



**PSCB Online Safety Strategy  
2014-17**

**“Children and young people need to be empowered to keep themselves safe—this isn’t just about a top-down approach. Children will be children—pushing boundaries and taking risks. At a public swimming pool we have gates, put up signs, have lifeguards and shallow ends, but we also teach children to swim”**

Safeguarding in a Digital World—Tanya Byron 2008

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Rapid developments in technology and online behaviour present excellent opportunities but also new risks. Through their use of e-technology children and young people are able to access world-wide information, get their entertainment including films and music, and network with others through social media. Children and young people are increasingly using the Internet as an integral part of their learning and leisure and this is likely to continue as technology and access progresses.
- 1.2. Alongside the many benefits are a number of risks, including the risks of exploitation, exposure to and sharing of explicit material (including sexting), identity theft, grooming, radicalisation, cyber-bullying and cyber-hacking. Most of these risks are not new, but are now taking place in a new environment in new forms. Many parents and carers find it challenging to support and guide their children through these risks online. It is essential that agencies recognise the benefits of internet use whilst safeguarding from harm, so that measured precautions are put in place and priority given to this area of safeguarding as robustly as to others.
- 1.3. Although the technology children use to access the virtual world changes regularly and it can be challenging to stay up to date, safe behaviour in the virtual world remains consistent. This strategy promotes a focus on understanding and promoting safe behaviour.
- 1.4. Interactions between people are increasingly taking place in the virtual world, with on-line networks growing in significance in children's lives. It is essential that support for children and their families takes their virtual actions and relationships into account.
- 1.5. This strategy seeks to provide an overview of the strategic approach the PSCB is taking to ensure that all member agencies and other organisations who work with children are striving to minimise the risks posed to children in virtual communities, and to build the virtual community into the way they work.
- 1.6. This is a live document which will develop in response to changes in national policy and local learning.

## **2. Vision**

Through the delivery of this strategy the PSCB aims to ensure that:

- A. All children and those who care for them in Portsmouth are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to safeguard themselves online and avoid causing harm to others
- B. All adults who work with children in Portsmouth are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to safeguard children in their online activity
- C. All work with children across agencies reflects the growing prominence of the virtual world in children and their family's lives
- D. There is a shared, demonstrable understanding of the rights, responsibilities and expectations of all concerned in keeping children safe online
- E. All those who work with and care for children and children themselves are aware of the additional online risks and vulnerabilities associated with child exploitation and trafficking, and radicalisation, and are aware of how to identify the signs and prevention activities
- F. All those who work with children are aware of poverty and neglect as a potential barrier to children and families accessing the virtual world and the impact of this on their lives

## **3. Principles**

3.1. This strategy acknowledges that advances in technology should be welcomed and celebrated, and that children and those who care for them are a valuable source of knowledge and insight into the potential benefits, risks and responses.

3.2. The following principles underpin the strategy and all agencies will need to operate within them

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount
- Children should be safeguarded in virtual communities as robustly as they are in real communities
- All PSCB member agencies have a responsibility to contribute to the safety of children
- There should be a focus on prevention and disruption
- Work is more effective when delivered in partnership with children, parents, families and carers
- Safeguarding is supported by collaboration and communication between agencies

## **4. Scope**

4.1. Online Safety is the concern of:

- All children who are able to independently access the technology
- All adults, including those who do not use the technology themselves, who may need to know how to keep the children they care for safe in an on-line world.
- All agencies working with children and their families in Portsmouth

4.2. Online Safety is concerned with behaviour that can be illegal, inappropriate, deliberate or accidental. It is primarily focused on safeguarding children, but also

needs to consider how adults (staff, parents, carers, volunteers) use technology and how this impacts on children.

#### 4.3. Online Safety concerns behaviours associated with devices such as:

- Computers
- Mobile phones, tablets and other handheld devices
- Digital cameras
- Video and Computer gaming
- Digital communication such as email, social networking, chat and instant messaging
- Use of the Internet (browsing, downloading, uploading and file sharing)
- Audio devices such as MP3 players

## 5. Needs analysis

5.1. In 2012 the e-Safety Committee consulted with groups of children aged six to sixteen attending schools in Portsmouth in order to gain insight into their use of internet, social media and mobiles devices. Key findings included:

- The majority of children spent between one and two hours online each day, with 20% spending more than three hours a day
- 80% of eleven to sixteen year olds and 40% of six to eleven year olds said they have a Facebook account. Half of those had created their account without their parent or carers knowledge
- The majority of children accessed online content with a recommended age above their own. The majority of 11-16 year olds had played video games with an 18+ rating, and 50% of those using Facebook had created their account before they were thirteen (the required age to hold an account)
- 20% of 6-11 year olds said they had experienced online bullying and 20% said they had been cruel to another child online

5.2. In the 2008 report 'Safer children in a digital world' Dr Tania Byron recognised that although children and their parents enjoyed their use of the internet children were worried about the following things:

- That they might come across something rude or scary
- They might experiences unwelcome contact from other users including cyber bullying
- How others, including siblings behaved online

Parents' worries included:

- They did not always understand how to use the technology or how to manage the technology as well as, or better than their children
- Parents and teachers regard inappropriate contact on the internet as one of the online risks for children
- The time children were spending online including online gaming

5.3. The Childwise research in 2008 identified:

- 90% of children aged 5-16 have internet access in their home.

