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COMMUNICATING PROGRESS ON BUILDING EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT

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Introduction

In 2019, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers adopted [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education](#), a key milestone in recognising the need for comprehensive educational support to enable citizens to prosper in the digital environment. The Recommendation specifically encourages member States to promote the development of frameworks to facilitate partnerships between the public and private sectors within education in the context of digital citizenship education.

Subsequently, the Council of Europe developed its [Guidelines to Support Equitable Partnerships of Education Institutions and the Private Sector](#) as part of its Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) Programme. The Guidelines resulted from a two-year consultation process with key stakeholders and were adopted by the then Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (now the Steering Committee for Education) in October 2021.¹

This Explanatory Document is intended to accompany the Guidelines and support partners involved in their implementation. It provides further information on communication processes and how progress will be reported.

The Explanatory Document contains the following:

- *An overview of the Guidelines to Support Equitable Partnerships of Education Institutions and the Private Sector.*
- *Statement of Commitment* – an important feature of the Guidelines is the support expressed by private sector organisations and educational stakeholders. This is expressed in the form of a Statement of Commitment, intended as a public demonstration of support for the ethos of the Guidelines and in the wider promotion of digital citizenship.
- *Communicating progress* – a further objective of the Guidelines is to build a community of practice dedicated to promoting digital citizenship education. For this purpose, it is vital that good evidence exists of how the Guidelines are being implemented. This section explains how the implementation of the Guidelines is communicated and disseminated. Progress reports will feed into the further development of the Guidelines and of further materials.
- *Reviewing progress* - A Working Group will provide guidance throughout the initiative and will assess the Report, ensuring that relevant practices are shared.

The Appendix includes the Report template and the Statement of Commitment.

¹ Adopted by the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice at its 16th Plenary session on 13-15 October 2021
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Guidelines to support equitable partnerships

The Guidelines aim to foster a better understanding of digital citizenship education and an awareness of how the public and private sectors within education working together can bring about positive change for learners and educators. The Guidelines describe how partnerships between the two sectors empower learners of all ages by acquiring competences for active participation in our digital societies. Digital citizenship education aims at giving learners the competences to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities online and to promote and protect human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in cyberspace.

The Guidelines were drafted in consultation with education policymakers, practitioners, and private sector representatives, including school administrators, manufacturers, internet service providers, social media platforms, games designers, and other digital content or service providers of learning resources for children and young people and adult learners.

The Guidelines are intended to provide a framework for building successful partnerships of public and private sectors within education for the purposes of embedding digital citizenship. This includes supporting the integration of the Guidelines in key public-private practices: e.g., purchasing, training, decision-making, testing and developing etc., to ensure digital citizenship is at the heart of the relationship between the public and private sectors within education.

The Guidelines are available on the website of the Council of Europe, have been presented at Multistakeholder Exchange meetings hosted by its Education Department, and were circulated to the DCE Promoters Network – a network comprising educators appointed by CoE member States’ Ministers of Education working in the field and which support DCE by piloting strategies and disseminating information to families and schools. Stakeholders are also encouraged to apply the Guidelines within existing and future practices, which involve the use of digital technologies in educational settings and can foster meaningful partnerships between sectors. Partnerships using this approach are encouraged to reflect on their progress and achievements using the resources of the DCE project of the Council of Europe and to share their experiences with the wider educational community.

How to use the guidelines

The Guidelines are organised around Ten Digital Domains, encompassing the diverse ways citizens engage with the digital environment. The Guidelines are framed in a general way to demonstrate how digital citizenship can be a foundation to support effective and equitable partnership-building.

The [Ten Digital Domains](#) are summarised under the three headings of “Being online”, “Well-being online”, and “Rights online”. In each case, guidance addressing each of these dimensions is offered.

An explanation is provided for each of the terms used. The relevance of each domain to learning outcomes is provided with suggestions on what it may mean for the public and private sectors within education.

Each Guideline also contains suggested examples of sense-making practice from the perspective of both sectors. It is not intended that partnerships incorporate each feature or every guideline listed. Rather, the Guidelines allow stakeholders to specify and focus their activity in the areas most appropriate to the learning activities and services provided.

Each section concludes by highlighting areas for further development. This is not an exhaustive list and should be considered as recommended topics for innovation and collaboration.

A *Self-Assessment Checklist* is provided whereby partners can highlight the features of the Guidelines that are most relevant to their activity, assess the stage of their development or implementation, highlight areas of excellence and indicate areas for further development.

The process

Expressing support for the Guidelines

As part of a series of initiatives to support the adoption of the Guidelines, the Council of Europe has created a Statement of Commitment which participants can sign as a public demonstration of their support for the Guidelines and the principles of digital citizenship education as expressed in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10.

The support expressed via the Statement of Commitment will be publicly disseminated across Council of Europe communication channels by sharing each company's logo and a short bio on the DCE website (along with relevant links, if indicated) and announcing companies' support on its social media channels. This will contribute to developing a collective community of practice in this area.

- ▶ The Statement of Commitment is available online and in the Appendix.

