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The British School of Gran Canaria

Online Safety Policy

Policy Document



BSGC Online Safety Policy

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and protect all members of The British School of Gran Canaria's online community by providing a framework to promote and maintain a safe, effective and responsive online safety culture. The policy is applicable to all members of The British School of Gran Canaria. This includes staff, students and pupils, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors and community users who have access to and are users of The British School of Gran Canaria digital technology systems, both internally and externally.

This policy links with other policies and practices

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Safe Working Practice Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Curriculum Policies
- GDPR regulations

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1. Introduction

Online safety in schools is of paramount importance. As the online world evolves, so do both the online harms and risks facing our children and the relevant legislation, both statutory and non-statutory, which directs and guides how schools should meet their online safety requirements.

School staff and governors play a vital role in setting an example for the whole school and are central to implementing policy and process. It is imperative that a whole school, community approach to online safety is adopted and that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities and duties in relation to keeping children safe online. This will support a robust online safety ethos and ensure that our school is providing the best online safety provision we possibly can.

This policy is applicable to all members of The British School of Gran Canaria. This includes staff, students and pupils, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors and community users who have access to and are users of the The British School of Gran Canaria digital technology systems, both internally and externally within the home and community setting.

2. Rationale

The British School of Gran Canaria asserts that online safety is an essential element of safeguarding and duly acknowledges its statutory obligation to ensure that all learners and staff are protected from potential online harm.

The British School of Gran Canaria believes that the Internet and associated devices are an integral part of everyday life.

The British School of Gran Canaria affirms that all learners should be empowered to build resilience and to develop strategies to recognise and respond to online risks.

3. Policy Scope

Online safety is an omnipresent topic that requires recurrent regulatory review and places a stringent duty of care on us all. This policy supports BSGC in meeting statutory requirements as per the DfE guidance under *KCSiE* (2019), *Working together to safeguard children* (2018) and non-statutory guidance, *Teaching online safety in schools* (2019). Effective, timely and robust online safety is fundamental to protecting children and young people in education and it is a significant part of the safeguarding agenda.

High quality online safety provision requires constant vigilance and a readiness to act where abuse, exploitation or neglect is suspected. The landscape of threats and safeguards is constantly evolving, and educational establishments must update their priorities and processes to account for these changes. Education has a vital role to fulfil in protecting children and young people from forms of online abuse whilst demonstrating a concerted obligation to respond with haste and flexibility to concerns as they arise. Above all, all staff must listen to the voices of the vulnerable and act upon what is heard. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Defining online abuse: "*Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones*" (NSPCC, 2019).

Hidden harms – types of online abuse may include:

Cyberbullying

- Emotional abuse
- Grooming
- Sexting
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation

The types, patterns and different circumstances of significant harm and abuse should be considered within the categories identified for children in the Children Act 1989 / 2004. These are:

- Neglect
- Sexual
- Physical
- Emotional

Technology can facilitate a world of learning and development in addition to help yield a range of opportunities. However, the stark reality is that it can also present a window to potential and actual harm and abuse. It can elicit and support an array of illegal abusive behaviours including, but not limited to:

- harassment
- stalking
- threatening behaviour
- creating or sharing child sexual abuse material
- inciting a child to sexual activity
- sexual exploitation
- grooming
- sexual communication with a child
- causing a child to view images or watch videos of a sexual act.

This policy should be read alongside the relevant policies relating to safeguarding of children and in addition to the associated statutory legislation and guidance as stipulated at the beginning of section 3 and in section 13.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The following section outlines the online safety roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders across The British School of Gran Canaria online community.

4.1 Teachers and Staff

All members of school staff (teaching and non-teaching) have a responsibility to protect children online. This includes every member of staff who works at the school; head, teachers, substitute teachers, work-experience staff, office staff, caretakers, cleaners, etc., whether during school hours, after-school activities, Saturdays, or summer school. All teachers and staff must always act in accordance with their own professional boundaries, upholding professional behaviour and conduct at all times.

