

AREA: Student Services & IT

TOPIC: Filtering & Monitoring Policy

Scope

This policy relates to all members of Herefordshire, Ludlow, and North Shropshire College community. This procedure sets out the filtering and monitoring that is in place to support the safety of all students, staff, visitors in relation to their online activity.

Safeguarding the college community from online harm is a strategic responsibility for the organisation. Where necessary, additional support mechanisms will be put in place to assist the review, identification and action needed to provide a robust response to potential online harm.

This policy facilitates the ethos 'everyone has the right to work and study in a safe online environment' it encompasses assessment that enables a safe and supportive learning and working setting.

1. Introduction

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, sexual predation, self-harm, suicide, (this list is not exhaustive) technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

Our effective approach to online safety empowers the college to protect and educate the college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' obliges colleges to "ensure appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place. Children and young people should not be able to access harmful or inappropriate material from the college's IT system".

However, the college is careful not to over block sites and accepts that over blocking does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children and young people can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding." It is important to recognise that no filtering systems can be 100% effective and need to be supported with good teaching and learning practice and effective supervision.

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are informed in part by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty and the college self-assessment in relation to online access and monitoring.

2. Aims and Objectives

Each College within the group will have its own unique demands and use of the internet. However, all colleges must ensure they appropriately safeguard staff, students and visitors through an effective online filtering and monitoring regime.

All colleges within HLNSC are able to demonstrate how their systems manage effective filtering and monitoring and are included in the completion of the annual safety check, including filtering and monitoring.

[Appendix A] The completion of these safety checks will allow the filtering and monitoring working group to construct a risk assessment that considers the risks that both students and staff or visitors may encounter online.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Governors

Governors have delegated the responsibility for monitoring the way in which online monitoring and filtering is implemented across HLNSC to the link Governor for safeguarding, the Principal and DSL. They will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Principal and DSL to account for its implementation. The Governing body will do all that they reasonably can to limit children and young people's exposure to risks online through the colleges IT system.

3.1 CMT

College Management Team are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding within the college and making checks on the appropriateness of online filtering and monitoring systems in use.

The Principal, DSL and CMT are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- The college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. Whilst considering the responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn.
- They consider the age range of their students, the number of students, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks.
- The filtering and monitoring working group conduct a risk assessment as required by the Prevent Duty.
- The college keeps a breast of statutory changes of government policy, and that the college meets all legal requirements for online monitoring and filtering.
- The college implements the relevant statutory arrangements for online monitoring and filtering.

3.3 OMT

Operational Management Team will ensure all HLNSC staff follow the college policy with regard to appropriate use of the internet and that they use the college reporting mechanisms to alert the DSL to any breaches in the filtering and monitoring system.

3.4 DSL

- Lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at HLNSC.
- To identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems across the college including link governor responsibilities.
- With the identified IT link person lead on the review of filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- Have oversight of the filtering systems to ensure harmful and inappropriate content is blocked without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- Lead on all monitoring strategies in place to ensure their effectiveness in meeting HLNSC's safeguarding needs.
- Ensure timely and effective training for all staff on filtering and monitoring.

4 IT Services

The Head of Estates and IT looks after the web filtering for HLNSC and will ensure that:

- The service is maintained and accessible for all college sites to use
- All relevant safeguards are being met
- HLNSC is taking necessary precautions to ensure the service provided is appropriate

Also, they will provide investigation of any web filtering related issues including:

- Access to websites containing inappropriate or potentially harmful material
- Access to websites containing educational or related material deemed appropriate for the colleges
- Provide web access reports on an annual basis working together with Smoothwall and the DSL to ensure that the UK Safer Internet Centre checklist is followed. Smoothwall web filtering service meets and exceeds the Ofsted guidelines. The solution is constantly updated via national feeds from the wider Internet community to ensure that as new websites are created they are categorised and sanctioned accordingly.

Above the web filtering aspect of the service, in partnership with Smoothwall they will also provide the following features:

- Application Control – this stops some applications running which utilise peer to peer (file-sharing) features
- Intrusion Prevention – this is aimed at stopping hackers from gaining access to your endpoints
- Website Certificate Inspection – this checks website to ensure any certificates are valid and up to date. This stops users accessing malicious websites or websites that are not properly maintained.

5. Education and Training

Students will be made aware of the importance of filtering systems through the student handbook, induction and the tutorial programme.

They will also be warned of the consequences of attempting to subvert the filtering system.

Staff users will be made aware of the filtering systems through:

- signing the IT acceptable user's policy
- induction training
- staff meetings, briefings, and CPD events

6. Associated Policies

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Online Safety Policy

Staff Code of Conduct