A [dedicated webpage](https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/dce-privatesector) (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/dce-privatesector>) on the Council of Europe's website for Digital Citizenship Education will be used to promote and profile partners that have signed the Statement of Commitment.

Entities who have signed the Statement will also be invited to regular stakeholder exchange events to hear more about sense-making practices and updates regarding DCE from the Council of Europe. The exchange will give them an opportunity and platform to enter into a structured dialogue with each other and with policymakers.

Signatories will also be able to give feedback to the Council of Europe on the initiative and on the further development of the Guidelines.

Building partnership/s

After signing the Statement of Commitment and making use of the Structured Dialogue to be organised by the Council of Europe to enter into contact with other educational stakeholders (among one of the possible means), private and public entities are encouraged to build partnerships and develop relevant initiatives following the principles of the Guidelines.

The Council of Europe can provide guidance, if necessary, during this stage of the process.

Communicating progress

Recognising the importance of knowledge exchange for the overall success of the Guidelines initiative, a structured approach to collecting evidence of progress has been envisaged.

Communicating progress on the implemented initiatives stemming from the partnership/s that have been built will serve to highlight significant innovations and new developments making use of technology in education, share practices and learn from other approaches.

Communicating progress in the implementation of the Guidelines is based on the following principles:

- Participation in the review process is voluntary and is for the purposes of the enhancement of the process.

- Communicating progress is based on a self-declaration process whereby participants complete a Report providing a reflective assessment of progress against the relevant principles articulated in the Guidelines.
- Communicating progress contributes to knowledge exchange, and participants are encouraged to share practices that demonstrate promise beyond the context of the specific partnership.
- Communicating progress is open and transparent. Contributions made as part of the initiative are intended for publication on the Council of Europe Digital Citizenship Education website.

The Report template (Appendix) is designed to be a simple and accessible format suitable for adaption to the circumstances of individual partnerships and includes a description of actions taken and an assessment of outcomes using appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Reviewing the progress

A Working Group composed of Council of Europe staff members and nominated experts will accompany this process. It will:

- provide guidance, if necessary throughout the initiative,
- facilitate the organisation of a structured dialogue regarding pre-requisites for effective partnerships,
- hold meetings to answer possible questions and provide support to partners,
- review the completed Report, provide feedback, and contact relevant partners in case clarifications are needed,
- ensure that relevant practices are shared on a dedicated section of the Council of Europe Digital Citizenship Education website,
- encourage partners to communicate progress directly with their own stakeholders through newsletters, company websites, etc.

Report
Communicating progress on building equitable partnerships in education

Part I. Context

Please indicate that you are referring to the signed Statement of Commitment.

Part 2. Description of the Partnership

Please indicate the Partners involved in your initiative, its starting and end date of implementation, and possible online references.

Part 3. Description of the Initiative/s

Please indicate the title of the initiative, its objective/s, target group, location, outputs and outcomes.

Examples of outcomes might include:

- Specific actions taken by partners as a direct result of this initiative*
- Formalisation of partnerships*
- Changes in practices implemented as a result of the initiative*
- Lessons learned.*

Part 4. Link to the guidelines

Being Online	Well-being online	Rights Online
1. Access and Inclusion	4. Ethics and Empathy	7. Active Participation
2. Learning and Creativity	5. Health and well-being	8. Rights and Responsibilities
3. Media and Information Literacy	6. E-presence and Communications	9. Privacy and Security
		10. Consumer Awareness

Please relate your initiative/s to one or more of the 10 Digital Domains.

Part 5. Measurement of Outputs

Please indicate which qualitative and/or quantitative indicators were used to measure the outputs of the initiative (hence, whether the objective was reached and how).

Part 6. Self-assessment of progress

Partnerships are invited to include the Self-assessment Checklist available in the Guidelines (Appendix 1).

Statement of Commitment

[Insert Full Company Name and Logo/Letterhead]

Period covered by this Statement

From: [Insert date]

To: [Insert date]

Statement of Commitment by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

[Date]

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that [Organisation Name] affirms its support for the Council of Europe's Guidelines to support equitable partnerships between the public and private sectors within education.

We furthermore support the guidelines contained in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education and encourage all policy makers to make its implementation a priority.

We support digital citizenship education understood here as the empowerment of learners of all ages through education and the acquisition of competences for active participation in our digital society to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities online and to promote and to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the cyberspace.

Our point of contact for all matters relating to the implementation of the Guidelines to support equitable partnerships between the public and private sectors within education is:
_____ (name / position).

Sincerely yours,

[Full name] [Title]

By signing the statement, we authorise the disclosure and publication of the information contained herein, including the use of our logo and information about our organisation that is attached to the statement. This authorisation extends to any form or medium, including publication on the Council of Europe's website, and the use of links to our website.

To ensure your Statement is complete, please

1. Attach a logo or some identifying picture of your company/organisation
2. Attach a short description of your organisation (50-100 words)
3. Agree to the conditions below
4. Send the signed Template and necessary documentation to: digital.citizenship@coe.int