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Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair – Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Sent by email only

27 May 2025

Dear Chair,

Follow-up matters from the Public Hearing on 16th May 2025

Thank you for your letter of 16th May asking for further details following our public hearing last week. Please see the below answers to your questions and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Under the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) statutory guidance, schools, as corporate parents, are responsible for keeping children safe online, and technical monitoring is essential for achieving this. Various safeguarding measures are in place, including software designed to mitigate harm in digital environments. These systems aim to support teachers in managing online risks and promote safer digital experiences for students.

Key monitoring responsibilities include:

1. The use of filtering and monitoring systems in schools to reduce children's exposure to harmful online content and supports early identification of potentially concerning digital behaviour.
2. Online safety incidents are monitored, recorded, and followed up appropriately, with safeguarding leads and, where required, external agencies involved to ensure a coordinated response.
3. Regular safeguarding audits and self-evaluations provide schools with the opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of their online safety measures and make necessary updates to policies and practices.
4. Jersey School Review Framework will consider how well Jersey schools meet their duties to safeguard children as a part of their work to evaluate whether safeguarding practices in a school are effective (or not).
5. Schools deliver online safety within their Computing and PSHE. Depending on the area of focus schools teach Online Safety as discrete lessons or embedded within the Computing lesson. Whenever pupils are using online resources key online safety messages that have been taught are reinforced across the curriculum.
6. The majority of primary schools have adopted Education for a Connected World - A Framework to equip children and Young People for digital life from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)
7. It focuses specifically on eight different aspects of online education:

- Self-image and Identity
- Online relationships
- Online reputation
- Online bullying
- Managing online information
- Health, wellbeing and lifestyle
- Privacy and security
- Copyright and ownership

Schools use the framework to outline the aspects relating to Online Safety within their Computing Progression Framework for each Year Group.

8. Role of the Online Safety Lead in a school

The responsibility of online safety is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within schools, they may appoint a separate Online Safety Lead.

Key responsibilities include managing reports of online safety issues, contributing to policy development, and promoting online safety awareness across the school community.

The role also involves coordinating with curriculum leaders to embed online safety into teaching, ensuring staff are trained in incident response procedures, and providing or sourcing training for staff, parents, and pupils. The Online Safety Lead works collaboratively with technical and pastoral teams and must undertake regular, up-to-date training to stay informed about digital risks related to content, contact, conduct, and commerce, as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Where schools allow a Bring-Your-Own-Device policy we understand that, where they connect to the Wi-Fi network they will be subjected to the Lightspeed Filtering system, however, can you confirm if they have to have other specific safeguarding software installed on the device as well?

No other specific software on personally owned devices is required.

What additional safeguards are put in place through schools' Bring-Your-Own-Device policies?

The majority of schools do not permit pupils to bring their own devices (BYOD). In the limited number of cases where BYOD is allowed, usage is governed by the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) to ensure consistency and appropriate safeguards.

In JCG, as an example, personal devices may only be used as learning tools and must be managed in line with the same protocols applied to school-issued devices. This ensures robust safeguarding measures are maintained during educational use.

These practices are being further reinforced in the revised Online Safety Policy, which is currently under review and aims to strengthen the framework for safe and responsible digital engagement in schools.

How many schools permit a Bring-Your-Own-Device system?

Primary schools do not encourage, or permit bring your own devices in their schools. A number of secondary schools have implemented BYOD policies, tailored to suit their individual learning environments. Currently, five secondary schools permit BYOD in some form.

Approaches vary across schools. For example, Jersey College for Girls allows BYOD under a structured agreement with parents and students, requiring devices to be managed and meet defined security and safeguarding standards. In contrast, Grainville School permits BYOD more broadly for break and lunchtimes only, including the use of mobile phones. These school-specific models reflect a flexible approach to digital learning, with safeguarding and security considerations embedded according to the context and needs of each school community.

In May 2022 the Government of Jersey published 'Children and the Digital World: final report' – can you tell us about any learnings from that report and confirm what subsequent work has been undertaken by subsequent Governments to follow up on it?

Several steps and learnings have been identified from the Children and the Digital World report, aiming to enhance children's online safety and digital well-being.

In 2023 a new Digital Education Strategy was launched focusing on developing digital skills for young people and teachers. This strategy aims to establish a common set of digital and non-digital citizenship skills for age-appropriate delivery from early years through to post-16 education.

