



ANNEX 2

G20 HIGH LEVEL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILDREN PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT ¹

Section 1. Principles for a Safe and Beneficial Digital Environment for Children

1.1 Fundamental Values

Actors² in all activities concerning children's participation in, or engagement with, the digital environment, should:

- a) Uphold the child's best interests as a primary consideration; and
- b) Identify how the rights of children can be protected and respected in the digital environment and take appropriate measures to do so.

1.2 Empowerment and Resilience

Actors should take measures to support children in realising and enjoying the benefits of the digital environment by:

- a) Supporting parents, guardians and carers in their fundamental role of evaluating and minimising risks of harm and optimising the benefits to their children online as well as offline;
- b) Making sure children and their parents, guardians and carers are aware of their rights in the digital environment and putting in place accessible mechanisms for enforcing such rights, including complaints mechanisms or legal remedies;
- c) Supporting children and their parents, guardians and carers in understanding:
 - i. children's rights as data subjects; and
 - ii. the way in which children's personal data is collected, processed, shared, and used;
- d) Upholding and respecting children's right to freely express their views and their ability, as appropriate considering their age and maturity, to participate in matters that affect them in the digital environment;
- e) Making children, as well as their parents, guardians, and carers, aware of legal, psychosocial, or therapeutic services available to children requiring assistance as a result of activities or action in the digital environment, and providing access thereto; and
- f) Developing mechanisms to make children, parents, guardians, and carers aware of online commercial practices that may cause children harm.

¹ These Principles are not binding. This Annex draws from the principles and recommendations included in the OECD Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment. In line with that Recommendation, 'Children' refers to every individual below the age of eighteen years recognising the different age thresholds may be appropriate in providing certain legal protections.

² 'Actors' refers to all public and private organisations who play an active role in setting policies and practices or providing services for children in the digital environment.



1.3 Proportionality and Respect for Human Rights

Measures taken by Actors to protect children in the digital environment should:

- a) Be proportionate to the risks, evidence-based, effective, balanced, and formulated with a view of maximising the opportunities and benefits for children in the digital environment;
- b) Promote children's freedom of expression, and not undermine other human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- c) Not be unduly punitive; and
- d) Not unduly restrict digital service provision or limit innovation that can foster a safe and beneficial digital environment for children.

1.4 Appropriateness and Inclusion

In their activities in the digital environment, Actors should:

- a) Account for the different needs of different children, taking into consideration their age and maturity; and
- b) Seek to ensure that no child is more vulnerable to risk because of their particular social or economic circumstances and that no child is at risk of being excluded or discriminated against, or likely to suffer a future bias, because of:
 - i. a lack of digital access or digital literacy;
 - ii. inappropriate digital access or digital literacy; or
 - iii. the way in which services are designed.

1.5 Shared Responsibility, Co-operation, and Positive Engagement

Actors, in view of their shared responsibility to provide for a safe and beneficial digital environment for children, should:

- a) Engage in and promote multi-stakeholder dialogue including parents, guardians, carers, educators, and children themselves;
- b) Foster co-operation and positive engagement in policy making and the development of practices relating to children in the digital environment, including through multi-stakeholder bodies and by involving children;
- c) Encourage the positive engagement of business and Digital Service Providers³ in policy making;
- d) Support parents, guardians, carers, and teachers to identify opportunities and benefits and evaluate and mitigate the risks of the digital environment, recognising that the continually increasing complexities of digital technologies may increase the necessity for such support; and
- e) Support parents, guardians, carers, and teachers to fulfil their role in helping ensure children become responsible participants in the digital environment.

³ 'Digital Service Providers' refers to any natural or legal person that provides products and services, electronically and at a distance.



Section 2. Overarching Policy Framework for a safe and beneficial digital environment for children

2.1 Governments should demonstrate leadership and commitment taking into account the best interests of the child in the digital environment, including by:

- a) Adopting clear policy objectives at the highest level of government;
- b) Articulating a whole-of-government approach, through a national strategy where appropriate, that is flexible, technology neutral, and coherent with other strategies for fostering a sustainable and inclusive digital economy;
- c) Consider establishing or designating oversight bodies, with a view to:
 - iv. Coordinating stakeholders' views, efforts, and activities in the development of policies;
 - v. Meeting policy objectives;
 - vi. Reviewing the effectiveness of policy actions and measures implemented to account for the best interests of children in the digital environment;
 - vii. Coordinating, in accordance with their legal and institutional frameworks, the relevant actions of government bodies with responsibility for responding to the needs of children;
 - viii. Ensuring that the actions of government bodies are cohesive and mutually reinforcing, rather than an accumulation of isolated or stand-alone, and potentially inconsistent, initiatives; and
 - ix. Promoting co-operation across borders.
- d) Dedicating adequate and appropriate financial and human resources to implement policy measures.

