



Education action plan

Creating safer online environments



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Why has this guide been produced?

This resource is designed to help schools develop an Education action plan by considering their current approaches to online safety education.

Based on the key elements from eSafety's [Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education](#) and the [Best Practice Framework Implementation Guide](#), this resource provides schools with options to support online safety education for the whole school community. It also offers suggestions to improve online safety teaching practices.

An action plan template is provided at the end of this document. It should be used in conjunction with relevant school and/or education sector policies and procedures.

Education action plan

Approach	What we currently do	Other actions we could take
Online safety education at our school is framed around acknowledging and understanding students' rights and responsibilities in the digital age.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage teachers to find out more about students' rights to digital protection, digital provision and digital participation and build these concepts into lessons, where relevant. This could include students learning:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ that they have a responsibility to themselves and others when they are online○ how human rights and laws apply online○ how to use digital technologies with an understanding of equity, ethics and personal and social values.• Use a range of activities in curriculum, extra-curricular programs and at school events to help students appreciate the responsibilities that come with rights in the digital age. This includes encouraging respectful behaviour, setting and reinforcing clear behavioural expectations, and modelling positive relationships.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design learning experiences that provide students with opportunities to think critically about their experiences online and online safety. • Revise codes of conduct and acceptable use policies and procedures to reflect students' rights and responsibilities for online safety.
<p>Our school's approach to online safety education is strengths-based. It considers risks, challenges, benefits and opportunities to engaging online.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the positives and negatives of engaging online to help students develop an understanding of digital technologies, including learning decision-making processes and how technologies can be used to overcome barriers. • Give students opportunities to rehearse, practice and receive feedback on their developing skills, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the benefits and risks of being online ○ how to use digital technology in safe and empowering ways – building strengths, help-seeking behaviours and resilience. • Use strengths-based approaches – look for what students can rather than what they cannot do and provide authentic feedback that encourages growth. • Avoid shock tactics and fear-based learning – these approaches can be counterproductive in creating behaviour change and make it harder for students to engage in meaningful learning.
<p>Students are involved in the design, development and implementation of online safety education.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to provide relevant and meaningful examples of how they engage online and use these examples when designing learning experiences. Effective online safety programs give students a voice in what they learn and how they learn it. It helps them feel listened to, valued and connected to their school community. • Consider a range of strategies to support students in learning with, and from, others. For example, reciprocal peer education (for review and consolidation rather than introducing new material), students teaching parents/carers and intergenerational mentoring.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to eSafety’s Engage – Activities for students to take the lead in online safety (Foundation to Year 3), Engage – Activities for students to take the lead in online safety education (Years 4 to 8), and Engage – Activities for students to take the lead in online safety. This provides a range of activities for students across all year levels to help cultivate safe online environments. • Regularly review online safety programs and practices with students. This encourages students to be partners in their own learning, increases their agency and achievement, and creates positive long-term learning habits.
<p>Online safety education is taught to every student and reinforced at every year level/ stage of learning.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check when and how you are teaching and reinforcing online safety. Online safety can be taught through many areas of the Australian Curriculum including (but not limited to) Foundation to Year 10 Health and Physical Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Technologies, the Arts and English, and through the general capabilities. It can also be embedded into student wellbeing programs. • Use the Foundation to Year 10 Curriculum Connections for Online Safety, Respectful Relationships, and Media Consumers and Creators to identify content in the Australian Curriculum that supports the teaching and learning of online safety. • Use eSafety’s curriculum-aligned classroom resources • Do not rely solely on ‘one-and-done’ presentations to develop students’ online safety knowledge, skills and capabilities. Instead, teach age- and developmentally appropriate online safety lessons incrementally for all students from Foundation to 12. • Engage a Trusted eSafety Provider to complement a whole-school approach and provide staff mentoring and coaching. • Use eSafety’s Educate – Guide to engaging external online safety providers resource to support good practice.
<p>Online safety education is part of a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adopting a whole-school approach to online safety education. • Read eSafety’s Prepare resources – these help schools assess their readiness to deal with online safety issues and provide suggestions to improve their practices.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse eSafety’s Engage resources – these encourage the participation of the school community in creating safer online environments. • Use eSafety’s Educate resources – these assist schools in developing the capacity of students, staff, and parents/carers to have safer and more positive online experiences. • Know eSafety’s Respond resources – these support schools to assess and respond to online incidents, providing guidance to minimise harm, restore relationships and support wellbeing. • Consider asking teachers to demonstrate how they have incorporated online safety education into their curriculum planning each year.
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In the classroom	What we currently do	Other actions we could take
<p>Lessons are tailored to address topics that are relevant and appropriate to students’ ages and abilities.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up to date with eSafety’s research and advisories to identify evolving and emerging trends, issues, risks, and harms which may impact children and young people. • Consider developing a school-based scope and sequence (or learning continuum) for online safety education to ensure clear and structured learning pathways Foundation to Year 10 with opportunities for new learning, review, and consolidation. Use the ACARA Digital Literacy: Comparative information as a starting point. • Use eSafety’s curriculum-aligned classroom resources and lesson plans. Some contain examples of online safety scenarios that can be used to teach safety strategies in meaningful ways (for example, ignoring, blocking, seeking support, and reporting). • Lesson content and teaching strategies will need careful preparation and modification if there have been recent online safety incidents in your school. • Subscribe to eSafety’s free Education news to receive the latest classroom resources and teaching ideas.

