

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

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 27th June 2024
Report Subject	Safeguarding in Education including Social Media and Internet Safety
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language 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. The report also highlights the local authority approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and relevant updates for social media and internet safety provision.

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.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the Safeguarding in Education report
1.01	Education and Youth Safeguarding Panel The Education and Youth (E&Y) Safeguarding Panel continues to meet each half term, chaired by the Chief Education Officer with representation from

	<p>School Improvement, Inclusion and Progression, Youth Justice, Youth Services and Social Services for Children.</p> <p>The panel ensures the Portfolio is operating effective management and assurance processes and drives continuous improvement in safeguarding, whilst maintaining a strategic overview of the department's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>Key messages discussed at the Corporate Safeguarding Panel are cascaded to the E&Y Safeguarding Panel and items are also escalated from the E&Y Panel back up to Corporate Safeguarding panel to ensure consistent communication. Colleagues in E&Y attend a wide range of different meetings which impact on safeguarding and the panel provides an opportunity to share relevant information and practice.</p> <p>A representative from Children's Services attends the E&Y Safeguarding Panel and this supports two-way communication between portfolios. In addition, senior colleagues from Children's Services have also attended Headteacher Federation meetings at both primary and secondary level in the summer term 2023 and during the school year 23-24 to maintain open communication with our schools and work in partnership to improve services.</p>
1.02	<p>Annual Reporting and Self Evaluation</p> <p>All Flintshire schools are requested to submit annual safeguarding reports where they are required to evidence what training has been delivered; whether the relevant safeguarding policies and risk assessments have been reviewed and for the tracking of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) compliance. In addition, every 2 years there is a request for schools to complete the national Keeping Learners Safe Audit tool which is a self-evaluation of their safeguarding arrangements. This audit tool is intended to help schools identify strengths and weaknesses as well as checking whether the school has robust safeguarding policies and practices in place. By undergoing this process schools will have a benchmark against which to work to continually develop and improve.</p> <p>In reviewing this information, the local authority is able to fulfil its statutory obligation in regard to the monitoring of schools' compliance with the guidance.</p> <p>All Flintshire schools were asked to complete the audit tool, in addition to the Safeguarding Children Annual Report in spring term 2024. 69% of schools have returned the required documentation to date and those schools still outstanding are now being approached individually to follow up on the request. Findings from analysis of the reports will be shared with schools in the autumn term.</p> <p>Support is then prioritised; either on an individual school level or through a broader approach, including training or policy development or updates.</p>

1.03	<p>Professional Development – Safeguarding 2023-2024</p> <p>Autumn term 2023 - 8 courses (138 attendees) 3 x level 2 courses 3 x level 3 Refresher courses 2 x level 3 Full course</p> <p>Spring term 2024 - 7 courses (106 attendees) 3 x level 2 courses 2 x level 3 Refresher courses 2 x level 3 Full course</p> <p>Summer term 2024 - 9 courses (150 attendees) 3 x level 2 courses 4 x level 3 Refresher courses 4 x level 3 Full course</p> <p>During the 23/24 academic year, a total of 394 staff have accessed Levels 2 and 3 safeguarding training from 24 courses. This is an increase in the number of courses delivered and number of attendees in comparison with previous years:</p> <p>2023/24 - 394 staff from 24 courses. 2022/23 - 371 staff from 23 courses. 2021/22 - 299 staff from 17 courses. 2020/21 - 262 staff from 15 courses.</p> <p>The level 2 and 3 courses (including refresher and full course for new safeguarding leads) continue to be delivered. The number of participants per course is still limited to 20 to ensure the quality of the delivery and maximise opportunities for engagement. Colleagues in Social Services continue to provide an incredibly valuable input into level 3 refresher courses and training for new safeguarding leads.</p>
1.04	<p>Prevent e-learning</p> <p>The Home Office Prevent e-learning modules have undergone a refresh in 2023. Training is tailored for all parts of the UK and different sectors including Education. Where this course was one online module in the past, this has now been divided into different courses:</p> <p>Course 1 – awareness course 30-40 min Course 2 – Referrals course 30-40 min</p> <p>There is also a refresher course option 20-30min.</p> <p>We have advised schools that all staff (including governors) should complete course 1 when they are due to renew their existing training (required every 3 years). For those in roles that are required to make referrals/ senior roles, to complete courses 1 and 2. Schools maintain their own records of staff completing training and these are shared with the local authority in the annual safeguarding report.</p>