5.4. The National Foundation for Educational Research, published in 2009 identified that in the UK:

- 23 per cent of parents with children under 11 allow their children to access the internet without supervision at home
- 84% of girls aged 12-15 use the internet to contact other people.
- Of the children and young people who have access to the internet, 18 per cent have reported experiencing content which they found to be inappropriate or harmful
- Of this 18 per cent, and that over half did "something" about it.

5.5. The Department for Children, Schools and Families *Staying Safe Survey* of 2009 showed that in the UK:

- 91 per cent of children and young people aged 12 to 17 have a mobile phone and 12 per cent say they access the internet through their phone

## **6. Delivering our vision**

### **A. All children and those who care for them in Portsmouth are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to safeguard themselves online and avoid causing harm to others**

Those engaging in this strategy will seek to:

1. Raise awareness among parents, carers and families of the need to support and protect children in the virtual world
2. Develop Online Safety skills among children and those that care for them
3. Develop risk assessment skills among children to minimise risks and ensure they know what to do when faced with issues
4. Provide access to Online safety tools and guidance appropriate for children and their families
5. Encourage the positive contribution of children to improving Online Safety through participation in the delivery of the strategy and in supporting their peers

### **B. All adults who work with children in Portsmouth are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to safeguard children in their online activity**

Those engaging in this strategy will seek to:

1. Raise awareness of the importance of online safety in safeguarding children
2. Ensure those working with children have access to the information, advice, guidance, tools, support and training they need
3. Ensure learning from local and national incidents involving online Safety and local and national research are disseminated

### **C. All work with children across agencies reflects the growing prominence of the virtual world in children and their family's lives**

Those engaging in this strategy will seek to:

1. Raise awareness among those working with children of the importance of understanding children and their parents / carers' interactions and relationships in the virtual world, and the importance of building this into their work

2. Equip those working with children with the confidence and skills to identify, assess and plan around children and their parents / carers interactions in the virtual world
3. Provide those working with children with the knowledge to appropriately utilise the virtual world in building an understanding of children and their parents / carers' lives

**D. There is a shared, demonstrable understanding of the rights, responsibilities and expectations of all concerned in keeping children safe online**

Those engaging in this strategy will seek to:

1. Ensure agency policies and procedures sufficiently prioritise virtual safeguarding and promote the online welfare of all children in Portsmouth
2. Ensure agencies have in place robust systems for preventing and responding to online Safety breaches
3. Identify agency champions to promote best online Safety practice
4. Provide mechanisms for feedback on the effectiveness of online Safety arrangements from children and those that care for and work with them

**E. All those who work with and care for children and children themselves are aware of the additional online risks and vulnerabilities associated with child exploitation and trafficking, and radicalisation, and are aware of how to identify the signs and prevention activities**

Those engaging in this strategy will seek to:

1. Raise awareness of the CSE and trafficking risks online among staff and service users
2. Raise awareness of the risks of radicalisation online among staff and service users
3. Encourage children to be critical and analytical in their use of on-line sources and communications
4. Increase knowledge among children and their parents to support them in identifying and responding to concerns regarding the online behaviour of peers

**F. All those who work with children are aware of poverty and neglect as a potential barrier to children and families accessing the virtual world and the impact of this on their lives**

Those engaging in this strategy will seek to:

1. Ensure workers consider children and families' access to the virtual world in their assessments and plans, and seek to facilitate access where to do so will improve their well-being

**7. Monitoring the Online Safety Strategy**

- 7.1. The strategy will be regularly monitored for impact and reviewed on an annual basis
- 7.2. The views of children and those that care for them will be used to inform the review of the strategy
- 7.3. The strategy will be updated in light of local and national learning

## **8. Delivery Agenda to support the Online safety Strategy 2016/2017**

1. Twilight session for School staff June and October 2016 3.30-5pm 30-40 professionals per session.
2. Offer of Online Safety Group work delivery in Junior Schools to be delivered via Bernardo's and communicated via online safety newsletter and PCSB.
3. Online Safety delivered as part of 6 week programme offered to Secondary schools by the Sorted Team
4. Professionals event February 2017 to coincide with Safer Internet day.
5. Online Safety Awareness raising event for foster carers November 2016
6. Newsletter 3 x a year and contribution to Education newsletter and PCSB newsletter as required.
7. Online Safety Committee to meet x 4 in 2015-16. Online Safety Committee to review with task and finish group by 24.11.16