



MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI
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ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOL

Models and implementation practices of Standards
for the protection and safety of children/students online



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I. BACKGROUND

Digital safety has become an essential component of modern education, contributing to the development of responsible and aware individuals. In a context where children and adolescents are permanently connected to technology and where access to information and interaction is unlimited, the educational process is becoming increasingly complex and requires a coordinated approach focused on risk prevention.

At the international level, digital safety is promoted through integrated educational policies, digital literacy programmes, and initiatives that encourage responsible online behaviour. These practices highlight the role of schools not only as learning spaces, but also as environments for shaping safe behaviours in the digital world.

In the Republic of Moldova, an important step in this direction was the approval of the Standards for the Protection and Safety of Children/Students in the Online Environment, through Order of the Ministry of Education and Research No. 985 of 7 October 2022. These provide a clear framework for integrating digital safety into the activity of educational institutions.

Over the past decade, the International Center “La Strada” has promoted digital safety in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research, successfully integrating online safety programmes into educational curricula. Expertise in the field and international cooperation have contributed to the establishment of the Digital Safety Centre, which is part of a programme initiated by the European Commission.

At the European level, there is a network of more than 30 Safer Internet Centres (SIC), present in most EU Member States and associated countries, working together to promote online safety for children and young people.

Their aim is to provide a wide range of content and services to support children and young people, as well as those who care for them: parents and caregivers, teachers, and child protection professionals. The main pillars of this programme are:

1. Raising awareness and providing information through educational programmes;
2. Immediate support and assistance for children through the Helpline service;
3. Protecting children by removing sexual content through the Hotline service;
4. Programmes involving the direct participation of young people in promoting a safe online environment.

In the Republic of Moldova, the Safer Internet Centre is managed by the International Center "La Strada" and represents a national initiative that provides support, protection, and education for children, parents, and teachers in the online environment, through counselling services, reporting of illegal content, and educational resources for preventing digital risks.

SAFER INTERNET CENTRE (Moldova)

And so our journey begun...

2013 – Launch of the SigurOnline.md platform

Since its launch, the SigurOnline.md platform has continuously evolved through initiatives aimed at integrating child online safety into the digital environment and expanding services that provide children with information, support, and protection against all forms of online abuse.

2020 – Became the National Committee for Safer Internet Day (SID) in Moldova

Through this role, the initiative became part of an international network promoting online safety, enabling the annual organization of nationwide awareness and information campaigns, while actively engaging the educational community.

2022 – Joined the SIC+ (Safer Internet Centre Plus) programme

Joining this European programme strengthened the initiative's capacity for prevention and intervention by providing access to international expertise, resources, and modern tools for protecting children in the digital environment.

2022 – Launch of the SigurOnline Hotline, the national service for reporting child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

The national reporting service for child sexual abuse material (CSAM) was established to enable the fast, secure, and anonymous reporting of illegal content, contributing to the protection of children and the removal of such material from the digital environment.

During **2022–2025**, the International Centre “La Strada” supported the implementation of standards for the protection and safety of children/students online in 29 educational institutions across different regions of the country, contributing to the development of good practice models that are now successfully adopted by other institutions.



II. IMPACTFUL COLLABORATIONS

1.1 A monitoring mechanism for the implementation of standards for the protection and online safety of children/students in the digital environment. Cooperation between local education authorities and educational institutions.

The implementation of standards for the protection and online safety of children/students (hereinafter – the Standards) cannot be achieved at the level of a single institution alone. For these Standards to become an integral part of the educational culture, a coordinated approach at local and regional levels is required.

In this context, local education authorities (LEAs) have been involved, with the role of supporting and guiding educational institutions. Through coordination, monitoring, and methodological support, they contribute to the integration of digital safety into educational activities and to the creation of a safe and secure online environment for every child.

How do the directorates support educational institutions?

Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have the role of supporting the implementation of the Standards as an ongoing process oriented towards the participatory development of each institution under their supervision. In this regard, they ensure the coordination, monitoring, and methodological guidance of educational institutions, so that digital safety becomes an important component of educational activity.

At the same time, each educational institution can conduct a self-assessment of the actions undertaken, benefiting from methodological support provided by the LEAs. This support enables the formulation of recommendations for improving processes and turns monitoring into a tool for progress and reflection, rather than merely an administrative step.