1.05	<p>National Safeguarding Training Standards</p> <p>Social Care Wales have developed the National Safeguarding training, learning and development <u>Framework</u> and also the National Safeguarding training, learning and development <u>Standards</u> which were launched in November 2022. The standards have been co-produced by a multi-agency national development group and were developed due to a lack of consistency in the design, content and provision of safeguarding training, learning and development across organisations in Wales and confusion around the appropriate levels of safeguarding training, learning and development for the workforce.</p> <p>With that in mind, the National Safeguarding training, learning and development Standards require organisations in Wales to incorporate the standards into their safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure practitioners understand their responsibilities relevant to the group they are in. This has been underway in the local authority already and during the last 12 months the current training offer for schools has been reviewed and mapped against the standards. The updated training offer will be effective from September 2024.</p>
1.06	<p>The term ‘Levels’ will now be referred to as ‘Groups’ and for each group there is specified criteria which must be incorporated into each agency’s training programme to ensure consistency in delivery. Each group will be expected to undertake the required number of hours training within a given period.</p> <p>For the Education sector specifically, staff fall into the following groups as determined in the Standards. Note the timeframe for refresher training differs between the National Standards and the Keeping Learners Safe Guidance. In Flintshire we will be adhering to the Keeping Learners Safe timeline.</p> <p>Group A: All staff or volunteers (1-3 hours) Refreshed every 2 years in Keeping Learners Safe, 3 years National training standards.</p> <p>This is for everyone. They need to have a basic level of awareness of safeguarding and know how to report a concern.</p> <p>Group B: Teaching Assistants and Teachers (minimum 6 hours) Refreshed every 2 years in Keeping Learners Safe, 3 years National training standards.</p> <p>This is for people who work directly with children and young people. They should have a higher knowledge of safeguarding, know who to talk to if they notice something is wrong and how to report a concern.</p> <p>Group C: Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) (minimum 8 hours) every 3 years, Refreshed every 2 years in Keeping Learners Safe, 3 years National training standards.</p> <p>This is for people who work directly with children and young people and have particular safeguarding responsibilities. They need to be able to respond to safeguarding concerns.</p>

	<p>Group D: Education safeguarding lead for the local authority (24 hours) Refreshed every 2-3 years</p> <p>Group E: N/A</p> <p>Group F: Directors of Education and School Governors (minimum 6 hours) within 3 years</p>
1.07	<p>Secondary Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP) Forum</p> <p>A Flintshire Secondary DSP Forum was established in October 2023 to ensure that a continuing dialogue exists to support the development of robust safeguarding arrangements in Flintshire secondary schools, and the effective implementation of the Welsh Government’s statutory safeguarding children in education guidance, Keeping Learners Safe. The terms of reference set out the purpose of the group and the proposed governance arrangements. The group is jointly chaired by a secondary school DSP and a Children’s Services Team Manager. It is our intention to establish an equivalent primary forum and advice has been sought through head teacher colleagues about the most effective means of establishing this for the next academic year.</p> <p>In order to support the review of the existing training offer and the implementation of the national training standards, a sub-group of the DSP Forum specifically focusing on training has been formed. The input in this group has shaped the planned training model and this will be consulted on with the wider DSP forum at the summer term meeting before being shared at the E&Y Safeguarding panel and the Corporate Safeguarding panel. The new training programme and standards will be referenced in the updated schools’ model safeguarding policy which is issued annually every September.</p>
1.08	<p>Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Cluster model</p> <p>In the summer term 2023, members of the Healthy Schools team met with health and wellbeing / PSE leads from the secondary schools at the termly forum where they explored the benefit of working in clusters with their primary school colleagues focusing on RSE in 23-24. GwE has advocated working in school clusters to develop RSE and Health and Wellbeing in the curriculum as good practice and as such the approach is being adopted by other North Wales local authorities.</p> <p>The aim is to utilise the cluster approach for identifying and sharing effective practice and develop a plan with identified training needs which can be co-ordinated through the cluster model.</p> <p>In the summer term 2023 we worked with one secondary school and their cluster primary schools to support a meeting of their health and wellbeing leads. This was a pilot to establish how this model could work on a county wide basis with a focus on RSE.</p> <p>The Healthy Schools team organised an RSE Cluster afternoon at County Hall on 24th November 2023 for primary school RSE leads to meet in their clusters with secondary RSE / H&Wb lead. The focus of the meeting was to</p>

	<p>review how RSE was delivered in the first year of Curriculum for Wales and the implementation of the RSE code in order to identify future training and resource needs, support transition and planning for effective delivery of RSE. This event was attended by 58 staff from Flintshire schools and the team received really positive feedback on the day from both primary and secondary colleagues.</p> <p>Following this, each cluster were allocated funding of £3000 and were required to submit a proposal of how this could be utilised to develop RSE. This was a really useful exercise and enabled the schools to work collaboratively to best utilise the funding. Some clusters have continued to meet in person and others have maintained dialogue over email. The intention is for schools to build on this practice and a follow up event will be held in the autumn term 2024 to review how the funding has been utilised and what the outcomes are.</p>
1.09	<p>Further Professional Development opportunities – Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)</p> <p>Refresher training for the existing ‘Tyfu i Fyny’ / ‘Growing Up’ resources used by many primary schools was also delivered on 18th March 2024 attended by staff from 7 primary schools.</p> <p>Working with colleagues at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), funding of £1500 was accessed to support secondary schools with the RSE professional development training, equipping teaching staff with extensive, current, and comprehensive knowledge of the RSE code, delivered by a specialist provider.</p> <p><u>RSE Delivery in Practice Course (Brook)</u> 19th March 2024 - 4 Secondary RSE leads attended.</p> <p><u>Sexual Health in the Community Course (Brook)</u> 21st March 2024 - 3 Secondary RSE leads attended.</p> <p><u>Supporting and including LGBTQ+ Young People (Brook)</u> 11th April 2024 - 6 Secondary schools attended.</p>
1.10	<p>Online Safety Act (Bill)</p> <p>The Online Safety Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 becoming an Act of Parliament (law). The Online Safety Bill delivers the UK government’s manifesto commitment to make the UK the safest place to be online, while defending free expression. The UK government has continued to consult with stakeholders since introducing the Bill into Parliament and as a result, a number of policy changes have been made.</p> <p>The Digital Resilience in Education Team in Welsh Government have contributed to a series of consultations led by Ofcom concerning the emerging guidance to support the regulation of the Bill.</p>
1.11	<p>Web Scraping Risks and Social Media Guidance for Schools</p>