All school staff need to:

- Always act in the best interests of the child.
- Know how to recognise, respond and report signs of online abuse and harm.
- Be aware of and adhere to all policies in school which support online safety and safeguarding.
- Know the process for making referrals and reporting concerns.
- Model good practice when using technology.
- Receive appropriate child protection training.
- Support in the ownership and responsibility for the security of systems and the data accessed.
- Be responsible for their own continuing professional development in online safety.
- Contribute to policy development and review.

4.2 Governors and Senior Leadership Team

A governor's role for online safety includes, but is not limited to:

- Upholding online safety as a safeguarding issue that is embedded across the whole school culture.
- Ensuring that children are provided with a safe environment in which to learn and develop.
- Ensuring that the school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place.
- Ensuring the school has effective policies and training in place.
- Carrying out risk assessments on effectiveness of filtering systems.
- Auditing and evaluating online safety practice.
- Ensuring there are robust reporting channels.

4.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL)

With respect to online safety, it is the responsibility of the DSL to:

- Ensure children and young people are being appropriately taught about and know how to use the internet responsibly.
- Ensure teachers and parents are aware of measures to keep children safe online through relevant training provision.
- Take responsibility for all safeguarding matters, including online safety.
- Collaborate with the senior leadership team, the online safety lead and computing lead.
- Facilitate effective record keeping and the reporting and monitoring of all online safety concerns.
- Promote online safety and the adoption of a whole school approach.
- Maintain own training and learning needs, ensuring they are up to date with all matters relating to online safety.

4.4 Children and Young People

With respect to online safety in our school, children need to:

- Know who the DSL is.
- Engage in age appropriate online safety education opportunities.
- Contribute to policy development and review.

- Read and adhere to online safety policies.
- Respect the feelings of others, both off and online.
- Take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe online.
- Know where and how to find help for any online incidents or concerns.
- Know how, when and where to report concerns and when to seek help from a trusted adult.

4.5 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers need to understand the risks that children face online to protect them from online dangers. Parents need to:

- Read and adhere to all relevant policies.
- Be responsible when taking photos/using technology at school events.
- Know who the school DSL is.
- Know how to report online issues.
- Support online safety approaches and education provision.
- Be a role model for safe and appropriate behaviour.
- Identify changes in children's behaviour that could indicate they are at risk of online harm or abuse.

5. Education and Training

A commitment to ensuring the provision of an integrated and highly robust safeguarding service for all ages is essential. Effective online safety provision and promotion of the welfare of children and young people relies upon constructive relationships that are conducive to robust multi-agency partnership working. This can only be effective when all staff are knowledgeable, confident and equipped with the skills to deal with processes and procedures when concerns arise relating to online abuse or harm.

Online safety has a high emphasis on a competent well-established workforce, up-to-date policies and procedures, robust governance arrangements and collaborative practices. Types of online risk usually fall under one of three categories:

- **Contact:** Contact from someone online who may wish to bully or abuse the child. This could also include online grooming, online harassment or activities of a commercial nature, including tracking and harvesting personal information.
- **Content:** Inappropriate material available to children online including: adverts, spam, sponsorship, personal info, violent or hateful content, pornographic or unwelcome sexual content, biased materials, racist materials, and misleading, polarizing or blatantly false information or advice.
- **Conduct:** The child may be the perpetrator of activities including: illegal downloading, hacking, gambling, financial scams, bullying or harassing another child. They might create and upload inappropriate material or provide misleading, polarizing or blatantly false information or advice.

5.1 Learners

The British School of Gran Canaria will promote safe and responsible Internet use:

- Teach safe and responsible use of and access to the Internet.

- Include online safety in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Information Computer Technology studies.
- Reinforce online safety messages as a continuum.

The British School of Gran Canaria will support learner's understanding based on age and ability:

- Prominently display acceptable use posters around the school.
- Inform all students of monitoring and filtering measures the school has in place.
- Implement peer education strategies.
- Provide continuous training and education as part of learner transitions across key stages.
- Use alternative, complementary support where needed.
- Seek and listen to the students' voice.

