PSP
Digital Transformation Experts

10 KCSIE QUESTIONS

SAFER SYSTEMS | STRONGER OVERSIGHT

COMPLY WITH KCSIE

FILTERING AND MONITORING



01 THE GUIDANCE

The latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) was published in September last year. One of the key changes was centred around the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, which was published a few months prior.

02 SAFEGUARDING ROLES

The new guidance replaced the KCSIE 2022, placing greater focus around the roles and responsibilities of education staff in relation to online safeguarding.

THE FILTERING & MONITORING STANDARDS

What do I need to know about filtering and monitoring?

As part of the requirement, the KCSIE signposted the Department for Education's filtering and monitoring standards, which sets out that your school or college should:

01

Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.

02

Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.

03

Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

04

Have effective monitoring standards in place that meet your safeguarding needs.

GOVERNORS, DSLS & SENIOR LEADERS

Clear roles. Effective oversight.

To further support schools and colleges with meeting the DfE filtering and monitoring standards, the updated KCSIE 2023 guidance highlighted particular roles and responsibilities for governors, DSLs and SLTs for keeping their staff and pupils safe online:

01

Your school should have "appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness," in blocking harmful and inappropriate content. (para 141)

02

You should ensure "over blocking" doesn't lead to "unreasonable" restrictions on teaching and learning. (para 134)

03

You must have a DSL (Designated Safeguarded Lead) who has an "understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems in place" (para 103)

04

"Governing Bodies and proprietors should ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training," so they understand the "expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring." (para 124)

05

Your child protection policy should include your approach to 'filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks.' This includes the use of school devices off campus. (para 138)

06

Your senior leadership team and relevant staff should have an "awareness and understanding of the provisions in place" and know how to escalate safeguarding concerns when identified. (Para 141)

PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP

What should I do next?

10 Questions to discuss at SLT.

Scott Slocombe, our Deputy CTO at PSP IT, leads our outsourced provision for Education. He is also the Chair of Governors for a large primary academy in Bourne and a member of the IT Management Board for a Lincolnshire Multi-Academy Trust.

He has shared ten questions your senior leadership team should have discussed after the publication of the KCSIE in 2023.

01 Do we have a clearly defined role for filtering and monitoring and provide assurance to the LGB or Trustee boards?

Scott: “One of the biggest requirements that came out of the DfE’s filtering and monitoring standards last year was the requirement to have a senior leader who has a clearly defined role in relation to filtering and monitoring; they should work closely with the IT team to ensure your filtering and monitoring systems meet your safeguarding needs and your policies and procedures are aligned and all staff are aware.
They should take responsibility for filtering and monitoring reports, safeguarding concerns and provide assurance to the board that the filtering and monitoring systems are fit for purpose.”

TEN QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT SLT

Annual review & safe access

02 Do we review our filtering and monitoring provision annually?

Scott: “Although best practise, it is now explicitly highlighted within the filtering and monitoring standard and KCSIE.
The review process should cover a wide range of criteria, such as the risk profile of your pupils, what your systems blocks (and why), outside safeguarding concerns, the policies you have in place and how you handle safeguarding concerns.”

03 Does our filtering and monitoring block harmful content, without impacting teaching and learning?

Scott: “Are you confident that your filtering and monitoring systems are protecting children, rather than impacting their learning?
The DfE says that SLTs, alongside IT staff and the DSL, should establish “appropriate levels” of filtering and monitoring. A key issue to address is that you are not affecting your admin teams performing their roles, and your students can still learn how to assess and manage risk independently.”

TEN QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT SLT

Block bypasses. Prove it works.

04 Are we blocking proxies and VPNs which help circumvent our filtering?

Scott: “There are ways to block common filtering bypass methods and services that hide IP addresses, such as VPNs and Proxies. When connecting to the school network via one of these, your pupil’s device usage can go unmonitored.
You must have technology in place that blocks access to your network via VPNs and proxies.”

05 How do we test and record the effectiveness of our filtering and monitoring?

Scott: “Setting up filtering and monitoring is one thing, but you must be able to prove you frequently test the effectiveness of your systems. During inspections fulfilled by OFSTED or ISI, they will want to see evidence and assurance that you have carried out these tests and recorded the results effectively.”

TEN QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT SLT

Policies, ownership & online risks

06 Has our safeguarding policy been updated to reflect: our device monitoring strategy, and the owner of the process?

Scott: “Who is responsible for ensuring your filtering and monitoring has been effectively applied to all devices on your network? This also includes any personal devices which staff and pupils use as part of your BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy.
Alongside your DSL and IT staff, the SLT must incorporate your online safety processes and the owner of your filtering and monitoring with your overall safeguarding policy. This ensures comprehensive protection of students from online risks and potential harm, as outlined in KCSIE 2023.”

07 Do we meet requirements for identifying the 4 Cs?

Scott: “KCSIE groups online risks into four areas: content, contact, conduct and commerce. These are also known as the ‘four Cs of online safety’.
By using the 4C’s as a framework, schools, colleges and DSLs can ensure they have the systems and processes in place to help their students stay safe online.”

TEN QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT SLT

Effective device monitoring

08 What is our strategy for effective device monitoring?

Scott: “KCSIE makes it abundantly clear that the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring of all devices is required for keeping staff and pupils safe online. The senior leader responsible for filtering and monitoring must ensure that this extends to the use of personal devices and visitors using your network.
Would you be able to see if children are typing in to google a question asking how they get help? Similar to a disclosure to a member of staff, which would lead to a safeguarding concern being raised?”

THE FOUR CS OF ONLINE SAFETY

CONTENT	CONTACT	CONDUCT	COMMERCE

TEN QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT SLT

Training & Prevent duty

09 Are our staff adequately trained on online safety? Do they understand their role in relation to online safety?

Scott: “The KCSIE guidance states that all staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety. As part of their training, they should understand their roles and responsibility in relation to filtering and monitoring.”

10 Does our filtering achieve our prevent duty?

Scott: “Although not new in the KCSIE 2023, it is an important question to ask and be able to provide assurance to the board. However you could argue this has been expanded under the monitoring requirement, which goes beyond filtering content and web browser searches, but in chat messages, documents, and possible pictures shared outside of the school’s filtering on-school platforms.”

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EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND CONTROLS



NEXT STEPS

Take the next step

PSP can help your school review and strengthen its filtering, monitoring and online safety arrangements, ensuring they meet KCSIE requirements and support a safer digital environment for all.

Our team will work with you to assess your current position, identify gaps, strengthen governance and controls, and provide practical, achievable next steps tailored to your school's needs.

Get in touch

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