JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 29th June 2023
Report Subject	Safeguarding in Education including Social Media and Internet Safety
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Youth and Culture
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been developed to provide elected members with an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education and Youth Portfolio following the previous report given in 2022. This report also includes social media and internet safety and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That members note the content of the Safeguarding in Education report and provide their feedback to officers on the strategies used by the Portfolio to effectively discharge its duties.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING THE SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION REPORT**
1.01	**Safeguarding reporting arrangements and lines of accountability within the Portfolio** The Education and Youth Portfolio has continued to embed its Safeguarding Panel to maintain a strategic overview of the Portfolio's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The panel meets each half term, chaired by the Chief Education Officer. It includes manager representatives from School Improvement, Inclusion and Progression, Youth Justice and Children's Services. The panel ensures the Portfolio is operating effective management and assurance processes and drives continuous improvement in safeguarding. The panel maintains effective joint working arrangements between the Portfolio and other Council departments and partner agencies, including working arrangements with the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board.
1.02	**Monitoring of Compliance and Review** The purpose of completing the safeguarding audit tool is to support all schools to review their safeguarding arrangements in line with the Welsh Government guidance **Keeping Learners Safe (2022).** The audit tool is intended to help schools identify strengths and weaknesses in their safeguarding arrangements. As well as checking whether the school has robust safeguarding policies and practices in place, the tool asks Headteachers/ Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs) to make professional judgements on how effective and comprehensive they are by using the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating. By undergoing this process schools will have a benchmark against which to work to continually develop and improve. All Flintshire schools were asked to complete the audit tool, in addition to the Safeguarding Children Annual Report, in spring term 2022. The annual report is completed by schools for monitoring and includes review of DBS checks, staff training and policies. 74 out of 78 schools returned a completed audit tool and all 78 completed the annual report. Individual schools were followed up by the LA primary officer and provided with support as required. All data was reviewed in the summer 2022 and results discussed with headteacher federations in the autumn term 2022. Individual schools were approached where further clarification or attention was required. The Chief Officer wrote to all headteachers in the spring term 20233 to highlight the common themes that were identified upon review of the audit tool/annual reports. Support has been prioritised accordingly either on an individual school level or through a broader approach, including training or policy development or updates.

	The audit tool will be requested for submission every two years with schools encouraged to update on an ongoing basis.

The request for the Safeguarding Children Annual Report will continue every 12 months. Submissions received prior to the Easter break 2023 for this year are 27 from 78 schools at this point in the academic year, which is a decrease from previous years and in the main can be attributed to national action short of strike. The annual reports are under review and the findings will be shared in the autumn term. |
| 1.03 | **360° Safe Cymru Tool**

The 360° Safe Cymru Tool is hosted on the national learning platform, Hwb, and allows schools to self-assess their online safety provision. The 360° Safe Cymru Tool is used by over 95% of schools in Wales, supporting them to:

- review their online safety provision
- develop or review their online safety policies
- benchmark their provision against good practice and compare with national averages
- produce action plans
- access a range of relevant resources and example policy templates
- collaborate on developing their provision and practice

Analysis from 22/23 showed 76 from 78 schools had engaged with the tool within the last two years. The level at which schools engage with the tool depends on their school improvement planning cycle and priorities. Officers continue to promote the tool to schools and support as required. |
| 1.04 | **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. Updated content includes:

- New online sexual harassment training module which aims to equip professionals who work with children and young people with the understanding needed to help prevent or respond to any instances of online sexual harassment within their school or setting.
- New cyber security awareness training module produced by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) which is designed to support school staff to help improve their school's cyber resilience.
- New and updated app guides provide parents and carers with key information about the most popular social media and gaming apps children and young people are using today.
- Resources to explain the Dark Web can help support practitioners and parents / carers have informed conversations and support a young person if they are concerned.
- New guides for governors including:
    - A governor's guide to responding to incidents of nudes and semi-nudes being shared |