The actions of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are aimed at:

- supporting educational institutions in the implementation of the Standards;
- organizing and coordinating the monitoring process of the implementation level in each institution;
- providing guidance and recommendations on improvement measures, adapted to the specific realities and needs of each institution;
- facilitating collaboration and exchange of experience between institutions in promoting online safety;
- expanding digital safety initiatives from the institutional level to the local and community level;
- identifying, leveraging, and disseminating good practices, turning them into replicable models.

The active involvement of the LEAs generates a direct impact:

- more educational institutions implement the Standards and apply concrete protection measures;
- teachers benefit from continuous methodological support and guidance in real-life situations;
- online safety becomes an integral part of annual educational planning, rather than an isolated action;
- an institutional culture is strengthened in which child protection in the digital environment is a responsibility shared by the entire school community.

*LEAs → online safe schools → coordinator → Ambassadors →
→ students → parents*

1.2 Safe Online Schools. Good practices for promotion.

What does an online safe school mean?

An Online Safe School is a model educational institution, a benchmark for other schools, which consistently integrates digital safety principles into its organizational culture, educational process, and relationship with the entire school community.

These institutions treat online safety not as an administrative obligation, but as a fundamental value—a key dimension of modern education that is embedded in internal regulations, activity planning, teaching approaches, and communication with students and their parents/legal guardians. An Online Safe School becomes an educational environment where digital responsibility, child protection, and the conscious use of technology are consistently fostered throughout the school year.

Beyond its internal impact, an Online Safe School plays a key role in building a local culture of online safety. Through the practices they develop and implement, these schools become reference points for other institutions at local and regional levels, clearly demonstrating how digital safety can be effectively integrated into school life and how a safe digital environment can become a responsibility shared by all, not just a few.

Some educational institutions have gone through a complex process of implementing and consolidating these practices, being recognized for their advanced level of engagement in promoting digital safety within the school community. Through sustained effort, continuous commitment, and the active involvement of the entire school community, they have demonstrated the ability to integrate online safety into both institutional culture and daily educational activities.

In recognition of these efforts, in December 2024, three educational institutions were designated as Online Safe Schools—a title reflecting their advanced level of implementation of the Standards for the protection and safety of children in the online environment and their commitment to responsible, safe, and child-centered digital education.

Safe Online Schools:

1. *“Principesa Natalia Dadiani” High school, Chişinău;*
2. *“Onisifor Ghibu” High school, Orhei county;*
3. *“Gheorghe Asachi” Gymnasium, Cucoara village, Cahul county.*

What makes them different?

- *carry out activities based on a structured plan;*
- *actively involve students, parents, and teaching staff;*
- *integrate online safety into daily activities;*
- *collaborate with other institutions and educational stakeholders.*

How have they stood out?

Recognition of these institutions does not come from a single action. It comes from consistency.

They have **continuously organized educational activities**, not around a single calendar date, but throughout the entire year, for all age groups and for all members of the school community.

They have initiated **campaigns with real impact at both school and local community level**, through which online safety has gone beyond the classroom and has become a topic of discussion within families and the wider community.

They have placed the **student at the center of action**, turning them not only into a beneficiary of digital education, but also into an active promoter of online safety among their peers. A student's voice often reaches places where a teacher's voice does not always reach.

They have built **partnerships with institutions from different regions** of the country, contributing to the creation of a network of practices and experiences that, in return, enriches each of them.

Why does it matter?

An Online Safe School is not important only for its own students. Its importance is measured in concentric circles: it starts in the classroom,

reaches the family, extends into the community, and, through the example it provides to other institutions, contributes to the creation of an educational system in which child protection in the digital environment is a standard.

These three institutions demonstrate that it is possible. That online safety can become a shared attitude, embraced by everyone – students, parents, and teachers—and that a school that chooses to be digitally responsible inevitably becomes a better school for every child within it.

1.3. The role of coordinators in the school institution.

The online safety coordinator is the key person within the educational institution who makes things happen. They are the person who translates policies into concrete actions, connects teachers' efforts into a coherent process, and ensures that digital safety does not depend on a single teacher, but becomes a shared responsibility of the entire school community.

In this regard, the coordinator acts as a link between all involved stakeholders - teachers, students, parents, school leadership, and external partners. They do not act in place of others, but rather connect, guide, and support them to act together in the same direction. They facilitate the implementation of institutional policies on online protection and safety and contribute to the development of mechanisms for the prevention, identification, and timely reporting of risk situations. They also ensure the proper flow of information between teachers, students, parents, and school administration. At the same time, they support the process of consultation and adaptation of practices to the real needs of the school community.

