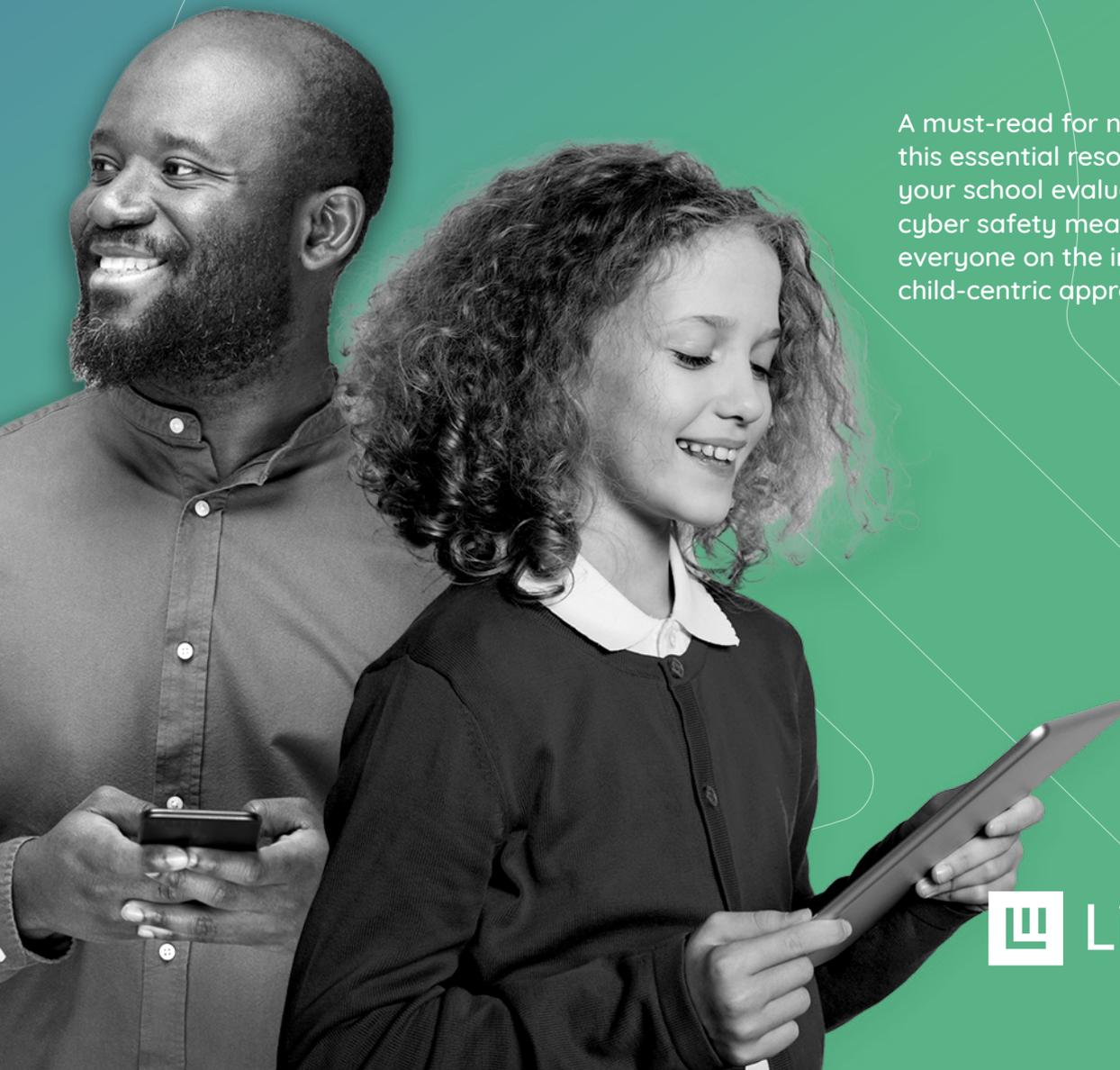


Why Schools Need to Consider a Child-Centric Approach to Online Safety.

A must-read for non-IT staff, this essential resource helps your school evaluate current cyber safety measures and unite everyone on the importance of a child-centric approach.



Introduction

The increased use of digital devices by children has led to a rise in concerning online behaviours and external risks. These include gaming addiction, cyberbullying, and social media addiction, all of which have negative impacts on students' mental health, academic performance, and social interactions.



Despite the crisis levels of student mental health, schools, parents, and caregivers often lack the knowledge and skills to help children navigate the online world effectively.

In recent times, the digital landscape has become a major battleground. Schools face the challenging task of balancing technological innovation with ensuring student safety in an increasingly digital world.

