

**SAFEGUARDING**

NEXT  
GENERATION  
LEARNING

April 2010

Further Education and Skills

**Becta** leading  
next generation  
learning



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# Safeguarding

## in a digital world

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An overview for learning providers

Using technology safely is vital to further education staff and learners alike. There are four publications in the **Safeguarding in a digital world** series.

**1. Safeguarding in a digital world:**

An overview for learning providers

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**2. Safeguarding in a digital world:**

Guidance for curriculum managers, teachers and training staff

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**3. Safeguarding in a digital world:**

Guidance for technical staff

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**4. Safeguarding in a digital world:**

Guidance for learners



# Technology

## in everyday life

Technology is part of everyday life. Our learners use it not only as a tool within their learning, but also in their work and leisure time.

Learning providers have always had a duty of care for their learners at the heart of their policies and practice. Duty of care also includes safe use of technology.

It is important that learners learn and are empowered to be safe and responsible when they are using technologies, particularly Web 2.0 collaborative technologies such as social networking sites, which are becoming an essential aspect of productive and creative social learning.

### What are the risks to learners?

Information and communication technologies are key within education and training to support an individual's progress, but they can also be misused.

These risks are often characterised by the four 'Cs':

- **Content** – this is content that may be unsuitable or potentially illegal, such as offensive or pirated content
- **Contact** – this may be unwelcome or inappropriate contact, such as grooming or sexual contact
- **Conduct** – this could be as a recipient or as an active participant – giving out too much personal information or the bullying of another person
- **Commerce** – this could be 'phishing' or other methods of identity theft.



### WHAT'S INSIDE

This document explains the importance of e-safety in a digital world. It outlines some practical steps and advice for assessment and reducing risks for your staff and learners.

Find out more



[www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding)



## Protection in practice

### Who needs protection?

Your organisation may have learners from a wide range of ages with different levels of knowledge and different needs in their uses of technology.

In particular, under the Children Act 2004, anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a 'child'. You have the same responsibilities to learners when they are working online as you do when they are being taught face to face. Learners with special needs or vulnerable learners may also need particular care. A vulnerable adult is 'a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

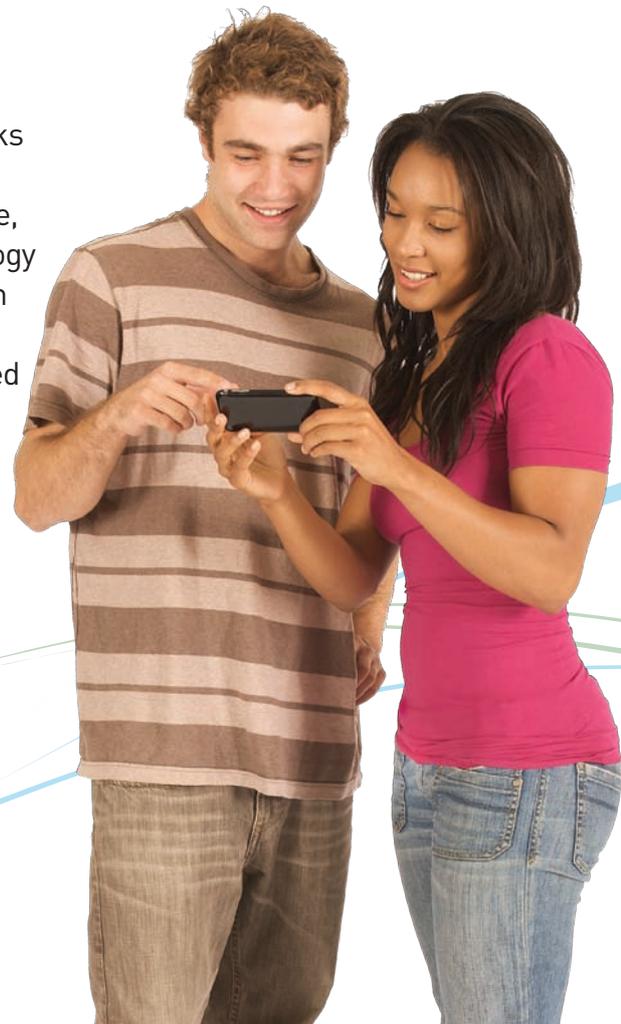
### But we already have blocking systems in place...

Organisations are finding that a blocking and banning approach, which merely limits exposure to risk, is not sustainable. You need to focus on a model of empowerment; equipping learners with the skills and knowledge they need to use technology safely and responsibly.

Becta's PIES model is an effective framework for approaching safeguarding strategy across learning provision. It offers a simple way of mitigating against risks through a combination of effective policies and practice, a robust and secure technology infrastructure, and education and training for learners and employees alike, underpinned by standards and inspection.