An essential part of their role is the coordination of teacher training and the promotion of educational resources in both curricular and extracurricular activities, ensuring that digital safety is addressed consistently and in an interdisciplinary manner. In parallel, the coordinator encourages the active involvement of parents/legal guardians and builds partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the field, contributing to the creation of a safe and responsible educational ecosystem.

The online safety coordinator contributes to:

- coordinating the implementation of the Standards at institutional level, ensuring coherence and continuity of the process;
- supporting teachers in planning and carrying out digital safety activities;
- facilitating collaboration between methodological committees and teachers, avoiding parallel efforts and overlaps;
- monitoring the institution's progress and achieved results in relation to the set objectives;
- maintaining communication with the LEAs and other relevant partners, ensuring visibility and external support.

The coordinator's actions are aimed at:

- guiding educational stakeholders in developing the annual action plan on online safety;
- monitoring the implementation of information and parental awareness activities;
- organizing information and training sessions for teaching staff;
- coordinating thematic online safety campaigns at institutional and community level;
- collecting feedback from students, parents, and teachers, turning accumulated experience into concrete improvements of institutional practices.

The online safety coordinator is a resource person within the institution, whose role is to harmonize all actions undertaken at institutional level, ensuring the protection and safety of children and students in the digital environment.

1.4 Promoting online safety ambassadors among teaching staff

When we talk about Online Safety Ambassadors, we refer not only to a role, but to an attitude and a commitment to promoting online safety. These are teachers who become a valuable resource for the school community, who observe children's needs in exploring the digital space and contribute to a collaborative relationship between school, family, and child.

At the same time, they facilitate dialogue on digital safety within the community, serve as a model of balance between online and offline life, and promote a safe and protected digital environment. Through the active involvement of online safety ambassadors, online safety becomes part of the school culture, and risk prevention becomes a shared commitment of the entire institution.

How did this “model” emerge?

The concept of the Online Safety Ambassador emerged from the need for continuous support for teachers and educational institutions involved in the implementation of the Standards for the protection and online safety of children/students at national level.

What makes them different?

The Online Safety Ambassador model is based on the active involvement of teachers who become promoters of a safe digital environment not only within their own institution, but also across other educational communities.

In addition to carrying out interactive activities and promoting responsible online behavior in schools, ambassadors contribute to fostering an active culture of online safety at the school community level. They conduct activities not only within their own institutions but also collaborate with other schools in their district or other regions, sharing experiences, methods, and useful resources for promoting online safety.

Through this approach, the model contributes to the development of a network of teachers who support the implementation of the Standards and inspire other educational institutions to adopt educational practices aimed at promoting the safety of children in the digital environment.

These initiatives go beyond the boundaries of a single institution, inspiring other communities and contributing to:

- *the development of local leaders and promoters of online safety;*
- *the consolidation of a digital safety culture within the community;*
- *the provision of continuous support in the implementation of the Standards;*
- *the facilitation of the exchange of experiences and good practices between institutions.*

The activities carried out by Online Safety Ambassadors are distinguished by their applied, interactive nature and their adaptation to the real needs of children, teachers, and parents. These are not standard activities, but educational interventions that emphasize participation, reflection, and experiential learning.

Activities with students are designed in an interactive and participatory format, going beyond the simple transmission of information. Children are encouraged to identify risk situations, analyze online behaviors, and propose practical solutions. At the same time, they are motivated to become online safety messengers themselves, sharing information with peers in the school community—because a message delivered by a peer reaches further than any presentation.

Parental involvement is an essential element of digital safety education. In this context, ambassadors facilitate information and awareness activities through which parents become active partners in protecting children in the online environment. They are guided to understand digital risks, provide appropriate support, and actively participate in the child's digital education process, contributing to a relationship based on open communication and trust.

Within the educational community, ambassadors conduct thematic seminars for teachers, students, and parents, as well as collaborative initiatives between institutions to promote online safety. They also develop support groups and experience-sharing networks across different regions and localities, which facilitate the transfer of good practices and strengthen the educational network actively involved in digital safety.

To become an Online Safety Ambassador, you need to be part of the change and actively contribute to creating a safe and responsible digital environment within your community.