As children spend more time in virtual environments, socialising with peers and learning new things, it's becoming increasingly challenging for schools to fulfill their mission of supporting and guiding students in life. Why? Because there are too many things to consider. Concerns about screen time at home, online risks, digital distractions, and the social and emotional wellbeing of students all contribute to the complexity.

Schools across Australia are witnessing the evolution of their cyber safety needs and responsibilities.

As negative online behaviours continue to rise, so do the associated concerns and the responsibilities of IT stakeholders.

Consequently, there is a growing need for all stakeholders to understand how best to support students and children in navigating the online world. This underscores the increasing importance of empowering all stakeholders to play their part effectively.

You may already be experiencing issues at your school and discussing how best to respond.

Cyber Safety Should be Everybody's Responsibility

When online issues occur on school devices, the impact is felt across the school, especially in the IT department.

While IT teams often have a responsibility to ensure the school network and devices are safe, it's equally important that leadership, staff, and families have the confidence and knowledge to respond when things don't go as planned with a child.

This partnership between IT and all stakeholders invested in a child's digital wellbeing helps reduce risk, minimise harm, and ensure young people receive support regardless of when and where an incident occurs.

What this means...

- Student digital safety and wellbeing do not solely sit with IT; it requires many parties to work closely in partnership.
- Schools need to understand the priorities of pastoral teams, teachers, leadership, and parents and share up-to-date information and advice in a timely manner.
- A collaborative, ongoing approach to the partnership helps keep online safety and wellbeing front of mind throughout the year.
- A child-centric approach to cyber safety is needed to ensure children are safe and protected at school, at home – and everywhere in between.

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Evolving Your School's Cyber Safety Practices

As with anything, affecting change requires support. Getting everyone in your school on board to consider a child-centric approach to cyber safety can be hard work, especially when the topic is technical and impacts multiple stakeholders.

Let's explore six game-changing ideas developed to help your school transform cyber safety. The approaches we will discuss will not only enable a thorough assessment of your current measures but also facilitate constructive discussions among stakeholders, ensuring that the right information is considered when making decisions about device management, policies, parental controls, visibility, and who should receive alerts, among other aspects. By considering these ideas, your school will be able to pinpoint areas for improvement and make informed decisions to better safeguard students online—wherever they are.

1. Should we be filtering the device, not just the network?

Remember the days when controlling internet access meant simply filtering your school network? Those days are long gone.

Today, students carry school-provided devices everywhere, connecting to any available network, bypassing the carefully configured rules in place. Simply put, if students don't want to follow the rules, they are savvy enough to get around them. By protecting the device, schools can ensure that no matter what network students are connected to or where the device may physically be, that child will have the same level of protection. This approach ensures that the technology you're putting into students' hands is always used to support effective learning and the child's digital development in a safe and responsible way.



Ultimately, schools should aim to cultivate an online environment that is **positive and conducive to learning**, thereby enabling students to acquire digital life skills with assurance.

2. Can reporting serve the needs of IT as well as those of all relevant stakeholders?

Tailored reporting that meets your requirements and non-technical stakeholders' requirements is essential. Trying to support and protect students without real insights into their digital activities is like steering a ship blindfolded. Schools need actual data, not just hunches or generic search data, to guide them effectively and ensure student safety.

The information needed by a year coordinator differs significantly from that required by a school counsellor focusing on a student of concern. The granularity of reporting needed in a school environment is sophisticated and bespoke, facilitating prompt intervention and individualised support. Such reports should address the needs of all stakeholders, not just the IT department, providing everyone with timely and relevant insights into the student body.

Evolving Your School's Cyber Safety Practices cont.

3. Is it possible to extend the safety net beyond the school gates and share responsibility between the school and parents?

As a school, we know it's important to provide consistent protection for students, both during school hours and beyond.

Imagine your students safely using their devices for 8 hours during the school day, only to encounter unprotected online environments for the remaining 16 hours at home. Issues that originate at home can quickly find their way into the playground and classrooms, creating challenges for the school to address.

The problem is, many parents don't feel empowered to engage in their child's digital space. They may lack the necessary insights or tools to initiate conversations about online safety. While some parents take proactive steps, others may choose to turn a blind eye.

Cyber safety is not solely the responsibility of the school's IT department; it can and should be a shared responsibility between educators and parents. The key to success is to allow parents to feel capable and empowered to manage their child's internet activity at home.

4. Can we give all stakeholders digital visibility from one platform?

IT teams need to meet the challenge of ensuring student safety and wellbeing across various devices.