	• A governor's guide to misinformation and bias • A governor's guide to understanding the role of the internet in radicalisation and extremism
1.05	**Professional Development – Safeguarding 2022-2023** During the 22/23 academic year 371 staff have accessed Levels 2 and 3 safeguarding training from 23 courses. We have seen this figure steadily increase year on year from 262 staff in 20/21 from 15 courses to 299 staff in 21/22 from 17 equivalent courses. The level 2 and 3 courses (including refresher and full course for new safeguarding leads) continue to be delivered online and do not exceed 3 hours – which includes a break and opportunities to participate in various discussions using virtual break out rooms. The number of participants per course is still limited to 20 to ensure the quality of the delivery and maximise opportunities for engagement. This academic year we have reintroduced the input from colleagues in social services which has been incredibly valuable to ensure key messages and local context is very much part of the content. When combining training from governor awareness courses, Digital Resilience and Harmful Sexualised Behaviour for 22/23, the total number of staff trained is 423 staff from 29 courses. This figure is in line with 20/21 (422 from 17 courses) however lower than 21/22 (530 from 30 courses).
1.06	**Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** In response to the 'Everyone's Invited' website and the subsequent review by Estyn *We don't tell our teachers - Experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales (December 2021)* we developed an action plan prioritising this area of work which includes Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in the new Curriculum for Wales. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. The RSE Code sets out each strand of teaching and learning in three broad developmental phases as follows: Phase 1: from age 3 Phase 2: from age 7 Phase 3: from age 11 The content is based around three broad learning stands: 1. Relationships and identity 2. Sexual health and well-being 3. Empowerment, safety and respect The strands allow RSE leads to design and develop a curriculum tailored to their learners, making connections and developing authentic contexts for learning across the curriculum. RSE should be inclusive and reflect diversity and developmentally appropriate for each learner. The following themes are interwoven into the learning strands above: relationships; rights and equity;

	sex, gender and sexuality; bodies and body image; sexual health and well-being; and violence, safety and support.
1.07	**Safeguarding in Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

Teaching children and young people about healthy relationships in an important part of keeping children safe. Learners should be taught to recognise and report different types of abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual. This will include focusing on boundaries and privacy so that children understand that they have rights over their own bodies and know how to ask for help when they suspect or know something is wrong. There should also be opportunities to teach learners about boundaries with their peers, including when they are online.

It is essential that teachers and support staff delivering RSE are aware of any potential issues and know how to deal with any concerns that do arise. Teaching staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) or RSE lead ahead of lessons; schools should ensure that all staff are aware of their safeguarding policies and procedures. |
| 1.08 | **Professional Development - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**

Historically, RSE has been a theme within the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes criteria addressed under the banner of 'personal development and relationships'. At a local level, officers have supported most schools in the county to deliver a programme of sex and relationships education in line with the previous government guidance.

The introduction of RSE in the Curriculum for Wales has since seen RSE identified as one of three key priorities for the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools and officers were well placed to continue to support schools going forward with this area. They have supported schools by commissioning experts in the field, sourcing training and resources, policy development and establishing platforms to share information.

For many schools, the introduction of the RSE Code has meant reviewing what they have delivered previously and refining the content to ensure it is developmentally appropriate and enhancing this provision further to ensure all the mandatory content is met. A comprehensive programme of staff training for RSE has been fundamental to raise teachers' confidence with this area of the curriculum over the last two years.

To support RSE leads in primary schools they were invited to attend 3 x 2.5hr workshops each delivered online between Jan-March 2022 by an independent provider working across the GwE region. RSE leads in all secondary schools in Flintshire were also invited to attend 4 x 2.5hr workshops delivered online between January- April 2022. As part of this training RSE leads were given access to a variety of bilingual materials to enable them to:

- undertake a whole school RSE audit
- consult with learners
- plan a whole school RSE programme |

