

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

Report Subject: **360 degree Safe Online Safety Policy for Schools**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	24.11.20			8.10.20	09.12.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the Executive Committee's approval of the Blaenau Gwent 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy for schools.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The requirement to ensure that learners are able to use the internet and related communications technologies appropriately and safely is part of a school's wider duty of care. The 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy is provided by South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) in partnership with Welsh Government. The Online Safety Policy is intended to help schools produce a suitable online safety policy document, which will consider all current and relevant issues in a whole school context.
  - 2.2 Since April 2014, South West Grid for Learning has worked in partnership with the Welsh Government to raise awareness of online safety issues and to improve online safety policy and practice for schools and colleges in Wales. The 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy suggests policy statements which would be essential in any school online safety policy, based on good practice. There are a range of alternative statements that schools should consider, and choose those that are most suitable, given their particular circumstances. The adoption of the 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety policy as the Council's online safety policy for schools will provide clarity and consistency across school estate.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
  - 3.1 The Education and Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) considered the draft strategy document and supported the policy with the addition of a link to the Welsh Government information

'Keeping Safe Online'. This has been added to page 11 of the policy, 'Education – parents and carers'.

- 3.2 **Option 1** - The Executive Committee are asked to review the policy and if appropriate agree the policy.

**Option 2** – The Executive Committee amend the policy.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

This report is in line with the following objectives as set out in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan:

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life.
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no direct financial implications.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There is a risk that without a robust online safety policy, the safety and well-being of children and young people could be negatively impacted. The adoption of an appropriate policy ensures that this risk is mitigated.

A range of key stakeholders have contributed to the development of this policy, which is supported by Welsh Government.

5.3 **Legal**

Welsh Government Circular 158/2015, 'Keeping Learners Safe' contains guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children under section 175 of the Education Act 2002. E-safety is referenced within this document as a safeguarding responsibility in specific circumstances.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Local Authority policies have previously been distributed to governing bodies for adoption by schools and all schools have policies in place for internet safety and acceptable use agreements.

The proposed 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy consists of an online safety policy and a series of appendices containing more detailed

templates and forms. They have been developed with support by Online Safety professionals through the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) in partnership with Welsh Government.

The policy provides guidance and an indication of what should be included. It allows each school to ensure that the content will be relevant for the individual circumstances of each school.

#### **6.2 Expected outcome for the public**

The proposed policy template provides a framework to support schools in developing confident, digital citizens who know how to stay safe online.

#### **6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The proposed policy demonstrates an integrated approach to online safety across schools.

Views have been sought from schools through the Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP). There were no objections to taking forward the policy approach.

The copyright of the policy is held by South West Grid for learning. Schools/colleges and other educational institutions are permitted free use of the policy templates for the purposes of policy review and development. A range of individuals and organisations have contributed to the development of the policy and appendices, including:

- Members of the SWGfL online safety group;
- Representatives of Welsh local authorities;
- Representatives from a range of Welsh schools/colleges involved in consultation and pilot groups;
- Plymouth University online safety.

South West Grid for Learning and the Education Achievement Service are in agreement with the Council plan to adopt this policy.

#### **6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

Welsh Government encourages schools to make full use of digital technologies to engage learners and improve learner outcomes. The proposed policy supports this learning opportunity.

#### **6.5 Preventative focus**

In order to become confident digital citizens, children need to know how to stay safe online, both under supervision and independently. The proposed policy supports this.

#### **6.6 Collaboration / partnership working**

The Council collaborates with a range of partners and corporate services to discharge its Local Government Education Service functions.

South West Grid for Learning and Education Achievement Service are in agreement with the Council proposal to adopt this policy.

**6.7 Integration (across service areas)**

The proposed policy is for all schools. The proposed policy template would cover other pre-existing LA policies that will be superseded upon the implementation of this policy

**6.8 EqIA**

An EQIA for the online safety policy template has been undertaken and no adverse impact has been identified.

**7. Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Adoption of the policy templates will be monitored on a termly basis through the Safeguarding Matrix which is part of the embedded approach within the Council.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – 360 degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy Template