An online safety review of CYPES safety and monitoring systems has been undertaken. As a result, a project has been tasked to enhance those measures across Jersey Children Care Homes and within Schools.

A review of online safety policy and digital harm is being undertaken as part of the Digital Education Strategy and to include new and emerging technologies and risks. The digital harm guidance includes information and guidance for families on topics such as screen time, the impact of device use on sleep, recognising signs of addiction and anxiety linked to device use, and identifying cyberbullying.

Can you tell us some more about the CYPES Digital Strategy and how this supports online safety?

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all pupils are digitally confident, safe, and prepared for life and work in an increasingly digital world.

Digital education plays a critical role in preparing children and young people for the future. It supports equity, innovation, and the development of essential life skills. However, effective digital education also requires robust safeguards, infrastructure, and support to protect students from digital harm.

The Digital Education Strategy sets six main visions and objectives these are:

- Develop a common set of age-appropriate digital and non-digital citizenship skills from early years through to post-16 education, supporting both safe and responsible digital engagement.
- Establish a consistent baseline for digital skills and understanding across the education workforce, enabling educators to embed digital tools and online safety effectively into their practice.
- Integrate improved online safety into the curriculum and school culture, backed by technical safeguards, policies, and staff training aligned with best practice and emerging threats.
- Address the digital divide through infrastructure, connectivity, and access to up-to-date devices, ensuring all students can fully participate in digital learning opportunities.

- Provide parents, carers, and family members with clear, age-appropriate guidance and community learning opportunities to support children's digital development and protection at home.
- Involve children and young people in shaping digital education guidance and provision, recognising their rights under the UNCRC and their unique perspectives on digital life.

A framework is currently in development to support the protection of children from digital harm as part of the Digital Education Strategy. This framework will provide clear and consistent guidance for teachers, parents, and pupils, ensuring a coordinated and informed approach to safeguarding in digital environments.

Given the cross-cutting nature of online harm, consideration should be given to the development of a wider, cross-government strategy. Such a strategy would align education, the digital education strategy, safeguarding, digital policy, and public health efforts, ensuring a unified response to the growing and evolving risks children face online.

Minister, what data do schools in Jersey collect on online harms affecting students and how is this information utilised?

Schools have monitoring systems in place that flag key terms or keystroke logging. Should a flag be raised by the system the Designated Safeguarding Lead is automatically alerted. The flagged content is then reviewed and addressed in line with the CYPES Safeguarding and Online Safety Policies, as well as the school's behaviour policies and AUPs.

Where incidents of online harm do occur in schools, do you believe that there are protections or procedures in place for any eventuality?

Schools review incidents as they occur and risk assess the risk to determine the best outcome or intervention for a pupil, this may include informing parents or alerting relevant agencies. The response is proportionate to risk identified. Records of incidents are maintained securely within the school's system, ensuring that relevant information is documented appropriately for each case.

How should / how can children and young people be involved in shaping digital policies that affect them?

Involving children and young people in shaping digital policies that affect them is a practical necessity. They are among the most active users of digital technologies and their voices should not be overlooked in giving practical advice in how to keep them safe online.

As part of the wider commitment to implementing the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), steps are being taken to ensure young people are included in conversations around digital safety, access, and education in PSHE.

Can you provide practical examples of this?

Two updated versions of Online Harms Guidance are currently in development. The first is a resource for educators (formerly titled [Online Learning Best Practice Guidelines for Teachers](#)), and the second is a guidance document for parents and carers (previously [Keeping Your Child Safe Online](#)).

Both documents will reflect the voices and lived experiences of children and young people, ensuring their perspectives are central to the development of safe, supportive online

environments. In addition to highlighting key risks, the guidance will offer practical tools and advice to support children, parents, and educators in navigating the digital world more safely and confidently.

A dedicated Participation and Engagement unit responsible for the Participation Standards and sustainable engagement strategy of the voice of children and young people in the Children, Young People and Families Plan via the Children's Outcomes Executive Committee and the School Council Network.

When involving children and young people in decision making, it is advised to review the Participation Standards and toolkits which are publicly available to any organisation who wants to consult with children and young people gov.je/yoursay.