This complexity amplifies the demand for consistent safety measures and management across multiple platforms. This task is simplified by a unified web filtering platform and configurable tools to address IT challenges. It enables them to effectively safeguard students online through a comprehensive, adaptable, and easily manageable system meeting the needs of all stakeholders in a school, not just IT.

5. Can we empower teachers to shape their digital learning experiences, without IT losing control of the safety of the devices?

Managing classroom internet should be as intuitive as teaching itself. Teachers need tools that align with their teaching styles, allowing them to curate the digital landscape rather than just control devices.

It's not about monitoring screens and digital distractions but guiding students to manage the internet. With simple and flexible classroom management tools, teachers can seamlessly integrate the internet into their lessons, foster focused learning environments, and support students' digital wellbeing. Educators need to be empowered to harness the internet's potential in a way that complements their unique approach to teaching.

6. What happens if we filter the child, not the Internet?

Overly strict internet filters can inadvertently suppress curiosity and restrict educational prospects for students, leaving them to feel constrained and frustrated in class. Schools need to adopt flexible filtering systems that honour each student's unique interests and requirements, fostering an enriching and supportive online environment.

Ultimately, schools should aim to cultivate an online environment that is positive and conducive to learning, thereby enabling students to acquire digital life skills with assurance.

Now that our heads are buzzing, let's see how each game-changing can be addressed in practical terms and what steps and tools schools can consider to move in the right direction.



Linewize Connect is Here to Help

What is Linewize Connect? Linewize Connect is the world's leading cyber safety and digital wellbeing solution for 1:1 programs.

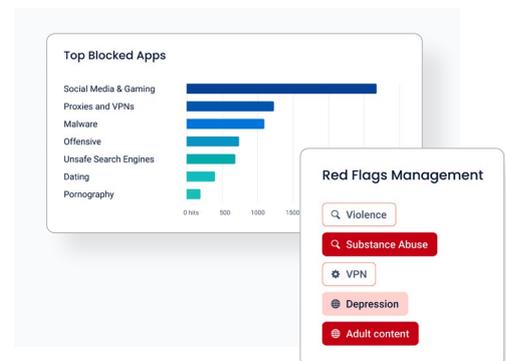
Linewize Connect is Here to Help cont.

IT teams rely on it every day to create a safe digital environment capable of addressing every stakeholder's needs from one single platform. How? By giving every member of the school community, from leadership and teachers to parents, a never-before-seen picture of each child's digital wellbeing and the tools to support them.

Connect for leadership

Filter, reporting and real-time alerting

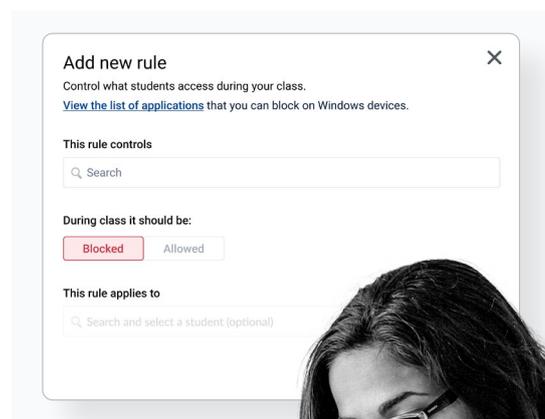
Linewize Connect gives schools precise control over internet access, protecting students from harmful content and catering to individual needs and interests. With its advanced reporting, schools can quickly identify and address concerning online behaviours, ensuring proactive intervention for better student outcomes.



Connect for teachers

Classroom internet management tools for teachers

Linewize Connect can give educators in the classroom access to control and manage the use of the internet to meet their learning objectives. From a dedicated dashboard teachers can easily pre-plan what sites are accessed before class begins, block what they're looking at in real-time and so much more.

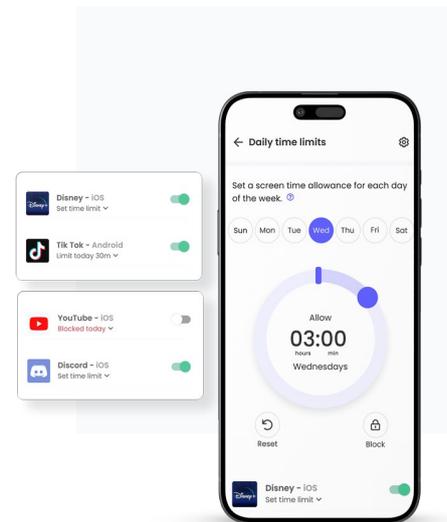


Linewize Connect is Here to Help cont.

