EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 14 July 2022
Report Subject	Social Media and Internet Safety
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Schools have statutory duties to operate in a way that ensures learners are safeguarded and that their wellbeing is promoted. There are many challenges for schools in addressing online safety including protecting children from inappropriate content, ensuring personal information remains private and promoting good practice among parents. Schools must ensure learners have high levels of digital literacy and are actively involved in the online safety provision. As a local authority we are committed to supporting schools to ensure they feel confident in their approach to online safety and helping them to develop effective policies and procedures.

This report has been developed to provide elected members with an update on the Education and Youth Portfolio's Social Media and Internet Safety policy and provision, following the previous report given in 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That members confirm they have received an appropriate level of assurance regarding the support and monitoring of schools with regard to social media and internet safety.
2	For members to consider for future reporting that Online Safety is incorporated within the annual Safeguarding in Education report.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET SAFETY REPORT
1.01	The local authority provides advice to schools on information assurance and safeguarding through various approaches. These include the Safeguarding Children Annual Report which includes review of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, safeguarding training and policies that schools completed and submit to the authority. Schools identify all the policies they have in place and their review dates. Relevant policies include Social Media, Acceptable Use of IT, E-safety, Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Data Protection, Information Security and Anti-Radicalisation as examples. Schools have also completed the Keeping Learners Safe Audit Tool which supports schools to review their safeguarding arrangements.
1.02	Where themes and trends are identified upon review of this information we will prioritise support accordingly; either on an individual school level or through a broader approach, including training or the development of a model policy. The Edtech Lead Officer within the Education Portfolio will support schools to embed online safety within their School Development Plans where it is not currently evident.
1.03	As a local authority we can also monitor the uptake of the 360° Safe Cymru Tool by our schools and the Edtech Lead Officer will revisit schools that need support. The 360° Safe Cymru Tool is hosted on the national learning platform, Hwb, and allows schools to self-assess their online safety provision, produce action plans and access good practice resources. The tool provides links to a wide range of good practice template policies, websites and documents. Evidence suggest that schools which use the 360° Safe Cymru Tool have made significant improvements in their online safety provision. 360° Safe Cymru helps schools continue to meet statutory requirements and adapt to changes in national guidance such as the Prevent counter-terrorism agenda and the General Data Protection Regulations.
1.04	In order for the curriculum to support the development of safe, resilient and responsible users of online resources, schools are encouraged to take part in key campaigns such as Safer Internet Day. Safer Internet Day took place this year on 8th February and the theme was 'Exploring respect and relationships online'. The day provided an opportunity to talk about how to use technology responsibly and the importance of being respectful online and creating a safer internet. Education programmes including the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme address various themes as part of their targeted delivery in both Key Stage 2 and 3 e.g. internet safety, cyberbullying and sexting.
1.05	The Regional School Improvement Service, GwE, also provides training on e-safety. Flintshire's Network Lead has also arranged regular safety training updates. During this current term a cyber security module has been shared with all schools adapted by the ICT Business Partnership team. Regular updates are shared with schools from the national Safeguarding in Education meetings which are attended by the Learning Advisor and the

	'Keeping Safe' area on Hwb is also promoted. The Edtech Lead and Learning Advisor have worked with Welsh Government on the consultation for the new web-safe tools. Online safety is a regular agenda item at the Flintshire Deputy Head network meetings and the Small Schools network.
1.06	The local authority monitors and records reported online safety incidents involving learners via the 'Challenging Bullying' online reporting system. This was introduced in September 2021. All online safety incidents within school are reported on their electronic child protection management system. If the concern is regarding a failure of filtering, the school immediately contacts their federated technician and the IT business partner. The IT business team can run websafe filtering to see if there have been any incidences by a pupil or school staff. The IT Service Level Agreement provides for web filtering in all schools.
1.07	**Hwb Keeping Safe Online - Updated content** Keeping Safe Online is a dedicated area on the national Hwb platform for the latest news, guidance, resources and training on a range of online safety, cyber resilience and data protection issues to help schools, staff, parents and children stay safe and secure online. It is regularly updated and is an invaluable resource.
1.08	A new 'Online issues and worries' section has been launched this term on Hwb which is directly for children and young people. It has been written by and for young people and covers ten different areas that were chosen by them: inappropriate or offensive content, online bullying, online gaming, online grooming, online hate, online radicalization and extremism, online reputation for print, online sexual harassment, sharing nudes and social media. The advice pages offer children and young people important information and guidance on what to do and where to turn for help if they are worried about something that has happened online.
1.09	A range of resources on Hwb were also launched this spring to support Safer Internet Day called 'All fun and games?' They can be used all year around for exploring respect and relationships online with a focus on gaming and interactive entrainment spaces. There are tailored activities and resources for the full age range (3-18years) and a guide for parents and carers.
1.10	In spring 2022 a number of guides with a focus on understanding more about cybercrime were published on Hwb; 'Be cyber smart to avoid cybercrime' – for educational practitioners, families and governors. The Guide for Governors addresses their role in supporting the school to teach about and protect itself from cybercrime. It provides an overview of what cybercrime is, the risks that cybercrime present, what the school's responsibilities are and where to go for help. This has also coincided with the Council's cybersecurity training modules which were launched this year as mandatory training for all staff.
1.11	**School Health Research Network (SHRN)** The School Health Research Network (SHRN) conduct a national health and wellbeing survey every two years with secondary school aged children in Wales.