5.2 Vulnerable Learners

Vulnerable children who need our help the most not only miss opportunities to flourish online but often experience the very worst of the online world. Some of these children live in families with domestic abuse, parental substance abuse and mental health problems.

The British School of Gran Canaria recognises that some learners are more vulnerable due to a range of factors, with the most vulnerable identified by the school's Safeguarding Team for inclusion on the Learning Support Register.

The British School of Gran Canaria will ensure the effective and safe provision of tailored online safety education. The British School of Gran Canaria will obtain input and advice from specialist staff as deemed necessary.

5.3 Staff

The British School of Gran Canaria will:

- Ensure provision of robust policies and practices as part of induction and ongoing training provision.
- Provide up to date online safety training at least annually or in line with legislative and statutory changes and/or online safety incidents arising.
- Ensure training includes how to recognize risks and respond to concerns.
- Explain and document the monitoring and filtering processes.
- Make staff aware that their online conduct outside of work can have an impact upon their professional role and responsibilities.
- Advise of appropriate resources.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of procedures to follow in recognising, responding and reporting online safety concerns.

5.4 Parents and Carers

The British School of Gran Canaria will:

- Recognise and cultivate the essential role parents and carers have in fostering healthy online safety practices in children and young people.
- Ensure provision of resources, support and advice.
- Ensure provision and adherence to online safety policies and other policies of relevance.
- Explain how and when to raise concerns.
- Provide all relevant contact data (for example, the DSL).

6. Cultivating a safe environment

“All staff should be aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.” (DfE, 2019).

Children should be educated in an age-appropriate way regarding:

- How to evaluate what they see online
- How to recognise techniques for persuasion
- Their online behaviour
- How to identify online risks
- How and when to seek support

6.1 Evaluate: How to evaluate what they see online

This segment cultivates critical thinking and enables students to make judgements about what they see online, not automatically assume that what they see is true, valid or acceptable.

The British School of Gran Canaria will help students to consider questions including:

- Is this website/URL/email fake? How can I tell?
- What does this cookie do and what information am I sharing?
- Is this person who they say they are?
- Why does someone want me to see this?
- Why does someone want me to send this?
- Why would someone want me to believe this?

6.2 Recognise: How to recognise techniques used for persuasion

This segment enables students to recognise the techniques that are often used to persuade or manipulate others. A strong grasp of knowledge across many areas makes people less vulnerable to these techniques and better equipped to recognise and respond appropriately to strongly biased intent or malicious activity.

The British School of Gran Canaria will help students to recognise:

- Online content which tries to make people believe something false is true and/or mislead (misinformation and disinformation)
- Techniques that companies use to persuade people to buy something
- Strategies that gaming and social media companies adopt to keep users online longer (persuasive/sticky design)
- Criminal activities such as grooming

6.3 Online Behaviour

This segment enables students to understand what acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour looks like. The British School of Gran Canaria will teach students that the same standard of behaviour and honesty applies online and offline, including the importance of respect for others. The British School of Gran Canaria will also teach students to recognise unacceptable behaviour in others.

The British School of Gran Canaria will help students to recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by:

- Looking at why people behave differently online. For example, how anonymity (you do not know me) and invisibility (you cannot see me) affect what people do.
- Looking at how online emotions can be intensified, resulting in mob mentality.
- Teaching techniques (relevant on and offline) to defuse or calm arguments (for example, a disagreement with friends) and disengage from unwanted contact or content online; and
- Considering unacceptable online behaviours often passed off as so-called social norms or just banter. For example, negative language that can be used, and in some cases is often expected, as part of online gaming and the acceptance of misogynistic, homophobic and racist language that would never be tolerated offline.

6.4 Identify: How to identify online risks

This segment enables students to identify possible online risks and make informed decisions about how to act. This is not about providing a list of what not to do online. The focus is rather on helping students to assess a situation, think through the consequences of acting in different ways and decide on the best course of action.