1.5 The role of Student Councils in promoting online safety

The Student Council represents the core of all actions aimed at promoting online safety among children and adolescents. As direct and active users of digital technologies, they best understand the realities, risks, and opportunities of the online environment. Through their involvement, the Student Council contributes to creating a culture of digital responsibility among peers, where online safety becomes a shared concern integrated into everyday life.

The active involvement of the Student Council adds value to educational activities in the field of digital safety. International practices show that peer-to-peer initiatives have a significantly greater impact, as messages are delivered in a more relatable and credible language, making their reception considerably more effective. In this context, the Student Council becomes an authentic and efficient communication channel between students, teachers, and the wider school community.

When properly guided and supported, the Student Council can play an active role in identifying the real needs of peers, proposing solutions, and developing initiatives adapted to the current context. Thus, students not only participate but directly contribute to building a safer digital environment, closer to their realities, while also developing leadership skills, critical thinking, and digital civic responsibility.

The impact of Student Council involvement is reflected in increased levels of responsibility among students, active participation in school life, and the development of their ability to observe, analyze, and manage the risks they face daily in the digital space.

What can Student Councils do in practice?

Student Councils are not just consultative structures; they are actors with their own initiative. Among the actions they can initiate and carry out are:

- organizing awareness campaigns on online risks;
- carrying out peer-to-peer learning activities among students;
- developing and promoting a school-wide digital code of conduct;
- organizing thematic events dedicated to online safety;
- participating in the development or revision of internal policies on the use of technology in schools;
- conducting student surveys to identify real risks and needs;
- creating digital materials (videos, posters, guides) produced by students for students;
- collaborating with student councils from other institutions to exchange experiences and good practices;
- participating in local and/or district-level advisory groups on digital safety issues.

The Student Council thus becomes an essential partner in building a safe digital environment, where every student is not only protected but also actively contributes to the safety of others.

III. HOW TO BUILD A MODEL OF PROMOTING ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS? RECOMMENDATIONS.

How do you start building a model for promoting digital safety in your school?

Digital safety is not a time-bound project, nor a temporary initiative. It is a continuous process that requires involvement, collaboration, and responsibility assumed by all. Building such a model starts with commitment, concrete and consistent steps adapted to the realities of each institution.

Every institution can take the first steps:

- *by actively involving teachers and assuming a clear role in promoting online safety;*
- *by identifying a coordinator or a team responsible for this area;*
- *by capitalizing on existing initiatives and integrating them into a structured action plan;*
- *by collaborating with students, parents, and other educational stakeholders to develop joint actions for promoting online safety;*
- *by continuously monitoring results and adapting actions according to identified real needs.*

Digital safety is not built through isolated actions. It is built through a shared, sustained, and well-organized effort, in which every educational actor knows their role and takes ownership of it. Only in this way does the school truly become a space where children are not only learning, but also protected, guided, and prepared to become responsible users of technology.

Digital safety is a shared responsibility and a culture that is built together!

For more information and resources on promoting online safety, visit the **www.siguroonline.md**.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Promoting online safety in educational institutions is no longer an option; it is a necessity of modern education. The models and practices presented demonstrate that integrating digital safety is possible, realistic, and sustainable through a coordinated, sustained effort adapted to the realities of each school community.

From the documented experiences, several clear directions emerge that any school community can adopt and adapt:

- *effective implementation of the Standards requires a systemic approach based on close collaboration between educational institutions and Local Education Authorities (LEAs);*
- *developing functional models (digitally safe schools, coordinators, ambassadors, student councils) contributes to the sustainable integration of digital safety into the educational culture;*
- *active involvement of all educational stakeholders—teachers, students, and parents—is essential for creating a safe and responsible digital environment;*
- *students are agents of change, playing a key role in promoting online safety, while peer-to-peer initiatives significantly increase the relevance and impact of messages;*
- *methodological support, continuous monitoring, and the exchange of good practices facilitate the scaling of initiatives at local and national levels;*

online safety becomes effective when integrated into the daily activities of the school and addressed by all educational actors;

a culture of digital responsibility is built through the involvement of the entire community and through genuine partnerships between schools, families, local authorities, and civil society.

All these directions converge towards a single message: **a child's digital safety is not the responsibility of one person, one lesson, or one programme.** It is everyone's responsibility and becomes reality only when everyone chooses to build it together.

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