Securus Software Limited

Let's Talk Digital **Safeguarding** in Schools

An Innovative White Paper

3 Education Technology Questions for Keeping Pupils Digitally Safe

Securus

Safeguard Monitor Protect

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Introduction

Software innovation is evolving within Education Technology with rapid advancements. In this white paper we will provide our input into three important safeguarding questions and outline how Securus Software continues to harness cutting-edge monitoring software to support schools and education establishments safeguard pupils from digital harms – a key requirement to meet Government requirements for Keeping Children Safe in Education, filtering & monitoring standards, the Prevent duty & Ofsted inspections.

Why is safeguarding so important?

Education in the 21st century has been revolutionised by technology, it is now a critical component of how the curriculum is delivered and central to the lives of learners globally. **Has its widespread use been beneficial to education, educators and learners?**

The overwhelming answer must be “yes!” EdTech can offer more engaging and inclusive learning opportunities, it’s more fun! There are increased opportunities for pupils to learn anywhere and at any time. Learners can develop new skills and knowledge they wouldn't have access to otherwise. EdTech can even help improve mental and physical health with games, assessments, surveys, and other tools.

However, alongside the clear benefits of EdTech is the darker and more threatening use of technology that we see in everyday life, and which extends into the education sector. Children and young people now use technology not only to learn but also to run their lives and with this comes danger and risk of harm and education settings are at the forefront of this digital world.

The need for safeguarding software in schools and throughout education is paramount. New and evolving social platforms and applications contain digital traps into which learners can fall, dangers are faced every day and awareness and prevention is required, especially for children who are vulnerable or have a lack of understanding to the risk of harm they could face.

Safeguarding software represents the digital “eyes and ears” of the school pastoral and safeguarding teams. Concerns such as bullying, grooming, exploitation, racism, drugs and weapons and of course mental health with hidden abuse issues are made visible to the school and offer the chance for early intervention and allow schools to offer help and support to students. Safeguarding software provides that layer of protection whilst students are using EdTech, and as such is an essential tool for the DSL who has overall responsibility for safeguarding.

What are the biggest misconceptions?

One of the major misconceptions we face is the assumption that employing a filtering system meets all of the requirements for safeguarding software and we are therefore constantly discussing the difference between filtering and monitoring solutions.

As a specific safeguarding monitoring solution, Securus monitors in the background and detects incidents of concern, we do not just block websites as a filtering system does. This gives a true picture of any background issues a student could be facing, rather than just blocking sites only.

All schools need to have both a robust filtering solution and a robust monitoring solution in place, a key focus within the latest KCSiE guidance and the Ofsted inspection framework.

Other software labelled as ‘**safeguarding**’ act as recording systems, they are easy and good at this job, but they record details AFTER the event or incident has occurred, they are not safeguarding AGAINST or IN ADVANCE of the an incident. Monitoring is there as an early warning system to highlight potential (as well as actual) instances of a child at risk and the screenshots and detail produced by Securus act as hard evidence allowing school safeguarding staff to deal with the situation and help change future behaviours.

How will safeguarding evolve in the next 5 years?

As already stated, EdTech is a significant factor in the modern education landscape, it is here to stay and will become even more widespread. The delivery of the curriculum will also become increasingly dependent on EdTech and the emergence of 1 to 1 device to pupil ratios is on the increase.

Monitoring and safeguarding software solutions will need to keep pace with the EdTech being employed. This will be a key focus as there will be a greater need to protect children within this ever-changing landscape, both online and offline and with more intelligent technologies being promoted and new platforms geared towards the younger generation.

The emergence of AI and machine learning is already having a profound impact on the digital world, as is augmented or extended reality and this clearly includes the education sector globally. For Securus, we have to be quick on our feet to keep up with this fast pace of change, appreciating the positives that are evident but also understanding and responding to the new digital threats that we see emerging. Our development mapping continues into the future with advanced OCR technology, AI functionality, increasing integration with other EdTech platforms and an increased focus on behavioural analytics as we expand our ability to support safeguarding teams across education.

Securus can monitor ALL devices on the school network and our aim will be to continue to support new devices and platform technologies that appear over time.

Conclusion

In today's fast-changing tech world, innovative software is the key to transforming the digital safety landscape. Securus has laid out a clear plan and a continued focus on helping schools and education establishments monitor and protect children & young people from harms taking place on the school devices.

Website: www.securus-software.com

Call: +44 (0)330 124 1750

Email: enquiries@securus-software.com

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