Establishment: Ethos College (PRU) Date of assessment: 26th April 2018

Assessor: Johnathon Martin Headteacher: Jayne Foster

Moderator: Ron Richards School Contact: Alison Ruck

**Ethos College Online Safety Mark Report**

**Element A – Policy and Leadership**

Ethos College has an excellent leadership team driving Online Safety throughout the unit, this is evident right across the board, with teachers, parents and students all commenting on how driven the Online Safety Lead is towards not only achieving the Online Safety Mark, but ensuring Online Safety is a very high priority within the College. This focus enables all staff and students to buy into the changes that have taken place recently regarding policies and infrastructure, meaning the team at Ethos are able to deliver Online Safety education to students and parents in a way that really meets their needs. Having such a caring staff, who clearly understand the needs of each individual in their care certainly helps with this.

The Online Safety group is well established, and includes various key members of the College, and also includes the Chair of the Management Committee and other staff from local referral units. This collaboration will help everyone involved. This group is active, and is heavily involved with decision making, for example, deciding that the benefits of using Facebook to communicate with parents outweigh the risk. This has proved to be a valuable tool for staff, and one that parents are fully behind in certain areas. The Chair of the Management Committee was also influential in the change towards a new filtering system, one that allows the staff to monitor students more effectively.

Due to this strong leadership, with committed SLT and Headteacher, the children know they can communicate with any staff member to report their concerns. The relationship staff have with the young people at the college is a real strength. All staff are aware of the policies and are updated on changes frequently. The work undertaken towards the NSPCC staff training will be useful when completed to give staff an idea of the challenges young people face online.

The College uses ‘SchoolPod’ very efficiently to report safeguarding concerns, ensuring all relevant members of staff are aware of potential harm to students.

**Element B – Infrastructure**

Ethos College has a dedicated technician on site most of the time, and also buy into a third party service provider. The two clearly have a great working relationship and are able to work together to ensure the infrastructure is kept secure. Budget and other restrictions have meant that infrastructure is not exactly as the Unit want it, however there are plans in place to improve this. For example, securing the server and moving away from on-site backups to cloud services.

There is a clearly understood password policy in place, meaning staff and student devices are secure, and all sensitive information is stored on encrypted memory pens. Ethos are well aware of the incoming General Data Protection Regulation and have begun to prepare for this.

Filtering has recently improved due to moving over to Smoothwall, and after the initial teething problems, this will help inform SLT of student’s internet usage and give them the ability to ensure produce reports that track student’s usage over time.

**Element C – Education**

The students at Ethos College receive a high level of Online Safety education, that is well suited to their needs. Opportunities at key times of the day, for example over breakfast, allow the staff to discuss any potential issues with students, and really find out what is going on in their life. The staff to student ratio and caring workforce mean that students feel confident in disclosing their online experiences.

The students are given opportunities to be creative with their Online Safety education, and especially enjoyed creating videos regarding staying safe online.

Parents also receive education on Online Safety, this could be through 1 to 1 conversations with support workers, via facebook, or in person at the Unit. Parent surveys show they are happy with the way the College deal with Online Safety education.

The student’s participation in the Online Safety Group has given them opportunities to be vocal about the education they receive and give them ownership of the curriculum.

**Element D – Standards and Inspection**

Ethos College use their MIS to log safeguarding concerns relating to students, and secure areas of online storage to log reports on staff. This works well, as all staff are aware of the reporting process, and know how to use ‘SchoolPod’ to make a report, and what happens after they press submit. Once the new filtering reports are produced, we hope they will begin to inform the College of issues or trends that they should incorporate into policy.

**Areas of strength and good practice**

There are many areas of strength and good practice demonstrated by Ethos College, but the main one has to be the leadership team. They really do bring out the best in their staff and students and drive a caring team who fully understand the sometimes complex needs of their students and community.

Safeguarding really is a priority at Ethos. The Unit also recognised the need for alternative communication with parents when traditional methods did not work, so took to Facebook. This has proved to be a huge success and should be shared with other Units as a means of engaging parents and the wider community.

Linking the Online Safety group with other PRU’s is also a very good decision, allowing each unit to work together to improve provision of Online Safety.

Their commitment to the Online Safety Mark needs to be commended, and we hope the Unit can share their positive experience with other establishments similar to them.

**Areas for further development**

The Unit should look to improve their infrastructure, including securing the server away from students or staff, and look into moving on-site back-ups.

Although the policies we looked at were fairly comprehensive, there are areas that should be included due to recent changes, including adding in a section in the Online Safety Policy relating to the PRU’s social media use, and be prepared to adapt policies with emerging technologies that may impact on the staff or students, this could include mobile devices or wearable technology.

As Smoothwall becomes embedded into the site a more focused reporting procedure, which informs policy and education, is needed.

**Additional Comments**

As the College looks to move towards academy status, it would be ideal for them to share their knowledge and expertise in this area with other members of the multi academy trust and even other similar units around the country.

It was a pleasure to work with the College throughout the assessment.

**Assessor’s Recommendation**

**Ethos College has reached the standards required to be awarded the Online safety Mark.**