



Checklist for developing effective online safety policies and procedures

Creating safer online environments



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Effective online safety policies should:

- detail the school's commitment to online safety
- clarify the expected behaviours, rights, responsibilities and roles for each member of the school community
- provide guiding principles and procedures that seek to mitigate online safety risks
- inform school actions when responding to online safety incidents
- support school community awareness of how the school is meeting its obligations to support a safe online environment.

Important note – Policies and procedures should be consistent with, and informed by, education sector and/or school policies and procedures.

Checklist for effective school policies

Engage staff, students and parent/carers	Yes
Work with staff, students and parents/carers to regularly identify key and emerging online safety issues and determine whether current policies and procedures address these.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hear from a diverse range of voices so that responses are relevant to all groups. This will help everyone to understand their roles, rights and responsibilities when addressing online behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider the needs of all students, including those with disability, First Nations students, LGBTQI+ students, those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, students experiencing family breakdown or in out-of-home care and others who may be more vulnerable and susceptible to online harms.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise a team	Yes
Establish a team of staff members to champion online safety and be a first point of contact for other staff, students and parents/carers when reporting online safety concerns, issues, and incidents. This could be the existing student wellbeing team or staff with knowledge and skills in online safety and interest in leading others.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Support the team to keep up to date with current and emerging online safety issues through regular professional learning , signing up to updates from the eSafety Commissioner and reviewing eSafety's Engage 2 - Activities for students to take the lead in online safety .	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embed online safety within school policies, procedures and practices	Yes
Ensure school policies are consistent with applicable national, state and territory laws and policies, such as those relating to child protection, mandatory reporting, work health and safety, privacy, wellbeing, anti-bullying, behaviour management and codes of conduct. This will help to ensure online safety incidents are addressed within the overall legal and policy framework of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop clear and accessible procedures	Yes
Set clear expectations and codes of conduct about the acceptable use of digital devices including computers, laptops, phones, tablets, wearable technology, cameras and other personal devices. Ensure devices covered are updated to reflect new technologies, as well as the online collaboration and social media platforms that are used within the school community. Refer to eSafety resources for guidance on legislative changes relating to social media age restrictions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include clear incident response pathways and processes so that all staff (including casual and relief staff), students and parents/carers are aware of how to deal with inappropriate behaviour, who to report critical incidents to and in what timeframes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure school leadership teams, student wellbeing staff and eSafety Champions are trained in reporting and responding to critical online incidents and know how and when to report directly to platforms and to eSafety and/or police where necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set expectations for how all members of the school community behave online. These could be embedded within existing behaviour management procedures and/or set out as an acceptable use of technology/devices policy, student agreement, code of conduct or school charter . These expectations should be widely communicated at regular intervals and accessible to all. For example, each term students could be provided with a pop-up message reminder in age-appropriate format, which they must read and agree to before signing in for the first time to that device.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Communicate openly with the school community	Yes
Outline how the school will communicate online safety issues with members of the school community, including when and how students and parents/carers will be consulted about policies, responsibilities and expected behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include information about what students and parents/carers can expect if an incident occurs, including when and how parents/carers will be contacted, and the support and referral services available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make procedures publicly available	Yes
Promote online safety at assemblies and year level meetings and in newsletters. Publish policies, procedures and guidelines on the school website and in high-traffic areas such as electronic noticeboards, the front office, first aid area, library and student services areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review regularly	Yes
Review policies and procedures regularly (at least annually) as technologies evolve rapidly. Try to futureproof policies by not naming specific products or platforms.	<input type="checkbox"/>