Connect for families

Fully integrated parental control tools for school devices

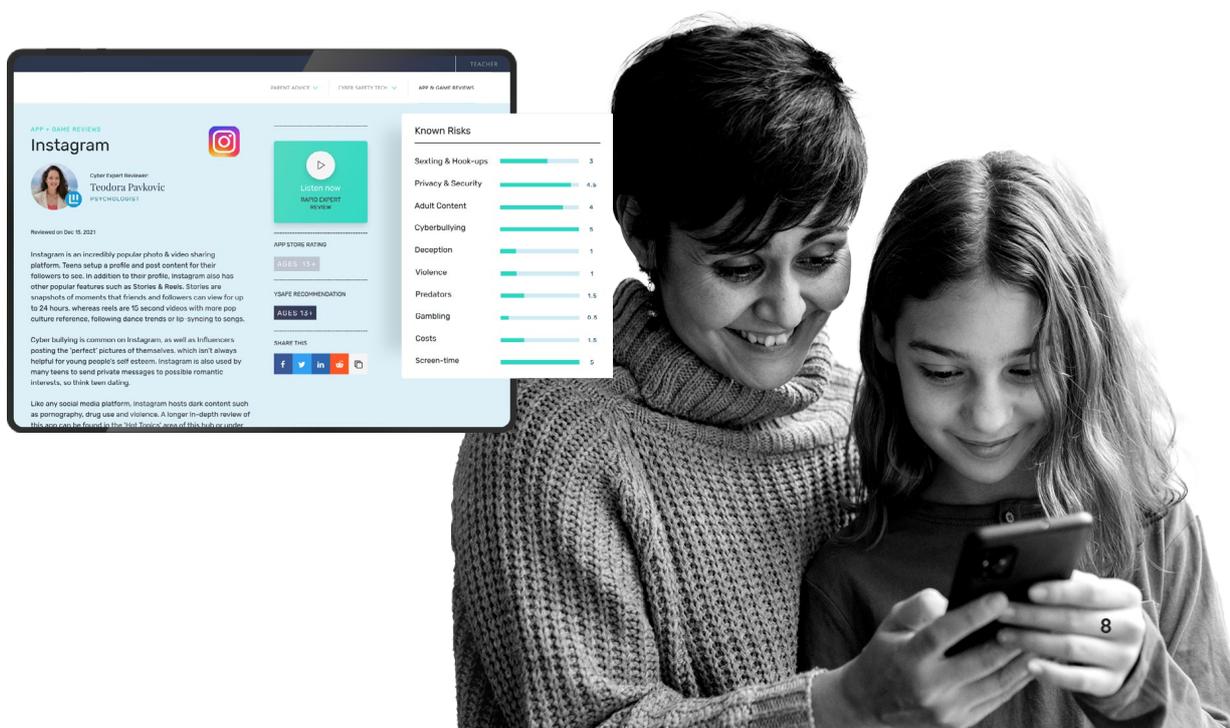
Schools using Linewize Connect can give parents advanced controls for school devices outside of school hours, allowing them to play an active role in their child's digital life. IT departments decide which policies and rules apply to the school device, and parents can set the rules for their children – extending the safety network and sharing the responsibility.



Connect for your community

Cyber safety resources and information for the entire community

Written by experts and packed with insights and how-to guides, the Online Safety Hub provides a valuable destination for leaders, pastoral staff, teachers, and parents. It allows all stakeholders to build their knowledge, stay ahead of trends and help bridge the knowledge gap between themselves and the children in their care.





Linewize Connect is the world's leading cyber safety and digital wellbeing solution for 1:1 programs.

What Next?

We hope you and your team have found this information useful as a starting point to critically think about the gaps in online safety within your school.

We understand the growing challenges schools face in ensuring a safe digital environment for students, and the increasing requirements from stakeholders to address these. By empowering all stakeholders - IT teams, teachers, leadership, and parents - Linewize Connect ensures a child-centric approach to online safety.

If your students' digital behaviours are causing concern, and the number of cyber safety stakeholders is growing, contact us to see Linewize Connect in action. **We're here to help.**

[Get in touch](#)



Linewize is a unique response to the challenge of today's connected learning environments, supporting the integration of technology, education and engagement to create cyber safe communities where students thrive.

Web: www.linewize.io

Email: enquiries@linewize.io



Linewize is part of Qoria, a global technology company, dedicated to keeping children safe and well in their digital lives. We harness the power of connection to close the gaps that children fall through, and to seamlessly support them on all sides - at school, at home and everywhere in between.

Find out more
www.qoria.com