

National online safety action plan for children and young people to be created – Kirsty Williams

The plan will provide a strategic overview of how the Welsh Government will work with partners to continue to improve online safety support in Wales. The plan will build on the extensive programme already underway in schools to support young people to stay safe online.

The latest figures from the National Survey of Wales show 95% of children aged 7 to 15 used the internet at home and the device most commonly used by these children was a tablet or similar (71%).

Over the last two and a half years, the Welsh Government has strengthened online safety practice in education with:

- 85% of all schools have taken up the 360 degree Safe Cymru tool, which allows schools to check their current online safety policies and provision against national standards and gives practical suggestions to improve and enhance online safety.
- Created the Online Safety Zone on Hwb, the digital learning platform for schools in Wales that can be accessed by teachers, parents and learners.
- Published the 'Online Safety Resource for Wales', with practical resources and lesson plans to support schools in their delivery of online safety in the classroom.
- Online safety training sessions have been delivered across all local authorities. Training approximately 2,300 educational professionals, these have provided new skills for teachers and governors in preparing them to deal with issues young people may encounter online.
- In September 2016, we published the Digital Competence Framework, the first element of the new curriculum to be introduced across Wales. This includes a Citizenship Strand that focuses on developing and applying critical thinking skills and strategies. It includes specific elements focused on online behaviour, cyberbullying together with health and well-being.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I am fully committed to keeping our children and young people safe online. It is our responsibility, as a society, to equip our young people with the skills to be able to think critically and navigate the digital world in a safe and responsible way.

"That is why we have a range of policies in place to help us achieve this, from providing training for teachers and governors to raise their awareness of the issues, teaching new skills to our pupils and providing resources to our schools and parents.

“While we are delivering an extensive programme of online safety activities, there is always scope for more. That is why I am commissioning a national online safety action plan for children and young people. This will provide a strategic overview of how we will continue to enhance online safety support in Wales.”