Becta
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next generation
learning

Safeguarding

in a digital world

Guidance for curriculum managers,
teachers and training staff

Using technology safely is vital to further education staff and learners alike. There are four publications in the **Safeguarding in a digital world** series.

1. Safeguarding in a digital world:
An overview for learning providers

2. Safeguarding in a digital world:
Guidance for curriculum managers, teachers and training staff

3. Safeguarding in a digital world:
Guidance for technical staff

4. Safeguarding in a digital world:
Guidance for learners

Technology,
learning and risk

Technology is part of everday life. Our learners use it not only as a tool within their learning, but also in their work and leisure time.

Learning providers have always had a duty of care for their learners at the heart of their policies and practice. Duty of care also includes safe use of technology.

Organisations have a key role in helping learners to develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe and secure when using technology for learning, leisure and work. Assessing and understanding risks as they apply to your learners, then taking mitigating action, and empowering learners to protect themselves are key to effective safeguarding in a digital environment.

WHAT'S INSIDE

This document explains the importance of e-safety in a digital world. It outlines some practical steps and advice for assessment and reducing risks for teaching and training staff.

Find out more

www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding

Protection in practice

What is the situation in the further education system now?

Providers are finding that a blocking and banning approach, which merely limits exposure to risk, is not sustainable. You need to focus on a model of empowerment; equipping learners with the skills and knowledge they need to use information and communication technology safely and responsibly and managing the risks. This is particularly the case with Web 2.0 collaborative technologies, such as social networking sites, which are becoming an essential aspect of productive and creative social learning.

Your organisation is likely to have learners from the age of 14 upwards with a wide variety of knowledge, needs and vulnerabilities in their use of technology.

Under the Children Act 2004, anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a 'child'. In addition, you have the same responsibilities to safeguarding vulnerable adult learners when they are working online as you do when they are being taught face to face. Learners with special needs or vulnerable learners may also need particular care. A vulnerable adult is 'a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

Becta's PIES model is an effective framework for approaching safeguarding strategy across learning provision. It offers a simple way of mitigating against risks through a combination of effective policies and practice, a robust and secure technology infrastructure, and education and training for learners and employees alike, underpinned by standards and inspection.

FIGURE 1:
BECTA PIES MODEL

In the Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills 2009, safeguarding is one of the limiting grades and is considered to be essential in assuring the safe development and well-being of young people and adults. The grade for safeguarding may therefore limit other inspection grades, including the grades for leadership and management and overall effectiveness.

Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- safeguarding is prioritised
- learners are safeguarded and protected
- staff take action to identify and respond appropriately to users' welfare concerns.

What are the risks to learners?

Online risks are often characterised by the four 'Cs':

- **Content** – this is content that may be unsuitable or potentially illegal

- **Contact** – this may be unwelcome or inappropriate contact. It could be grooming or sexual contact

- **Conduct** – this could be as a recipient or as an active participant – giving out too much personal information or the bullying of another person

- **Commerce** – this could be phishing or other methods of identity theft.

