)
- Ensuring that online safety is clearly identified and established as part of the roles and responsibility of the management/senior leadership team and governing body etc.
- Auditing and evaluating current practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement (Kent Self-evaluation tool and 360 safe)
- Embedding online safety in staff training and professional development by ensuring that all members of staff receive up-to-date and appropriate online safety training (at least annually and as part of induction) and guidance which sets out clear boundaries for safe and professional online conduct online.
- Ensuring that there is an age and ability appropriate online safety curriculum that is embedded, progressive, flexible and relevant which engages children's' interest and promotes their ability to use technology responsibly and to keep themselves and others safe online.
- Ensuring there are robust reporting channels for the community to access regarding online safety concerns, including internal, local and national support.
- To ensure that age and ability appropriate filtering is in place, which is actively monitored

- Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken regarding the safe use of technology, including ensuring the safe and responsible use of devices
- Reviewing and updating online safety policies, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and other procedures on a regular basis (at least annually) with stakeholder input
- Ensuring that online safety is integrated with other appropriate school policies and procedures.

Additional Key Tasks of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Acting as a named point of contact on all online safety issues and liaising with other members of staff as appropriate.
- Keeping up-to-date with current research, legislation and trends. This may include accessing appropriate training and using a range of approaches to enable them to understand the role of new technology as part of modern British society and the wider safeguarding agenda.
- Leading an online safety team with input from all stakeholder groups.
- Ensuring that the setting participates in local and national events to promote positive online behaviour, e.g. Safer Internet Day.
- Ensuring that online safety is promoted to parents and carers and the wider community through a variety of channels and approaches.
- Work with the setting lead for data protection and data security to ensure that practice is in line with legislation
- Maintaining an online safety incident/action log to record incidents and actions taken as part of the schools safeguarding recording structures and mechanisms.
- To monitor the delivery and impact of the online safety policy
- To monitor log of reported online safety incidents to inform future areas of teaching/learning/training.
- Monitoring and reporting on online safety issues to the school management team, Governing Body and other agencies as appropriate
- Liaising with the local authority and other local and national bodies as appropriate.

Online Safety Groups/Committees

Many schools/settings are choosing to support the online safety lead by setting up online safety groups or committees who can support and share workloads and tasks. This builds resilience within the setting and enables schools/settings to demonstrate that key members of the community are involved in establishing a shared whole community approach to online safety. Some information which settings may find helpful when considering forming an online safety group can be found here: <http://www.esafety-adviser.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Guidance-for-Establishing-an-e-Safety-Group-V1-1.pdf>

Possible online safety group members (subject to individual school/settings needs and requirements) could include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Early Years Designated Person
- Computing/ICT Lead/Leader/Head of Subject
- Technical staff e.g. Network Manager, Technicians
- School Governor /Committee member
- SENCO
- Pastoral/support staff e.g. Family Liaison Officer, learning mentors etc.
- Parents/Carers
- Pupils/children
- Other community members (e.g. local Police, Children Centre, Nursery) as appropriate

Online safety groups can be used to support and deliver the key tasks of the online safety and are a useful approach to help enable incorporate and maximum the range of experiences and expertise within schools/settings. The group should report regularly to the governing body to help inform them of existing practice and localised concerns.