

# School community engagement plan

## eSafety Toolkit for Schools

Creating safer online environments

**This resource provides strategies for schools to engage their communities in preventing and responding to online safety issues. It is designed to help schools engage with community concerns and create a shared understanding of, and responsibility for, online safety. Schools are encouraged to align their plans with departmental or sector policies and procedures.**

This resource is best used in conjunction with eSafety's [Activities for students to take the lead in online safety](#), which provides additional guidance and highlights the importance of student-led online safety strategies.

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Online safety education is most effective when staff and families understand the complementary roles they play in educating young people — both in and out of school. Involving the whole school community as active and valued participants in online safety is important for creating and maintaining a safe online environment.

An effective school community engagement plan builds on the [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#) elements of **Partnerships**, where ‘families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support student learning, safety and wellbeing’ and **Inclusion**, where ‘all members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships’. Plans can also reflect **Principle 3** from the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), which highlights the importance of families and communities being informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

## School community engagement plan



### **Building a positive and inclusive culture**

School community members engage with each other online in ways that are welcoming and inclusive.



### **Involving the school community in decision-making**

School community members are supported to share their opinions, identify issues and collaborate on responses as part of a meaningful decision-making process.



### **Sharing information and communicating regularly**

Schools share relevant online safety information in a variety of formats which cater to the school community.



### **Collaborating with families and community partners**

Schools promote online safety activities and events as part of a whole-of-community response.



### **Developing the skills and capacity of parents/carers**

Schools empower parents/carers to teach, encourage and model appropriate online behaviours through access to information and resources.

Figure 1: Based on Australian Government's Family-School Partnerships Framework (2008)

## School community engagement plan

Action area	Goal	What we currently do	Other actions we could take (tick options for your school)
<b>Build a positive and inclusive school culture</b>	All school community members feel that their ideas, cultures and identities are respected.		<p>Encourage school community members to share their views about how to create a safe online environment by having students survey their parents/ carers. See eSafety’s <a href="#">Survey of school community attitudes to online safety</a>.</p> <p>Using survey data, develop a school charter that sets the expectations for how school community members will engage online. See eSafety’s <a href="#">School charter of commitment to online safety</a>.</p> <p>Encourage the school community to engage positively on social media. For guidance on using social media in schools, see eSafety’s <a href="#">Guidelines for social media use, video sharing and online collaboration</a>.</p>
<b>Involve the school community in decision-making</b>	School community members feel their views are respected and heard, and processes are responsive to the needs of the school community.		<p>Consult the school community about online safety policy development and planning. This could be through meetings with parent/carer organisations or the school board, or by conducting focus groups or surveys. Take steps to ensure that the collection, storage and disclosure of information complies with privacy legislation and department or sector policies.</p> <p>Consult with a range of people that represent the diversity of the school community.</p> <p>Where appropriate, involve community members in a ‘solutions-focused’ approach to dealing with online safety issues, both when they occur and at appropriate times during the incident response process.</p>

## School community engagement plan (continued)

Action area	Goal	What we currently do	Other actions we could take (tick options for your school)
Share information and communicate regularly	School communities know where to find reliable information about online safety issues and approaches, and openly exchange ideas.		<p>Share online safety information at parent/carer attended school events. For example: when signing acceptable use agreements or during school enrolment procedures. Information could also be shared using an online safety display stand at school events like drop-in sessions on parent/teacher nights, presentation nights and open days.</p> <p>Ask students about how best to raise online safety awareness and empower them to lead online safety awareness raising. For example, students could create and perform an online safety play, hold an online safety summit, create a mock social media campaign or use another interactive medium to communicate online safety messages to their parents/carers.</p> <p>Encourage parents/carers and staff to sign up for <a href="#">eSafety News</a>.</p> <p>Use eSafety's <a href="#">Tips for parent/carer education and engagement</a> resource to create a regular section of the school's newsletter dedicated to online safety with handy hints for parents/carers. Invite students to contribute to newsletters by writing reviews of their favourite games and apps including their safety features or sharing their online safety tips.</p> <p>Share online safety policies and incident response procedures on the school website along with advice and links to reputable websites such as the <a href="#">eSafety Commissioner</a> and <a href="#">Bullying. No Way!</a> Consider linking to eSafety's 'report' webpages from the school intranet.</p>

## School community engagement plan (continued)

Action area	Goal	What we currently do	Other actions we could take (tick options for your school)
<b>Collaborate with families and community partners</b>	Community members actively promote online safety within their school community.		<p>As part of class projects, encourage students to design presentations to upskill their peers, parents/carers and community members about online safety. See eSafety's <a href="#">Activities for students to take the lead in online safety</a> for more information.</p> <p>Secondary schools can participate in intergenerational mentoring through <a href="#">eSafety's Young Mentor's program</a>. This program offers young people the opportunity to develop valuable teaching, communication and leadership skills while facilitating digital learning for older members of the community.</p> <p>Encourage parent/carer and community groups to develop online safety awareness campaigns or events for special days (e.g. <a href="#">Safer Internet Day</a> and the <a href="#">National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence</a>). These days should be considered when planning for the year and taking a whole community approach to online safety.</p> <p>Use the <a href="#">Be Deadly Online resources</a> to facilitate discussions in culturally relevant and appropriate ways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.</p> <p>Identify community organisations or individuals that offer support for online safety issues or provide wellbeing services. If inviting an external presenter or community member to the school, see eSafety's <a href="#">Guide to engaging external online safety providers</a> to help inform the decision.</p>

## School community engagement plan (continued)

Action area	Goal	What we currently do	Other actions we could take (tick options for your school)
<b>Develop parents/carers' skills and capabilities</b>	Parents/carers reinforce positive online behaviours at home and feel confident to help children solve problems they encounter online — including where to find help and support. Parents/ carers are confident to use reporting pathways when necessary.		<p>Provide community members with opportunities to develop their online skills through informal and formal training. This could include online safety webinars, face-to-face sessions, links to resources and printed copies of <a href="#">eSafety's Parents Online Safety guide</a>.</p> <p>Provide online safety information and referral services in various languages. eSafety's <a href="#">Start the Chat</a> resources are available in a variety of languages. Refer parents/carers to translation services, such as the <a href="#">Translation and Interpreting Service</a> (TIS National) on 131 450.</p> <p>Invite parents/carers to join group lessons in online safety at school, where students share their own skills and experiences to help develop those of their parents/carers.</p> <p>Create a series of household technology rules and guidelines by adapting school policies. This can help to align and complement online safety messages both at home and at school.</p>