School Council Network

The School Council Network, which co-produced the Children, Young People and Family youth friendly plan sees around 200 children engaging and participating on the Plans big picture outcomes four times a year with support from the Participation and Engagement unit in CYPES. One of the Big Picture Outcomes focuses on all children and young people being "safe and loved".

At the next School Council Network meeting, of the new school term in November, the Building a Safer Community team will be attending to run a workshop with students and the Jersey Office of the Information Commissioner will run a workshop attending to co-produce a new set of standards around online safety.

More information can be found here about [The School Council Network](#)

More information and guidelines about including children and young people in decision making can be found here: [Participation Standards for children and young people](#).

Children, Young People Survey findings

The findings from the Children, Young People Survey have been shared with schools, parents and the media and a child-friendly version is being created, which will be shared with the School Council Network, with a focus on e-safety, for discussion at the next meeting in November.

Safer Internet Day

Jersey schools participate in Safer Internet Day, where children and young people co-create messaging and materials that speak to digital challenges from their own perspectives. These activities often inform wider public awareness campaigns.

Jersey Children's Day

With an audience of almost 10,000 children, young people and families attending Jersey Children's Day event in Howard Davis Park on 13 July, around 60 charities, community groups and businesses will be attending offering engaging activities to promote their services including the Office of the Information Commissioner about keeping safe online.

Do you see this as a responsibility for another Minister to ensure that views of young people are collected?

As Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning it is my responsibility to ensure the views of young people are sought for policies implemented in schools. For wider government / societal policies this responsibility would rest elsewhere and / or collectively across more than one Minister.

Minister, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has provided specific guidance, in General Comment No. 25, about how states should implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the digital environment. Could you advise us whether the Education department has taken any particular consideration of the recommendations in General Comment No. 25?

The Office of the Jersey Children's Commission submission to the Panel is helpful in this regard. My Officers work closely with the Children's Commissioner to ensure that children's rights are also respected in the digital world whenever possible.

General Comment 25 sets out broad principles for the realisation of children's rights in a digital environment, requiring a range of legislative, administrative and other measures. The UN Committee recommended that in developing these measures, State Parties should prioritise the 4 guiding principles of the UNCRC: non-discrimination, best interests of the child; right to life survival and development and respect for children's views.

The UN Committee is also clear that policies relating to the digital environment cannot be viewed in isolation; they should form part of the overall realisation of children's rights.

The 2022 project Children and the Digital World¹ sought to provide an insight into how children's lives were impacted as a result of their changing use of technology during the pandemic. Its findings reflected the significance of the digital world in all elements of children and young people's lives and reinforced that this was not going to change as the impact of the pandemic declined. Considering children's Article 12 rights, consultation took place with children and those who speak on their behalf (teachers, youth workers, child health professionals and the Children's Commissioner for Jersey) as part of the project. The report informed the development of the CYPES Digital Education Strategy² referenced in an earlier question.

The objectives of the Digital Education Strategy include improving digital inclusion through infrastructure, connectivity, and access to up-to-date devices and creation of a common digital curriculum which all schools can adapt and develop to suit their digital needs. This will ensure all students fully participate in digital learning opportunities in accordance with their Article 2 (non-discrimination) and article 3 (best interests) rights.

Aligning with the Digital Education Strategy, the department continues to ensure that children's views are considered, and online safety will be one of the themes of the November School Council Network meeting.

In the 2025 CYPES Business Plan it states that the department has taken over the responsibility for the 'Rights Respecting Schools Award programme'. Can you describe if that programme explores elements relating to online safety?

Outcome 4 of the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) programme states that children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.

Outcome 5 of the RRSA states that children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles so often children will tell the independent assessors about not spending too much time online and how too much time online can negatively impact emotional wellbeing.

¹ [Children and the Digital World, www.gov.je](https://www.gov.je/ChildrenandtheDigitalWorld)

² [Digital Education Strategy report.pdf](#)

In our silver accredited RRSA schools many children and young people share with the independent accreditors that they feel safe at school and can describe how their actions and those of others contribute to this. They can show what they would do / who they would speak to if, for any reason, they did not feel safe.

In our Gold RRSA schools nearly all children and young people share that they feel safe at school and can describe how becoming rights respecting contributes to this. The school can show that bullying, violent and discriminatory behaviour is rare (or steadily declining). Most children and young people have trust in the school systems that enable them to report any sense of not feeling safe both within and beyond school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Ward', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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