



St John's College, Southsea

Mat Round, Deputy Head (Pastoral), Designated Safeguarding Lead,
Head of Boarding

Can you share a bit about who you are, your school and your role within the school?

My name is Mat Round, I'm the Pastoral Deputy Head at St John's College, Southsea. It's an independent day and boarding school. My role sees me managing the boarding community as well as being the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). I also line manage the pastoral leaders within the day houses as well, which covers students in the Sixth Form, right down to students in Year 5.

How has NetSupport DNA helped with supporting your safeguarding efforts?

KCSIE outlines lots of responsibilities related to safeguarding and it is interwoven throughout that document. The reality of safeguarding and the lived experiences of children is that it is both in virtual contexts and real-world contexts. Our real-world contexts we can observe but, in terms of the online world, that can be a bit trickier to see.

We use NetSupport DNA, and I find it very useful from both a safeguarding and pastoral care point of view. A good example of this is around self-harm and eating disorders. During the various lockdowns, both issues have been seen to be on the rise, so we use NetSupport DNA to help us see what our students are searching for. That data is converted into information for us in really useful ways, such as with the Word Cloud function.



Every time a child types in something, it is logged and registered and then compared against a database of known terms. That database is updatable by both NetSupport, and importantly, also by us, where we can add terms that we are coming across. From this, you get to see the scope and size of any issues via the Word Cloud function.

We use the Word Cloud feature to assist our PSHE coordinator who designs our PSHE programme to augment it as needed. This allows us to be responsive so that if we see spikes, for example in our boys looking for more information on gym supplements and protein shakes, we can look at what they're learning in PE. If that isn't a topic they're studying, we can look at academic PE and see how they can be supported there, but also, our PSHE coordinator can put on sessions to support our students about healthy choices, healthy eating and so on.

We also get regular reports alongside the Word Cloud feature. The reports come at a frequency that works for us. At St John's, we have a vertical house system and every few weeks, every head of house, house parents and I get a report about the most common searched-for and typed phrases and, within that, we can start to have more meaningful conversations with students. This is useful on several levels:

- You get to learn what children are searching for.
- You get to see what children are typing about.
- It's really good CPD for us to learn about the latest issues impacting our students.
- It helps us to have better conversations with students about wider general concerns.

How do you use NetSupport DNA on a daily basis?

It's used on a couple of levels. With everything typed into a device by a student or member of staff being logged on the system, it's a real time-saver in terms of safeguarding and picking up issues. It's also really useful to help us make sure we're aware of what is going on in the school and the issues impacting upon our community, whilst being mindful of the learning taking place across our curriculum.

Do you find the language packs useful for safeguarding in your school?

Very much so. One of the things I really like about them is that it not only facilitates tracking of our international students, but equally, the ability to add our own phrases that we've learned from them is really useful too. On top of that, it is of course important that we safeguard our international boarders too, so with that in mind, the language packs are even more useful.

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What are your favourite features in NetSupport DNA?

My absolute favourite feature is the Word Cloud. The reason for that is that it very quickly allows me to see the most searched for terms; it turns data into information and presents it in such an easy and accessible way. It's not just words on a page either, it's interactive, so not only can you see what the words are, but you can drill down and learn what the terms mean. This helps me to unpick the areas of concern, right across the entire school.

How has it helped you perform your safeguarding tasks?

The compliance aspect is key and NetSupport DNA ensures compliance, with confidence, to ensure you are on top of that. Having access to NetSupport DNA allows us to be reflective and reactive so that we can do far more than just be compliant. Our ability to be responsive to the needs of our student community is so important and, as such, DNA gives us the reassurance and flexibility to be able to both augment and be flexible with our programs at the school and the curriculum as required, based on the needs of our students.