FIGURE 1:  
BECTA PIES MODEL



Learners should learn to manage risks, whenever and wherever they go online, and understand safe and responsible behaviour in using technology at their learning provider, in the workplace, in the home and beyond. The factors influencing digital safety include learner age, experience, their type of course and pedagogy, level of supervision and study environment.

Assessing and understanding risks as they apply to your learners, then taking mitigating action, and empowering learners to protect themselves are key to effective safeguarding in the digital environment.

It is important that you consider Becta's PIES framework and work across any partnerships when dealing with e-safety. Your partners may include employers, FE colleges, work-based learning providers, local safeguarding children boards, education improvement partnerships, higher education providers, local agencies such as social services and the police, as well as other appropriate bodies.

By working on joint policies and good practice across the partnership, you can help to promote:

- the development of appropriate skills relevant to learners' age or stage of development
- an approach that is consistent across the partnership so that learners are not subject to conflicting guidance
- robust reporting arrangements for raising safeguarding concerns and effective response and support in relation to any e-safety concerns or a serious incident.

**Factors influencing e-safety systems, policies and procedures:**

Learner  
Age  
Experience  
Pedagogy  
Level of supervision  
Study environment  
Topic of study  
Technology mix  
Risk evaluation and incident response  
etc ...

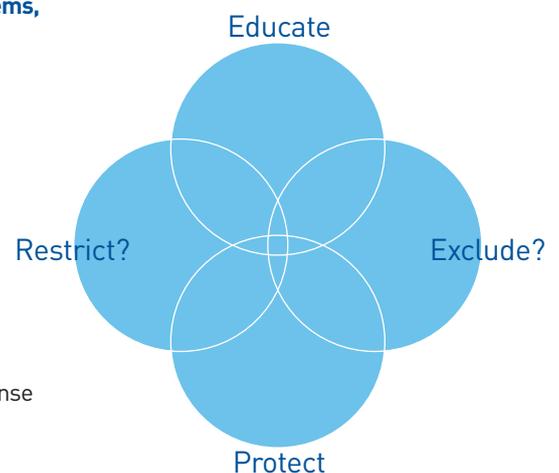


FIGURE 2: OPERATIONAL FOCUS MODEL

## Organisational response

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You should aim to develop clear policies, procedures and monitoring systems for e-safety, which are integrated within the teaching and learning, and management processes, but which also allow learners access to the very significant benefits of effective use of information learning technology.

You should be working to:

- develop informed learners who can identify and minimise risks, which may be amplified by technology
- engage learners about their rights and responsibilities when working online so that they understand what constitutes safe and responsible online behaviour
- educate learners so they are clear and confident about how to report their concerns.

The following are points for reflection when you consider enhancing your learners' e-safety:

### 1.

In relation to your policies and procedures consider integrating e-safety within:

- your acceptable use policy (AUP) (include employers and partners, and wherever learners learn)
- learner course induction
- teaching and learning processes including teaching learners how to stay safe and responsible online
- learner support arrangement, including anti-bullying and harassment policy
- staff development and training.

### 2.

In relation to your infrastructure and software systems consider the need for protecting against risk and monitoring access through the appropriate use of:

- firewall
- anti-virus
- filters
- tracking and monitoring systems.

### 3.

Develop policies and procedures, including effective training for learners and staff which effectively tackle ICT misuse and reinforce responsible use.

Overall, your e-safety systems, policies and procedures should:

- provide confident and clear messages about working safely online
- educate learners and empower them to make informed choices
- equip staff with the skills to confidently support learners to safe online working and to protect themselves
- make lines of responsibility for safeguarding online clear to all
- develop robust and resilient e-safety policies to include training, monitoring, reporting, supporting and review arrangements.



## CHECKLIST FOR ACTION

*Do you have effective strategies and policies for:*

risk assessment of learners working in a digital environment informed by their education and training requirements, experience and learning context?

engagement and involvement of tutors, assessors, employers and partners in developing effective policies and guidance which mitigate risks involved in working in a digital environment?

technologies which support the organisation's policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements?

communicating about safety within a digital environment with learners, tutors, assessors, employers and partners who are involved in the education and training process?

training, development and updating about working safely in a digital environment for learners, tutors, assessors, employers and partners who are involved in the education and training process?



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Information from Becta  
[www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding)

JISC research, advice and guidance  
[www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk)

Direct Gov's Click Clever, Click Safe campaign  
<http://clickcleverclicksafe.direct.gov.uk/index.html>

Get Safe Online - Clear up-to-date advice for individuals and small businesses  
[www.getsafeonline.org.uk](http://www.getsafeonline.org.uk)

Easy-to-read website on online security (based in Ireland)  
[www.makeitsecure.org](http://www.makeitsecure.org)

The UK Hotline for reporting illegal content  
[www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

Report abuse, via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre  
[www.ceop.police.uk/reportabuse](http://www.ceop.police.uk/reportabuse)

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