

What makes an effective online safety group?

Quotes are taken from 360safe assessor reports

A school online safety group has been key to developing effective practice in schools that have achieved the 360safe online safety award. No school is the same, and the way in which an Online Safety group will make a difference to safeguarding will vary according to the age range, size, ethos and ability of the community in the school. Each school needs to consider how the adults and pupils will contribute and how they can work effectively together.

Expectation for 360safe accreditation:

The school has an active Online Safety Group with wide representation from the SLT, staff (including child protection representative), governors and pupils / students. It has clear lines of responsibility and accountability. <https://360safe.org.uk>

Aspirational level with 360safe review:

The school has an active Online Safety Group with wide representation from within the school eg SLT, teaching and support staff (including Child Protection representative), governors and pupils / students and also from parents and carers and the wider community. It has clear lines of responsibility and accountability which are understood by all members of the school. The committee is actively integrated and collaborating with other relevant groups in school e.g. School Council. <https://360safe.org.uk>

Oaklands Primary:

“The work is driven by the e-safety committee with members from governors, parents, teachers and pupils. Meeting regularly, they discuss issues and prioritise actions. Impressive are the responsibilities given to the pupils with, for example, signing the class rules document being the responsibility of the e-safety representative rather than the class teacher.”

“The role of the e-safety group was again evident with pupils knowing who their representative was, listening when they reported back and going to them for advice.”

Somerset Bridge Primary

“Somerset Bridge Primary has a committed online safety leadership team that includes the Deputy Head and Child Protection lead, e-Safety Coordinator (job share), Parent Governor and Safeguarding Governor; working together with the e-Cadets, a group of ten year 6 pupils. They are supported by the Headteacher who sets high expectations with regard to safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding is a core part of school life with children using and understanding this term. Online safety is part of this care and seen in actions of the pastoral team, teaching and non-teaching staff.

The e-Cadets are paired with a class. They meet weekly with one or more of the adults, teach lessons, maintain visual reminders of online safety around the school, pass on information to other pupils and check that the adults in the team carry out promised actions. For the adults in the group, the important conversations occur when there is a need to share knowledge of concerns and actions.”

Membership of the group

People on the group should include:

- Online Safety Coordinator (OSC)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Pupil representatives from each year (some schools use schools council or Digital Leaders members)
- Other members of staff eg TA with responsibility for IT
- Governor with responsibility for Online Safety

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Frequency of meetings

Formal meetings should be held at least once a term with an advised frequency of once a half term. Informal 'catch ups' will take place in between as concerns, new possibilities for technology or ideas for increasing impact of online safety occur. Some work will take place in smaller groups. The pupil members will often meet more frequently with representation from the adults in the group. Staff will meet separately for strategic and sensitive matters.

Meeting may include:

With pupils

- What are the children doing at home?
 - What are the latest fads?
- What have the pupils been taught since the last meeting?
- What do pupils need to be told about?
- What actions could contribute to increasing online safety in the school?
- Notices for parent newsletter
 - What should we put in?
 - Who is going to write it?
- School Online Safety competitions
 - What are they going to be this year?
 - Who is going to organise them?
 - Who is going to judge them?
- Preparation for special days
 - Safer Internet day
 - Anti-Bullying week
 - Parent evenings (distribution of material etc)
- Prepare a report for Governors
- Any issues that the staff like to mention that have not appeared in the meeting

Without pupils (can be part of the meeting between DSL and OSC)

- Issues relating to Online Safety and Safeguarding
 - What happened?
 - What was the resolution?
 - Can we improve practice?
 - Can we improve education?
- Communications with the community
- Opportunities for training and education
- Policy and other documentation updates
- Requirements for improvements to infrastructure

Huish Primary School:

“Huish Primary School has a clear group of leaders responsible for e-safety provision, including the e-Learning Manager, Deputy Headteacher, SENCO, Headteacher/Child Protection Lead and Chair of Governors. They represent an e-safety committee of staff and are supported by a group of learners who have been trained as eCadets.”

Knights Templar First School

“Digital Leaders visit each class once a week to record any concerns that have arisen. They wrote and performed a short play before the Christmas performance to remind parents about their responsibility to only take photos as a personal memory of their children’s participation. This has now been videoed and added to the school website.”