

Online Safety at Acorns

Action Plan

Introduction

Within the context of a constantly changing online environment, schools are encouraged to review, monitor and evaluate their policies, procedures and practices with regard to the safeguarding implications this has. The term 'Online Safety' is seen to broaden the previous e-safety agenda to include issues such as online bullying, the impact of technology on sexual behaviour e.g. sexting, grooming and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Current on-line safety training, undertaken by some of the staff and governors at Acorns, suggested that good practice within schools should involve:

- a whole school approach that is tied into regular safeguarding,
- high priority, regular training so that ALL staff (and governors) are aware of the issues/'risks' and to promote a consistent approach,
- clear, meaningful and effective policies which are communicated well,
- well-designed strategies to keep children safe,
- a progressive, planned online safety education across the curriculum that supports pupils to develop their own understanding of the 'risks' and of how to 'stay safe' in an online environment,
- various routes to report concerns and receive advice that are known by staff and pupils and
- parental and community engagement on these issues.

Assessment and Planning

The training also recommended an Online Safety Assessment Tool called '360 Degree Safe' provided by The South West Grid for Learning – a charitable trust that specialises in working in the field of e-safety. The tool enables a school to review its current practice over four main elements: (a) Policy and Leadership, (b) Infrastructure, (c) Education and Standards and (d) Inspection.

Using the tool indicates what needs to be done and how to do it. When applying this to Acorns it was clear that, as is common in many schools, Acorn's strengths lay in its scope and development of related policy, the security of its infrastructure – with appropriate filtering and monitoring in place- and its AUP's. However, again in line with many other schools, areas were identified which could be further developed to reflect the current advice on 'good practice'. These included:

- to set up an online safety group with representatives from staff and governors to take online safety forward,
- to explore ways to involve pupils e.g. in Online Safety Group/ as Online Safety Ambassadors/ as Digital Champions or Cadets/ via School Council,

- to further develop staff and governor training,
- to ensure clear communication of policies,
- to monitor that cross curricular teaching is inclusive of the issues in an ever-changing environment and that it is reaching all pupils,
- to investigate new ways of engaging with parents and
- to further develop evaluation of the impact of online safety measures at Acorns to include evaluation of reporting routes and support for staff and pupils.

Future Plans

In order to work towards addressing these issues the school has set up an Online Safety Group. Membership of the group includes the designated safeguarding lead and on-line safety champion (Carol Rooney), a member of the ICT teaching staff (Stephanie Heaton) and a representative from the governors (Sharon Bennett). The Group is open to anyone who has an interest in the area and it liaises with other members of staff and governors when it is considering particular issues relevant to them. It is also keen to explore ways it can involve/ get the views of our pupils. The Group agreed to meet each term initially to discuss the issues and establish future plans. The frequency of meetings can then be re-assessed as the Group develops.

Two members of the Group regularly attend the annual LSCB Online Safety Briefings for Professionals. The advice from this, along with the 360 review findings above, are being used to inform the Groups focus. Initially two key priority areas have been identified to move online safety forward at school: engagement with parents and staff communication/ training. The Group will regularly report back to staff and governor meetings on progress made.