It is important that you have measures in place to manage exposure to this range of risks. Your organisation's culture should support reporting concerns in regards to any exposure, and also when learners are unable to access internet sites, which they require for their study. Indeed, your safeguarding practices should not restrict access to internet sites and content which learners may legitimately require for the purposes of study.
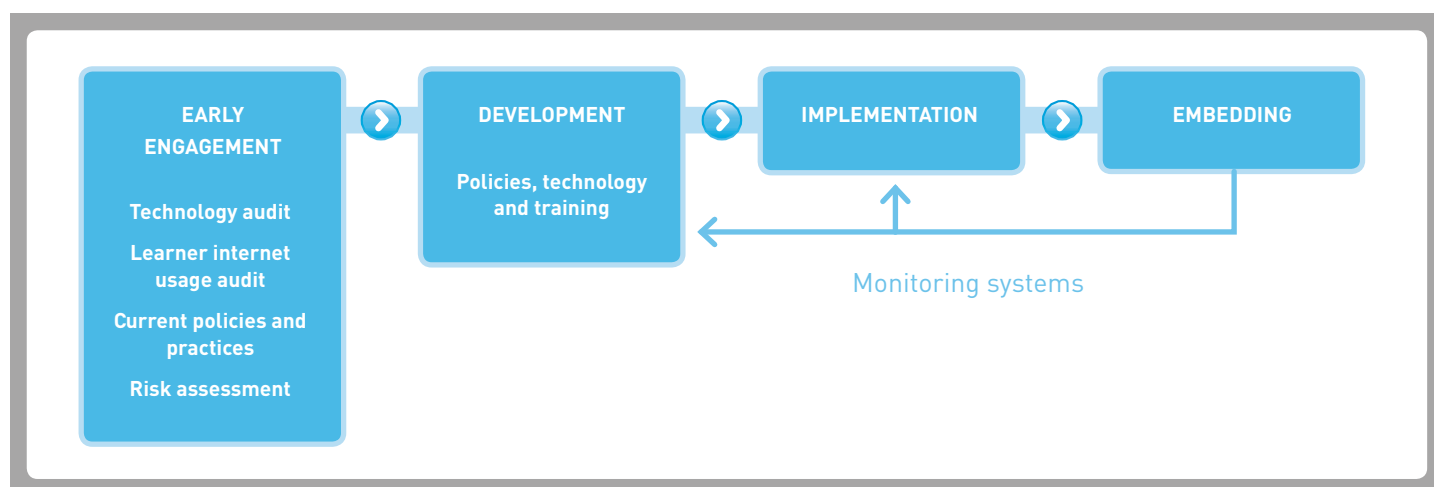

FIGURE 2: MODEL FOR DEVELOPING E-SAFETY SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Next steps

What should I do now?

These are points for reflection when you consider enhancing your learners' safeguarding in digital environment.

Your aim is to develop clear policies, procedures and monitoring systems in collaboration with tutors, learners and partners for safeguarding in digital environment, which are integrated within teaching, learning and management, but which also allow learners access to the very significant benefits of effective use of information learning technology.

You should be working to:

- develop informed learners who can identify and prevent risks, which may be amplified by technology

- engage learners in understanding their rights and responsibilities when working online so that they know what is safe and responsible online behaviour

- educate learners so they are clear and confident about how to report their concerns

- develop staff to support the implementation of e-safety policies and practices.

CHECKLIST FOR ACTION

Do you have effective strategies and policies for:

- *risk assessment of learners working in a digital environment informed by their education and training requirements, experience and learning context?*

- *engagement and involvement of tutors, assessors, employers and partners in developing effective policies and guidance which mitigate risks involved in working in a digital environment?*

- *technologies which support the organisation's policies and procedures?*

- *communicating about safety within a digital environment with learners, tutors, assessors, employers and partners who are involved in the education and training process?*

- *training, development and updating about working safely in a digital environment for learners, tutors, assessors, employers and partners who are involved in the education and training process?*

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information from Becta
www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding

JISC research, advice
and guidance
www.jisc.ac.uk

The Learning and Skills
Improvement Service provides
training and materials on
safeguarding
www.lsis.org.uk

Resources on the Excellence
Gateway linked to the Becta
PIES model
www.excellencegateway.org.uk/
page.aspx?o=197297

Teacher Support Network
www.teachersupport.info/
england

National Education Network
www.nen.gov.uk/esafety

Direct Gov's Click Clever,
Click Safe campaign
http://clickcleverclicksafe.direct.
gov.uk/index.html

Get Safe Online – Clear up-to-
date advice for individuals and
small businesses:
www.getsafeonline.org

Easy-to-read website on online
security (based in Ireland)
www.makeitsecure.org/en/index.
html

The UK Hotline for reporting
illegal content
www.iwf.org.uk

Report abuse, via the Child
Exploitation and Online
Protection Centre
www.ceop.police.uk/reportabuse

Anti-Bullying Network
www.antibullying.net/
cyberbullying5.htm