	• map the RSE programme for each school year • identify staff training needs for those with responsibility of teaching various aspects • establish whole school RSE. Staff from 49 primary schools attended the workshops. An additional 2 hour briefing session summarising the previous workshops was delivered in September 2022 for schools that did not attend / or required additional staff training. Staff from 22 primary schools were in attendance. The secondary workshops were attended by RSE leads from 9 secondaries, 1 special school and 1 PRU. Schools that have not accessed training have received access to these resources when support for RSE has been sought.
1.09	**Further Professional Development opportunities – Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** During 21/22 and 22/23 through the Welsh Government's Wellbeing grant, a pilot of an integrated scheme of learning for personal, social and health education has been carried out, of which RSE is a key feature. 11 schools in year 1 and a further 16 schools in year 2 have accessed the scheme which has received very positive feedback. Staff from 13 of the schools have attended one of two 90-minute RSE focused training sessions. 2 x 2 hour workshops - 'Working towards an inclusive school' - were held in January 2023 for RSE leads in primaries to explore how information is presented, values and beliefs around gender and identity and why this matters. Staff from 27 schools have attended. Understanding how to communicate with children and young people about relationships and sex can be challenging. A full day face to face course was held in February 2023 to give clear guidelines to secondary RSE leads with the opportunity to practice skills and increase confidence. There was attendance from 7 secondaries and 1 secondary special school. As part of the RSE training we have included information about the period dignity grant and have supported teachers to be better informed about menstruation and be familiar with the sanitary products available. Training about reusable / disposable products has been delivered to equip staff with the tools and confidence to support learners in making the right choices for them. 4 x 90-minute courses were delivered Jan- March 2023 with attendance from 18 primary/ Secondary schools. Refresher training for the existing 'Tyfu i Fyny' / 'Growing Up' resources used by many primary schools was also delivered in Feb-March 2023. 3 x 90min sessions were held attended by staff from 29 schools. The county Secondary PSE / Healthy Schools forum continues to meet on a regular basis attended by representatives from all secondary schools including special and PRU. A follow up to the workshops held in spring term 2022 was undertaken at the December 22 meeting to identify how schools were progressing in planning their RSE programmes and this continues to be a regular agenda item at meetings.

	For future RSE training, we intend to deliver this through the clusters. This approach has been advocated as good practice and is the preferred model for all local authorities in North Wales – in line with GwE advice.
1.10	**Consent Project** In partnership with Theatre Clwyd, Flintshire Youth Service delivers annual project around "Consent". The Consent Project aims to: • raise awareness regarding consent and sexual health • create a safe and accepting environment to discuss sex and relationships • promote access to sexual health advice • provide a real-life environment for learning • explain the legal process relating to Consent and the consequences of sexual assault and rape • provide a safe environment to challenge "toxic" views and opinions. Consent delivers interactive workshops, using live performance, to explore the issues arising from sexual consent which is in line with the RSE Curriculum. In a safe and supportive environment, young people explore what makes a healthy relationship, the effects of alcohol and drugs on decision making, and finally, how the law works in relation to Consent. The young people are presented with a scenario, performed by professional actors, of a night out that gets out of hand, and the consequences for all those that are involved. The Consent Project is delivered bi-lingually to all schools and entirely through the medium of Welsh in Flintshire's Welsh Language secondary. In the school year 22-23 the Consent Project has been delivered in 10 mainstream secondary schools, targeting year 9 learners.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	Safeguarding is a core responsibility of everybody who works for the Council. Delivering the commitments contained within this report are within existing human and financial resources.

3.00	**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**
3.01	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. 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.

The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview Scrutiny Committee.

There will continue to be ongoing monitoring of the portfolio and schools in discharging of statutory safeguarding duties.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None required for this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no supporting documents for this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	• Sexual harassment training module Sexual Harassment Training Module for all school staff • Cyber security training module Cyber security awareness training for school staff • App Guides for families New and updated app guides for families • The Dark Web explained Factsheet for practitioners Factsheet for parents and carers • New guides for governors: A governor's guide to responding to incidents of nudes and semi-nudes being shared

[A governor's guide to misinformation and bias](#)

[A governor's guide to understanding the role of the internet in radicalisation and extremism](#)

- RSE Code

https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement **Telephone:** 01352 704019 **E-mail:** vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk **Contact Officer:** Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding **Telephone:** 01352 704054 **E-mail:** Claire.h.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	**Safeguarding** - safeguarding means preventing and protecting children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers. **DSP** – Designated Safeguarding Person. The role of the DSP is to take lead responsibility for managing child protection issues and cases. This involves providing advice and support to other staff, making referrals to and liaising with the local authority and working with other agencies. **RSE** - Relationships and Sexuality Education. Relationships and Sexuality Education is part of the Curriculum for Wales and all schools in Wales must teach RSE from September 2022 on a phased basis.