

SECURUS

Case Study

E-safety monitoring protects Pembrokeshire pupils

With rising concerns over e-safety, Pembrokeshire County Council has introduced new measures to protect its pupils and encourage them to use today's technology safely. One highly effective solution has been for schools in the area to use computer monitoring as a way of encouraging students to act more responsibly.



The Challenge

There are 8,500 secondary school pupils in Pembrokeshire. Like most young people, they are enthusiastic about the latest mobile phones, games consoles, instant messaging and social networking sites. When used responsibly such technologies create great learning opportunities but their use also raises significant e-safety concerns, especially over online safety and cyberbullying.

In Pembrokeshire, teachers were finding it increasingly difficult to know exactly what their pupils were doing in email, on the internet and in applications like Word. If they suspected that a student was acting in an unsafe or inappropriate way, teachers were unable to collect hard evidence to tackle the situation. For staff to be able to safeguard their pupils effectively, they needed to know when a young person might be putting themselves or others at risk.

Recognising the problem, Pembrokeshire County Council pioneered a multi-agency approach to improve e-safety. Joining forces with Dyfed Powys Police, Pembrokeshire Children's Services and the NHS, they formed an Internet Safety Working Group. A key priority was to work closely with local schools to ensure the safety of young people and minimise the risks involved in using technology.

The Solution

The Council decided to install Securus, an e-safety software solution, across a number of local schools as part of a pilot project. By monitoring the computers in each school, Securus identified any inappropriate language or images used by pupils that might give staff cause for concern. It also recorded what was displayed on-screen at the time, the user involved and when the event took place.

The pilot project successfully demonstrated that computer monitoring was an effective way to enhance e-safety. Alona Jones, ICT advisor at Pembrokeshire County Council explains: "The results that were achieved by using Securus were very encouraging. We noticed a marked improvement in student behaviour in terms of online and offline activity, and were alerted to any incidents."

Benefits for Pembrokeshire

- Helps meet Every Child Matters requirements
- Helps adopt Becta best practice
- Helps achieve recognition for ICT excellence
- Raises e-safety standards and educational outcomes
- Transforms classroom behaviour
- Reduces cyberbullying
- Increases staff and pupil awareness of e-safety issues
- Helps identify and support vulnerable children



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Alona Jones, ICT advisor,
Pembrokeshire County Council

“Once the students are aware that their activity is being monitored, their behaviour improves greatly.”

Richard Chapman, Deputy Head
Pembroke School



As a result of the pilot, Securus was installed in all eight secondary schools in the area, including Pembroke School which has 1,600 pupils and around 500 computers. Before the monitoring software was implemented, deputy head Richard Chapman described the situation as: “Our knowledge of online student activity was limited, while our monitoring of offline activity was non-existent. As we were only aware of when students were on websites that were banned, we needed a solution to help us gain a wider view of our students’ activity.”

With Securus in place, Richard has adopted a daily routine to managing pupil e-safety: “Every morning I spend 10 minutes looking through the e-safety breaches that may have occurred the previous day. If there have been any incidents of misuse, the user’s computer login is immediately blocked. To reactivate access the offending student has to explain themselves! In most instances, once the students are aware that their activity is being monitored, their behaviour improves greatly.”

The Benefits

For Pembrokeshire County Council, the implementation of Securus has not only helped them to identify incidents that raise cause for concern but it has also helped educate their pupils about the importance of e-safety. Students are becoming more accountable for their actions and learning to judge for themselves whether they are likely to put themselves or others at risk. In addition, classroom behaviour has been transformed as students know that any off-task computer activity will be recorded. At the same time, teachers feel more confident about using ICT as a part of their lessons.

Alona Jones concludes: “At Pembrokeshire County Council our approach is not doom and gloom about the dangers of the internet. We want to promote the positive side of technology and encourage students to embrace the benefits. The implementation of Securus forms a key part of our plan to tackle the dangers of online activity.”

Supporting schools in Pembrokeshire

Securus alerts school staff every time pupils use inappropriate language; view explicit images; access unsuitable internet sites; or use computers for personal or unacceptable use during lessons.

School staff are also notified of other potentially harmful situations such as signs of depression or suicide; predator grooming; sexual, racial or religious harassment; drugs and pornography.



See what Securus can offer the schools in your area

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Find out more at www.securus-software.com/la