In the classroom	What we currently do	Other actions we could take
<p>Lessons are inclusive and differentiated for factors such as gender, disability, socioeconomic status, cultural and language background, sexuality, appearance and family background.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to identify the additional risks that diverse young people may face online and how to tailor lessons that support student safety and wellbeing. • Recognise that a one-size-fits-all approach may not suit all vulnerable students. Providing tailored online safety education for students who are at increased risk online, including young people in care, those with disabilities, those experiencing loss/trauma and those with mental health concerns may require partnering with parents and carers, and specialist support agencies beyond the school.
<p>Our approach to online safety education includes digital literacy.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach digital literacy as one of the four key aspects of online safety education. • Unpack digital literacy. • Check out eSafety’s resource Supporting digital literacy for under-16s. • Support students to develop a broad range of knowledge and skills that apply to <i>all</i> online spaces and purposes as well as those relevant to <i>specific</i> online spaces and purposes.
<p>Our approach to online safety education includes social and emotional learning.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach social and emotional learning as one of the key components in online safety education. • Unpack Personal and Social Capability in the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum. • Provide opportunities for students to practice their communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills, both online and offline as part of everyday routines and transitions. • Incorporate online safety scenarios into other student wellbeing programs, including respectful relationships, positive behaviour for learning and wellbeing.
<p>Our approach to online safety education addresses specific and emerging online risks.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students about existing, new and emerging online risks as one of the four key ingredients in online safety education.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support students by teaching explicitly about contemporary online risks, such as cyberbullying, image-based abuse (including sexual extortion and involving AI deepfakes), and exposure to age-inappropriate and/or distressing material. • Encourage teachers to undertake professional learning to keep up to date with online safety risks. eSafety's Professional Learning for teachers covering these topics.
<p>Our approach to online safety education addresses effective help-seeking.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students about effective help-seeking as one of the four key ingredients in online safety education. • Develop a Foundation to Year 10 school-based learning continuum for introducing and consolidating help-seeking for a range of situations, both academic and personal. • Teach students to recognise warning signs when a friend is distressed about something that happened online, how to listen to their concerns, and how to identify and tell an adult who can help. • Teach all students where to find reliable help online. • Discuss how to report harmful content to the platform or service it appears on, or to eSafety if that does not work. Look for the platform or service on The eSafety Guide and follow reporting instructions there. • Consider regular promotion of help-seeking services in school communications. The eSafety website includes a list of support services that can be filtered by audience, type of support, issue, audience, and state/ territory. • Consult school and/or sector policies and procedures to select the most appropriate specialist support services for your school context.

Supporting educators	What we currently do	Other actions we could take
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<p>Online safety education is supported by regular professional learning and updates about new and emerging online safety concerns.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include online safety in staff induction programs and make it a regular focus of whole-school professional learning. • Prioritise and invest in continuing professional learning for all school staff (including specialist, non-teaching and visiting staff), and more advanced training for school leaders, middle leaders, wellbeing staff and the action team. Consider a phased approach. • Encourage school staff to register for eSafety’s free professional learning webinars which cover the latest online safety research, case studies and teaching strategies. • Enlist a Trusted eSafety Provider to support staff professional learning. Use eSafety’s guidance on selecting providers (Educate Guide to engaging external online safety providers and Educate STEPS Framework for selecting online safety programs).
<p>Our school has processes in place to ensure that school staff engage with technologies appropriately and look after their digital wellbeing.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share eSafety’s Prepare – New technologies risk-assessment tool. • Share eSafety’s Educate - Tips for supporting staff wellbeing online. • Share eSafety’s Educate - Tips for staff using social media to communicate with parents/carers. • Raise awareness of sources of help seeking support for school staff including employee assistance schemes, union representatives, school wellbeing staff, and specialist support agencies. • Take seriously and respond promptly to staff concerns about cyber abuse. See eSafety’s advice on adult cyber abuse.
<p>Our school has processes in place to support staff knowledge, confidence and engagement in online safety education.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gauge staff knowledge, confidence and engagement in online safety education to help support the development of safe online environments and a culture of taking online safety seriously. • Conduct an annual Survey of school community attitudes to online safety that includes a staff component or build in online safety questions to the annual staff census. See Engage – Educators and school support staff survey and Engage – Educators and school support staff survey guide.

Evaluation and review	What we currently do	Other actions we could take
<p>Our programs and approaches are assessed for effectiveness and consider evolving online safety issues, risks and harms.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and evaluate school programs and online incident data to assess the effectiveness of online safety education efforts. Incorporate this feedback into future programs. Use this data to brief the school leadership/wellbeing or online safety teams, as appropriate. • Consider using the Educate - STEPS Framework for selecting online safety programs, adapted by eSafety with permission from Bullying. No Way! to help assess online safety programs. STEPS can also be used before beginning a program to help decide whether it is appropriate for your school. • Encourage educators to gather student feedback on program effectiveness. Doing so enables educators to gauge the program’s relevance and impact and provides a way for students to contribute to school improvement. • Review your online safety programs and approaches annually to account for new technology risks and specific incidents at your school, nationally and globally.
<p>There are processes within the school and with other schools to share effective practices.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the different forums that could be used to expand school staff knowledge and skills with technology generally and for online safety education specifically, for example sector workshops, symposiums and conferences. • Discuss online risks and issues you have identified with your student cohorts and explore eSafety resources and advice to help. • Consider enlisting the support of a Trusted eSafety Provider to provide mentoring and/or coaching to communities of practice.

Template - Education action plan

Reflecting on your responses to the table above, create an Education action plan for your school. Please note, this action plan is not intended to be exhaustive, and it should be developed in conjunction with school and/or education sector policies and procedures.

Action plan	Priority activities	Responsible staff	Review date
Outline what you hope to achieve in the coming year to improve your school's online safety capabilities.	List your planned activities for the coming year. Priority activities could include actions your school could take and relevant Toolkit resources and other eSafety resources.		
Approach			
In the classroom			
Supporting educators			
Evaluation and review			