The British School of Gran Canaria will help students to identify and manage risk by:

- Discussing the ways in which someone may put themselves at risk online
- Discussing risks posed by another person's online behaviour
- Discussing when risk taking can be positive and negative
- Discussing "online reputation" and the positive and negative aspects of an online digital footprint. This could include longer-term considerations; e.g., how past online behaviours could harm their future when applying to a university or for a job.
- Discussing the risks vs the benefits of sharing information online and how to make a judgement about when and how to share and who to share with
- Asking questions such as what might happen if I post something online? Who will see it? Who might they send it to?

6.5 How and when to seek support

This segment enables students to understand safe ways to seek support if they are concerned or upset by something they have seen online.

The British School of Gran Canaria will help students by:

- Helping them to identify trusted adults
- Looking at the different ways to access support from the school, police, and other Spanish organisations and services. This links to wider school policies and processes around reporting of safeguarding and child protection incidents and concerns to school staff (see Keeping Children Safe in Education).
- Showing that most platforms and apps have features for reporting inappropriate contact or content

7. Responding to Online Safety Concerns

The safety of the child and young person is of paramount importance. Immediate action may be required to protect other children and young people. Any concern that children and young people may be at risk of harm or abuse must immediately be reported. Investigations themselves and their participants must also be protected.

Online safety is recognised as part of the education settings safeguarding responsibilities – the DSL should take lead responsibility for online safety concerns, which should be recorded and actioned. Children and young people will be enabled (at a level appropriate to their age and ability) to share online concerns. The child protection policy for The British School of Gran Canaria includes procedures to follow regarding online safety concerns.

Adults Must Remember:

- Child welfare is of principal concern – the best interests of children take precedence.
- If there is any immediate danger, contact the police on 112.
- Refer to local agencies as per the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures or contact the National Online Safety organisation for advice.
- Always adhere to local safeguarding procedures and report to the DSL and Head.

8. Responding to Complaints

A complaint or allegation might arise from:

- A child or young person
- An adult
- A parent/carer
- A member of the public (including a friend or relative)
- A colleague

An allegation investigation might involve up to three components:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Enquiries and assessment by children's social care relating to whether a child, young person or adult at risk needs protection or services
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action with respect to the individual (including suspension)

Staff members shall inform their line managers if they are being investigated in relation to children, young people or adults at risk with respect to protection concerns outside of work. They shall also report if their own children, stepchildren, or children they live with are subjected to child protection matters or an adult related to them or living with them is subjected to adult protection matters. The line manager shall report these incidents to the DSL and Head.

Refer to other key relevant policies for processes to follow at The British School of Gran Canaria:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Safe Working Practice Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Policy

9. Monitoring and Compliance

As part of the Online Safety Policy, we carry out regular monitoring of both our systems and out implementation of the policy using the table below to report any issues

Monitoring Requirements	For example: Analysing incident logs Checking planning for online safety lessons Student, pupils, parents and carers questionnaires Evaluations
Monitoring Method	
Monitoring Prepared by	
Monitoring Presented to	
Frequency of Reporting	

10. Consultation and Approval Process

The DSL and Head have developed this policy in consultation with senior staff and other staff directly involved with online safety. It is approved by the school's Governors.

11. Dissemination and Communication Process

This policy is available on the school website, publicised through an induction and training updates and policy update briefings for staff, and distributed to the Governors Board by the Head. Online safety rules are on display in key areas around the school and the online safety policy is shared with all parents via the schools website.

12. Development of the Policy

The Online Safety Policy is reviewed annually, or more frequently in the light of any incidents or investigations, legislative changes or developments in best practices to ensure its continuing relevance and effectiveness.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 - References:

This Policy has been edited and contextualised to meet the needs of BSGC, based on the work of Christina Leath of the National Online Safety Team.

- Department for Education (DfE) (2021) Keeping Children Safe in Education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges. London: DfE.
- Department for Education (DfE) (2019b) Teaching online safety in school: guidance supporting schools to teach their pupils how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subjects. London: DfE.
- Department for Education (DfE) (2018) Working together to safeguard children. London: DfE
- Department for Education (2014) Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff. London: DfE.
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Communications Act 2003
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Education Act 2011
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019