Child Safeguarding and COVID-19

Webinar 2, 30th April 2020
Recap

In Webinar 1, we discussed the following:

• Child Safeguarding vs. Child Protection
• Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Mitigation Tool
• Challenges in Reporting
Today’s Webinar

• Child safeguarding risks associated with low-tech instruction mediums (SMS/WhatsApp/Phone) and high-tech instruction mediums (Zoom and Google Classroom)

• Kinds of risks associated with different groups of students

• Mitigation controls

• Key student-facing, parent-facing and staff-facing safeguarding considerations as schools plan for re-entry.
Instructional platforms used by GSF members

Low-tech Instructional Mediums used during COVID-19
- WhatsApp
- SMS/Text/Phone Call
- E-mail

High-tech Instructional Mediums used during COVID-19
- Zoom
- Google Classroom
Low-tech instructional mediums
SMS/Text/Phone call/E-mail
Main risk areas:

Risk #1: One-on-one contact (teacher – student)
Risk #2: Lack of supervision by parents/guardians
### Associated Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Students</th>
<th>Secondary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers using age inappropriate language on the phone</td>
<td>Teachers using inappropriate language on the phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of teacher grooming the child for sexual abuse (sharing verbal/visual sexual content)</td>
<td>Risk of teacher targeting and (and/or) ignoring specific students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk of teacher grooming the child for sexual abuse (sharing verbal/visual sexual content)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does Grooming mean?

In child sexual abuse, the grooming process is how a person in a position of power or trust gains the trust of a child in order to wear away personal boundaries and gain sexual access.

Stage 1: Create opportunities
Stage 2: Target a child
Stage 3: Introduce sexualized behaviors/act
Stage 4: Secrecy
WhatsApp
Main risk areas:

Risk #1: Privacy
Risk #2: Cyberbullying
Risk #3: Sharing inappropriate and secretive content
Risk #4: Fake news
## Associated Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Students</th>
<th>Secondary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of teacher taking screenshot/screen recording of interaction with students</td>
<td>Risk of teacher taking screenshot/screen recording of interaction with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student group chat links can be copied by group members and shared with anyone who can then click and join without any vetting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A rumor, mean comment or conflict situation can get intense very quickly and easily spill beyond the WhatsApp environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exchange of inappropriate content among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure of personal phone numbers to a larger group of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Controls to mitigate the risk:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Students</th>
<th>Secondary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students to be made aware of safe and unsafe situations</td>
<td>Students to be made aware of safe and unsafe situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents to be present during phone conversations with students</td>
<td>Students to be made aware of the reporting procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are informed to turn on the phone speaker during the call</td>
<td>Copy another teacher/child safeguarding point person when sending emails to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide explicit training to the teachers on using technology safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk no.</td>
<td>Who is at risk?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Keeping Children Safe*
Setting tough international Child Safeguarding Standards
Case Study (low-tech):

A secondary student reports that his/her teacher, during one-on-one phone check-ins, has been asking her how his/her personal routines have changed during shelter-in-place (hygiene, clothing choices, relationships etc.)

Is this a child safeguarding concern?

Why?
High-tech instructional mediums
Google Classroom

Google classroom is a platform to share files and assignments, and to communicate with students.
Main risk areas:

Risk #1: Teacher has access to personal e-mail addresses of the students

Risk #2: Allows teacher to share video links/files with an individual student
Associated Risks

Secondary students:

- Teachers have access to student email addresses
- Risk of teacher connecting with the students one-on-one via social media or other communication platforms using the email address
- Student trying to be-friend the teacher via social media
Zoom for Education

Zoom Classroom is a cloud-based virtual classroom
Main risk areas:

Risk #1: Entry of unauthorized person to the virtual classroom
Risk #2: Private chat/messaging
Risk #3: “Zoombombing”
## Associated Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Students</th>
<th>Secondary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of teacher taking screenshot of students without their consent</td>
<td>Risk of teacher taking screenshot of students without their consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsupervised private chat among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-on-one chat between the teacher and a student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students posting inappropriate contents in the room (pornographic images, racist comments)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Controls to mitigate the risk:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Students</th>
<th>Secondary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data privacy guidelines are developed and implemented</td>
<td>Students are provided with information on point people to raise concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be emailed on parent’s/guardian’s address.</td>
<td>Provide explicit training to teachers and staff on using technology safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid sharing link to virtual classroom on social media platforms / with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual classroom sessions to be recorded by default and saved in the school server</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child safeguarding point person to review the recording periodically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study (high-tech):

The physical education teacher is proposing to do 1:1 physical education tutorials with the students.

Does this present a risk?

Why/why not?
School re-entry considerations
Student-facing considerations

**Short-term (within a month of re-entry)**

- Students are reminded of how to keep themselves safe (different approach based on the age of students)
- Students are reminded of who the safeguarding point people are at the school

**Medium-term (within 6 months):**

- Develop age-appropriate awareness materials (posters, short videos)
- Awareness materials for children with special needs/differently abled
- Student representatives are included in the safeguarding committee/meetings
Parent-facing considerations

Short-term (within a month of re-entry):

• Parents/caregivers are reminded of reporting procedures
• Provide a copy of the child safeguarding policy to all parents

Medium-term (within 6 months):

• Include child safeguarding as a key topic in Parent-Teacher meetings
• Include parent representatives as part of the child safeguarding committee
• Organize periodic trainings on key child-facing issues such as sexual abuse, online risk etc.
Staff-facing considerations

Short-term (within a month of re-entry):

• A list of students who historically have been unsafe at home is created. Staff are directed to keep a special eye on them and report on observations on a regular basis.

• Designated staff/counsellors are assigned to have Special 1:1 meetings with students who are at-risk

• Creation of a list of therapists who can support children identified with high levels of trauma
Medium-term (within 6 months):

• Develop and implement policies and procedures that focus on safeguarding the staff (example: Whistle-blower protection, Data protection)

• All staff (teaching and non-teaching) are provided with general training on child safeguarding

• Staff selection process needs to incorporate stringent child safeguarding screening

• Designated safeguarding staff are provided with in-depth training by experts
Some useful websites

www.keepingchildrensafe.global (child safeguarding tools/info)

https://ikeepsafe.org/ (education and technology related info)

https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/ (kids safety online)

https://www.remind.com/ (app for safe school communication)
THANK YOU