

Online Safety Mark Assessor Report

School: Pendle Community High School & College

Date of assessment: 9th July 2021

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Element A – Policy and Leadership

Leadership of online safety is strong at all levels through the school. There is a deep commitment to online safety and it forms part of the safeguarding ethos of the school. Strategic online safety practice is informed by regular meetings of long-standing online safety groups. Decisions from these are passed on promptly. Pupils feel very much part of this process and this allows them to discuss these matters knowledgeably.

Online Safety is a constant consideration for all staff who understand the needs of their students and the need to be vigilant in their practice. This practice is supported by excellent communication strategies. This means that staff and other members of the school community are updated about relevant online issues on a very regular basis. The school uses several different tools to keep up-to-date with the current trends and issues pertaining to online safety (e.g. the SWGfL Boost Tool). Some of the electronic communication systems used are more specific to this type of school and their specific needs (e.g. Onwards & Upwards).

The school has clear sanctions and escalation procedures in place which are defined in their policies. The school's online safety documentation is updated appropriately through the school year. When updates do occur, staff are trained; given opportunities to provide feedback and given further support if the guidance is not fully understood. Acceptable use/behaviour policies (pupil, staff, equipment, social network ...) are understood by all stakeholders, with staff able to explain their importance and the implications for their wider lives (e.g. acceptance of 'friends' on social media). Staff were also able to explain, in some detail, how they could change filtering policies. These changes allowed them to access online resources needed to support their pupils in lessons. Pupils spoke about the rules that affect them in some depth, including those relating to mobile technologies, filtering and the appropriate use of technology outside school.

Element B – Education

The educational programme for online safety for staff, governors and pupils has been well thought-out and is comprehensive. Staff support and training is constant and starts during a teacher's induction. Staff are updated via electronic communications, weekly meetings, online resources and by external presenters. Some staff (e.g. DSL, PSHE leader) also have more specific training for their online safety role, electronically or via external courses. Registers highlight staff missing from training sessions and these staff are updated via online resources to make sure they do not miss out. The programme of support is continually evolving and is informed by surveys, looking at the online safety needs of staff. Initially these were run annually but recently this increased to two per academic year, to ensure the needs of staff are fully covered. Over several years the school has provided training on the security of data (GDPR) for all staff. To make sure that this training caters fully for their staff needs, the training provider has recently changed. On a subject level, the leader of PSHE gets online support and information sent to her directly, to keep her up-to-date and develop her subject in this area. When the information is suitable, she disseminates this to other members of staff, who would benefit from this information.

Governors are invited to the training sessions provided for staff and also have access to online training that has been sourced by the DSL. The governor who is part of the online safety group has weekly briefings from the DSL to keep him up-to-date. He disseminates these updates and any appropriate updates from the online safety group to other governors during their meetings. The school should ensure that governors have all the information and support documentation they need to inform their practice on key online safety infrastructure decisions such as those for appropriate filtering and monitoring (e.g. information sheets from the UK Safer Internet Centre).

The online safety support for parents is exemplary and the parents feel very supported. When new initiatives or issues arise the response is very well planned. In recent times this has meant ensuring that parents understand how to use any devices going home and keep them secure for their children. This is a continuation of the work over several years. Support for parents is given online, via letters and face-to-face when it is appropriate. During parent evenings the school has a support desk, so that parents can pick up information about online safety, and find out how to make their home devices more secure for student use. There is also an opportunity for them to share their views on school policies via parental feedback forms at parent evenings.

Pupils are supported in so many different ways. They are part of the decision-making process through their representation on the online safety group. This has also helped develop these individuals' knowledge and understanding in this area, which they are encouraged to pass on. Online safety is well supported in many curriculum subjects, not just in those that have it as an intrinsic part of their curriculum. It is this overall ethos that means that pupils get a consistent and persistent safeguarding message for online safety. The school is a regular participant in the annual Childnet Film Competition and trains the students in how to use the school's reporting tools (e.g. the 'Whisper' button) during their induction to the school.