	<p>Web scraping is described as the automated extraction of mass content from websites and open/public social media accounts.</p> <p>While it is understandable that schools will want to share moments they are proud of, it is critical to understand that any image or video content shared on a social media platform set to open/public can be accessed by anyone.</p> <p>The Digital Resilience Team in Welsh Government have advised this year that schools should exercise great caution sharing images or videos of learners publicly due to the potential risk of the content being misused. Social media platforms, as with any website, can be vulnerable to web scraping which facilitates any public content to be collected at scale. Web scraping poses risks when it comes to sharing images of learners. Here are some key points to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised sharing: Without proper safeguards, images posted on school websites or social media platforms can be scraped and shared outside the intended audience. This could lead to unintended consequences, including misuse or modification of images. • Privacy concerns: Images may contain personal information and could be used in ways that individuals did not expect, potentially compromising their privacy and disempowering learners from how their data and identity is used. • Potential misuse: Images can be manipulated or misused out of context, creating risks for learners. Identifying learners through images can make them vulnerable.
1.12	<p>There is Welsh Government guidance available to support schools and settings with their approach to using social media safely: 'Practices and principles for schools use of social media'. This is designed to help schools navigate the complex landscape of social media, the practices and principles outlined in the guidance can support schools to ensure that their use of social media is safe, responsible and effective.</p> <p>Schools have also been directed to a training video summarising how the guidance can help with developing a social media strategy, outlining current trends in the online behaviour of children and young people and highlighting where to find further sources of support through the Keeping Safe online area of Hwb.</p> <p>To raise awareness of responsible image sharing to ensure the safeguarding of learners across Flintshire, schools have been advised to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing practices: Schools should assess their current image-sharing practices in line with the Welsh Government's social media guidance. • Awareness raising: Raise awareness among all school staff about the importance of responsible image sharing, the school policy on social media and highlight the risks of digital scraping. Schools may also wish

	to highlight the importance of responsible image sharing with parents and carers.
1.13	<p>360° Safe Cymru Tool</p> <p>The 360° Safe Cymru Tool is hosted on the national learning platform, Hwb, and allows schools to self-assess their online safety provision. We continue to encourage schools to use the 360 safe Cymru online safety review tool.</p> <p>The tool is used by over 1,400 schools in Wales and provides schools with a structured self-review process to assess and improve their online safety policies and provision. The tool is funded by the Welsh Government to support online safety.</p> <p>98% of schools in Wales have registered to use the tool and of those 70% have assigned a score to all 21 aspects of the tool. However, only 23% of schools have logged in and updated their assessment in the last 12 months.</p> <p>The Digital Resilience Team regularly run communications campaigns to encourage schools to access and use the tool and to promote the support it offers. The tool is regularly updated (last update March 2024) to ensure the content reflects current practices and keeps pace with online safety developments. Schools do not need to complete the full self-assessment in one session, the process can be spread through the school year.</p> <p>Schools' engagement is monitored at a local authority level and supported as required. It is not a statutory requirement for schools to use this tool.</p>

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
	<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>schools is undertaken, alongside the monitoring of self-evaluations and annual reporting by schools on the implementation of relevant policies.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>There will continue to be ongoing monitoring of the portfolio and schools in discharging of statutory safeguarding duties</p>
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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	<p>National Safeguarding training, learning and development Framework. https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/safeguarding-list/national-safeguarding-training-learning-and-development-framework</p> <p>National Safeguarding training, learning and development Standards. https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/safeguarding-list/national-safeguarding-training-learning-and-development-standards</p> <p>National Training Standards Frequently Asked Questions https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/safeguarding-list/national-safeguarding-training-learning-and-development-standards/safeguarding-standards-faqs</p> <p>Home Office prevent training modules: https://www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal</p> <p>Hwb: Social Media training for schools https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/55f6b31d-8dac-4bb3-82c2-236c2bfd35c/overview</p> <p>Hwb: Practices and principles for schools' use of social media</p>

	<p>https://hwb.gov.wales/keeping-safe-online/welsh-government-guidance/practices-and-principles-for-schools-use-of-social-media/</p> <p>360 Safe Cymru 360 safe Cymru - Hwb (gov.wales)</p>
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding Telephone: 01352 704054 E-mail: Claire.h.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>