2.2 Governments should review, develop, and amend as appropriate, laws that directly or indirectly affect children in the digital environment, such that:

- a) Legal measures and frameworks are fit for purpose, enforceable, and do not limit children's enjoyment of their rights;
- b) Legal frameworks provide effective remedies for harms suffered by children via the digital environment, and new measures are introduced if existing legal frameworks fail to protect children or provide effective remedies;
- c) Legal measures are in place to promote responsible business conduct;
- d) Legal frameworks define conditions under which Digital Service Providers may be held liable for illegal activity by, or illegal information from, third parties using their digital products and services, which harm children; and
- e) Children are not unnecessarily criminalised. In this regard, other appropriate methods of dealing with harmful behaviour, such as educational or therapeutic methods, should be considered in the first instance.

2.3 Governments should promote digital literacy as an essential tool for meeting the needs of children in the digital environment, in particular by:

- a) Clarifying categories of digital risks according to age, maturity, and circumstances of children, together with harmonising the terminology used to inform the public;



- b) Supporting children in:
 - i. Understanding how their personal data is collected, disclosed, made available or otherwise used;
 - ii. Critically considering and appraising information to increase resilience in dealing with misinformation and disinformation; and
 - iii. Understanding terms of service, user redress and moderation processes and how these can be used to flag and report harmful content.
- c) Regularly measuring the evolution of children's digital literacy and skills.

2.4 Governments should adopt evidence-based policies to support children in the digital environment, in particular by:

- a) Conducting regular impact assessments of laws and policies to ensure they remain appropriate;
- b) Encouraging and supporting research into the use of, attitudes towards, benefits of, and risks associated with children and the digital environment;
- c) Coordinating with all stakeholders, including business, academia, and civil society, to share and develop evidence; and
- d) Seeking to ensure that research is responsibly undertaken in accordance with data protection principles which include protection of children's privacy, data minimisation, and purpose limitation.

2.5 Governments should promote the adoption of measures that provide for age-appropriate child safety by design, in particular by:

- a) Fostering the research, development, and adoption of privacy protective, interoperable and user-friendly technologies that can restrict contact and access to content that is inappropriate for children, taking into account their age, maturity, and circumstances; and
- b) Providing all stakeholders with clear information as to the trustworthiness, quality, user-friendliness, and privacy by design of such technologies.

Section 3. International Co-operation

3.1 Governments should strengthen international networks of domestic organisations dedicated to upholding the best interests of children in the digital environment, such as hotlines, helplines, and awareness centres and, where appropriate, facilitate an expansion of their role;

3.2 Governments should actively co-operate by sharing information about domestic policy approaches to children in the digital environment, and develop the empirical foundations for quantitative and qualitative international comparative policy analysis through:

- a) Developing proposals for shared statistical frameworks that enable internationally comparable indicators on children's engagement with the digital environment, risk prevalence, awareness by children, parents, carers, and guardians of these risks and how to respond to them, as well as policy impact and efficiency;



- b) Developing proposals for harmonised terms and statistical definition of risks and benefits, related policy responses, as well as children's age groups used for statistical purposes; and
- c) A shared commitment to regularly update official quantitative data within a timeframe that takes into account the dynamic development of the digital environment and of its uses by children.

3.3 Governments should support regional and international capacity-building efforts to improve policy and operational measures that take account of the best interests of children in the digital environment, including sharing of successful learning and awareness raising tools; and

3.4 Governments should actively co-operate to ensure the good co-ordination of work by the various international and regional organisations and bodies that play a role in supporting government efforts in this area.

Section 4. Digital Service Providers

4.1 Recognising the essential role of Digital Service Providers in providing a safe and beneficial digital environment for children, Governments, and other Actors, should make efforts to develop best practices and codes of conduct, such as the OECD Guidelines for Digital Service Providers, taking into account the domestic legal and regulatory context in which Digital Service Providers operate, as well as differences in their roles and the services and products they provide, in order to support Digital Service Providers in determining how best to protect and respect the rights, safety, and interests of children when they take actions that may directly or indirectly affect children in the digital environment.