The school has already started to support their community in understanding issues pertaining to online safety. They have more initiatives planned for the future. Some of these initiatives have had to be postponed due to the difficulty in supporting them during this current period. One of the main school projects involves the Post 16 students running a community cafe. This venue will give the school the opportunity to provide information and training for online safety to visitors to the cafe.

Element C - Technology

The school has developed the current IT infrastructure for some time. Some of the infrastructural elements are run campus-wide and some are school-specific to make sure the needs of the school are supported fully. The network manager is very experienced and knowledgeable. He has helped evolve the network capabilities as the school adds more and different devices to maintain the security and the ability to monitor them.

Currently the school runs the Netsweeper filtering software which is maintained and updated regularly by the software company and BTLS (British Telecom Lancashire Services Ltd). All devices that connect to the school network are routed through the software but there are different levels of access. It is possible to host guest devices but these cannot connect to any other devices and passwords used for these are very short-lived. Some staff devices also have the ability to access social media sites that are used to maintain the school communications with parents and the school community. The procedures and sanctions for breaking filtering rules are known by students and staff. The system creates regular reports that are monitored by the network manager and passed on to the appropriate individual, including the headteacher, depending on the significance. The computing room devices are monitored further by using the AB Tutor software. Teachers can request changes to the filtering, so they can access online resources and websites that they need to support their lessons. All devices are installed with the Sophos software which provides protection against viruses and malware. The software is automatically updated and any issues or concerns found by the network manager are sent to the appropriate member of staff.

The school has a Data Protection Officer and an up-to-date data policy. All staff have completed GDPR training and data is retained following the county model data retention policy. The school has a password policy for staff, who are made aware of this as part of their induction training. Students have a good understanding of password security. Due to the school context, student passwords are adjusted in their complexity according to the needs of the pupils. There are secure methods of resetting both pupil and staff passwords.

There are parental consent forms for the use of student photos and videos. The records for these are maintained rigorously so that staff know exactly how they can be images can be used (e.g. in school, on the school website or social media accounts or used by the press). Photos can be taken at school using the school iPads but these need to be deleted as specified in the school policy. Two-factor authentication is needed to gain access to sensitive data (e.g. via the mobile app for Onwards & Upwards). Staff are given training in using this software and this is updated at appropriate times during the school year. Staff fully understand the social media, mobile device and digital and video policies. Pupils also understand how their images can be used as well as policies pertaining to them regarding their own mobile devices.

Element D – Outcomes

The school monitors and reviews online safety regularly which has contributed to the effectiveness of its practice in this area. It has used the 360 degree safe self-review tool to inform overall progress. Policies are updated annually, unless there are changes during the year and then the policies are revised and the changes communicated to staff. Surveys are used to review the effectiveness of training and support, as well as to ascertain what areas need to be developed further. The regular meetings and the inclusive nature of the online safety group is also intrinsic in monitoring and developing the strategic vision of online safety in the school.

Monitoring access to the school network (e.g. via Netsweeper) creates reports from which the school can evaluate and develop their filtering and monitoring policies further. The school has built up very good communication tools including ones that they can customise to their own use (e.g. Onwards & Upwards for monitoring pupil progress). The school uses the SWGfL Boost tool to help monitor its online reputation, as this tool updates when someone mentions the school online. The school also uses the 'Whisper Anonymous Reporting Tool' which provides students a way of reporting any in-school and out-of-school incidents, thus allowing the school to monitor online safety incidents more effectively. The school website is updated and checked regularly to provide up-to-date information and resources for parents, students and the school wider community.

Areas of strength and good practice:

- Leadership of online safety throughout the school
- Parental engagement and support
- Staff training
- Effective communication of online safety issues and development.

Areas for further development:

- The school's ongoing development of wider community links.

Assessor's Recommendation

The school has reached the standards required to be awarded the Online Safety Mark