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## THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF TEACHERS IN ENSURING STUDENT SAFETY IN A DIGITAL EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

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**INTRODUCTION:** The 21st century is the era of information and communication technologies, and the education system has not remained untouched by these transformations. The digital education environment has become an integral part of the educational process, creating new opportunities for students. However, alongside the widespread adoption of digital technologies, the issue of ensuring students' safety in the online environment has become increasingly critical.

The global transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the importance of the digital education environment. At the same time, the risk of students being exposed to cyber threats significantly increased [1]. In the digital environment, students may face various risks, including cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, misuse of personal information, online fraud, and other cyber threats.

In this context, the role and responsibility of teachers have become even more significant. Teachers are not only educators but also protectors of students in the digital environment. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of teachers in ensuring student safety in the digital education environment and to define their responsibilities.

### MAIN BODY

#### Key Risks in the Digital Education Environment

In the digital education environment, students may encounter the following primary risks:

- **Cyberbullying and Digital Harassment:** Deliberate insults, threats, and psychological pressure among students on online learning platforms. Research indicates that cyberbullying incidents increased by 40% during online education [2].
- **Access to Inappropriate and Harmful Content:** Students may encounter materials unsuitable for their age, such as content promoting violence, pornography, or extremist ideologies. This poses a particularly serious risk for younger students.
- **Misuse of Personal Information:** Students' personal data, such as addresses, phone numbers, and other confidential information, may be misused or shared with third parties.
- **Online Fraud and Financial Deception:** Students may fall victim to various online scams or inadvertently misuse their parents' financial information.

#### Teachers' Key Duties and Responsibilities

- **Education and Awareness:** Teachers must teach students the basics of digital safety, explain internet safety rules, and provide practical skills. This process should be ongoing, as cyber threats are constantly evolving [3].
- **Monitoring and Oversight:** Teachers should monitor students' online activities to a certain extent, pay attention to unusual behaviors, and take prompt action when necessary. This can be achieved not only through technical tools but also through direct communication with students.
- **Creating a Safe Learning Environment:** Teachers must foster a safe environment in their classes and on online platforms, ensuring a comfortable and secure space for all students. This requires adherence to established rules and norms.
- **Collaboration with Parents:** To ensure students' digital safety, teachers should maintain regular communication with parents, inform them about cyber threats, and encourage the implementation of safety measures at home.

### **Practical Recommendations and Strategies**

- **Technological Solutions:** Teachers can utilize various software and technological tools, such as content filters, parental control programs, secure online platforms, and monitoring systems. These tools help restrict access to harmful content and monitor students' online activities.
- **Methodological Approaches:** Integrating digital safety education into the learning process is essential. This can be achieved through dedicated lessons or by incorporating relevant topics into existing subjects.
- **Psychological Support:** Teachers should monitor students' psychological well-being and, when necessary, provide psychological support or refer students to specialists. Students exposed to cyber threats often require psychological assistance.

### **International Experience and Best Practices**

In developed countries, the issue of digital education safety is given serious attention. Countries like Finland, Singapore, and Estonia conduct specialized training programs for teachers to enhance their skills in digital safety [4]. Studying and adapting these experiences to local conditions is of great importance.

In the European Union, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) establishes strict standards for protecting students' personal data in schools. Studying and applying this experience to local legislation is necessary.

### **CONCLUSION**

Ensuring student safety in the digital education environment is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires high competence and responsibility from teachers. Teachers play a central role in this process and must fulfill the following key duties:

1. **Prevention and Education:** Teaching students the basics of digital safety and keeping them continuously informed.
2. **Protection and Monitoring:** Observing students' online activities and taking prompt action when necessary.
3. **Collaboration:** Working with parents, school administration, and other specialists.
4. **Professional Development:** Staying updated with new trends and technologies in digital safety.

Ensuring the safety of the digital education environment is not only a technological issue but also a pedagogical, psychological, and social one. Teachers' efforts in this area are crucial for students' future and the digital security of society.

In the future, it is necessary to continue research in this direction, develop specialized training programs for teachers, and improve digital safety standards. Additionally, considering the emergence of new threats with the advancement of modern technologies, teachers' knowledge and skills must be continuously updated.

## REFERENCES

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