	The most recent survey was conducted during the autumn term 2021; 6959 pupils from all 11 secondary schools in Flintshire participated in the survey. This is higher than the first survey undertaken in autumn 2017 which had 6585 participants. The majority of secondary schools in Wales take part in the SHRN survey and the national findings will be published in a report due for publication in the autumn term.
1.12	Following the survey, schools received an individual report of their findings at the end of the spring term 2022, and members of the Healthy Schools Team are in the process of developing one page profiles for the school and providing support in the development of their action plans. Survey questions relevant to this report include: cyberbullying, explicit images and online contact with friends they got to know through the internet. **Students who have ever sent someone a sexually explicit image of themselves:** on average 11% of Flintshire learners reported that they have sent a sexually explicit image of themselves, which is 2% higher than the national average. This is higher than in 2019 by 1%. **Students who have been cyberbullied in the past couple of months*:** (*Includes students who have been bullied once or more in the past couple of months)**:** On average 21% of Flintshire learners reported that they had been cyberbullied in the past couple of months which is 3% higher than the national average of 18%. This is higher than in 2019 by 1%. **Students who have online contact almost all the time throughout the day with friends they got to know through the internet:** on average 7% of Flintshire learners reported that they had online contact almost all the time throughout the day with friends they got to know through the internet. This is the same as the national average. The term 'online contact' in the context of this survey question relates to 'sending and receiving text messages, emoticons, and photo, video or audio messages through instant messaging (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat), social network sites (e.g. Facebook) or e-mail (on a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone)'. This figure is 2% higher than in 2019.
1.13	As a local authority we are currently reviewing and reflecting on all the data in the report and the Flintshire SHRN Action Plan 2019-2024 is being updated to reflect this, with identified themes prioritised for action with key partners. The implementation of this important work is overseen by the Council's Emotional Wellbeing Steering Group.
1.14	**#FCCBeKindOnline** Following previous actions as agreed from this Committee a new campaign called #FCCBeKindOnline was launched on Flintshire's website on Tuesday 8th February 2022 and coincided with Safer Internet Day 2022. The campaign was an opportunity for the authority to demonstrate its commitment to this message and encourage everybody to embrace respect, empathy, and kindness online. The campaign also promotes the safe and

	positive use of digital channels when communicating with Council services with the introduction of social media house rules.
1.15	The Council's social media house rules are accessible on the Be Kind Online page and have been designed for everyone choosing to communicate with Council services through social media platforms e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn. They outline what the expected behaviour is, but also examples of what is considered unacceptable behaviour and what the Council will do when the house rules are breached. Inappropriate behaviour is managed through the Council's Managing Customer Behaviour Policy.
1.16	The dedicated web page on the Council site enabled people to make a pledge: as an Individual (young person or adult) living in Flintshire; a School, Business or Club/ Community organisation in Flintshire. A pledge card was designated to be used as a tool to promote discussion about the 'be kind' message and learners in some schools came up with their own personal pledges. Photographs of children, young people and staff with their pledges have been shared via the council's social media platforms to raise awareness using the hashtag #FCCBekindOnline. Two members workshop were also held.
1.17	As the Education Portfolio provides an annual Safeguarding Children report to the joint Education and Health and Social Care Committee, members are asked to consider whether they wish to continue to receive a separate report on Social Media and Internet Safety or whether it could be incorporated into the annual safeguarding report so that all relevant information is contained within a single and comprehensive report.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The provision for support for schools comes predominately through GwE, the regional school improvement service and Hwb. The Learning Advisor and EdTeach Lead are funded through the local authority's school improvement service.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
	The risk for the Local Authority is the potential to breach of statutory legislation related to safeguarding and the wellbeing of children. This includes the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020. There is also potential for reputational damage and negative press coverage if there are significant breaches of policy involving learners or Flintshire employees in relation to internet and/or social media activity and findings from Estyn Inspections.
	This risk is mitigated by the Council having named officers with specific responsibilities for safeguarding in schools. The Council also provides firewall and web filtering services to schools via a service level agreement.

	A rolling safeguarding training programme for head teachers / designated safeguarding leads is in place. The dissemination of relevant information to schools is undertaken, alongside the monitoring of self-evaluations and annual reporting by schools on the implementation of relevant policies including Safeguarding, and Acceptable Use.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	**Hwb: Keeping Safe Online Zone** https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/ **Hwb: Advice for children and young people – online issues and worries** https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/advice-for-children-and-young-people-online-issues-and-worries/ **Hwb: A governor's guide to cybersecurity** https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/resources/a-governor-s-guide-to-cybersecurity/#what-is-cybercrime? **Hwb: All fun and games? Parents and carers** https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/b5d4a98a-81fe-466b-bdac-81761134d677 **Flintshire Be Kind Online** https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Be-Kind-Online/Flintshire-FCCBeKindOnline-Pledge.aspx **Wales Police Schools Programme Lesson Matrix 2021/22** https://schoolbeat.cymru/uploads/media/2021-22-Lesson-Matrix-SchoolBeat.pdf **Keeping Learners Safe Guidance updated April 2022** https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding

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8.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
	Hwb *Hwb* is a platform with online tools and resources to support education in Wales. https://hwb.gov.wales/ **SHRN** School Health Research Network https://www.shrn.org.uk/ **360 Degree Safe Cymru** A self-review tool to help schools review their online safety policy and practice. https://360safe.org.uk **Edtech** Education Technology **DBS** Disclosure and Barring Service