On this page

1. National strategy

2. Media literacy and online safety through formal education

3. Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

4. Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

National strategy

Official documents

Official documents and national strategies that play a role in this context are:

- **Kinder- und Jugendstärkungsgesetz**

  The act to strengthen children and young people (Kinder- und Jugendstärkungsgesetz [1]) of 29 June 2017 (adopted as part of the reform of Book VIII of the Social Code) assigns responsibility for teaching media literacy to child and youth services and considers it part of educational child and youth protection (erzieherische Kinder- und Jugendschutz). The relevant section (Section 14 (1) of Book VIII of the Social Code [2]) will be amended accordingly. The act comes into force on 1 January 2018.

- **The Federal Government's Digital Agenda (Digitale Agenda 2014–2017 der Bundesregierung [3])**

  The Digital Agenda aims to shape the digital transformation of the economy and of society and in so doing, improving participation in society. During the next parliamentary term from 2017 onwards, the challenge will be to continue establishing a democratic digital culture and improving media literacy [4].

- **Jugendschutzgesetz (JuSchG)**
The Protection of Young Persons Act (Jugendschutzgesetz, JuSchG) of 23 July 2002 is the legal basis for protecting children and adolescents from any harm to their mental, psychological and physical welfare. It stipulates age limits for public film screenings (Section 11), for data media with films and games (Section 12) and labelling of films (Section 14), for instance.

Last amended through Section 11 on 10 March 2017.

- **Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag**

The Inter-State Agreement on Youth Protection in the Media (Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag, JMStV) of the German federal states is the universally applicable legal basis for youth protection concerning radio, TV and the internet. It stipulates when and how certain media content may be broadcast or otherwise distributed. The aim is to protect children and adolescents from content in electronic information or communication media that interfere with or endanger their development or education. In addition, it affords protection from content in electronic information or communication media that violates their human dignity or any other legal interests protected by the criminal code (Strafgesetzbuch).

The Inter-State Agreement was last amended in December 2015.

Currently applicable version: JMStV in the version corresponding to the 19th amendment to the Inter-State Treaty on Broadcasting (19. Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrag).

The Protection of Young Persons Act and the Inter-State Agreement on Youth Protection in the Media complement each other and together form a coordinated piece of legislation. Both pieces of legislation contain corresponding provisions, ensuring that both federal and state bodies operate according to the same standards of protection.

- **Strategy "Bildungsoffensive für die digitale Wissensgesellschaft"**

The “education offensive for the digital knowledge society” (Bildungsoffensive für die digitale Wissensgesellschaft) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) provides a systematic framework for digital education in Germany. The strategy promotes the teaching of digital literacy and learning with digital media. Divided into five areas of action, it describes the potential of digital education systematically and for all areas of education. It highlights opportunities and areas of action that are a result of digital transformation in all stages of the education system, from early learning and school to vocational training, higher education and professional training. The strategy was adopted in October 2016.

- **Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz (NetzDG)**

At the interface between media literacy, youth protection and internet policy is the Federal Government’s network enforcement act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, NetzDG) of 30 June 2017, which combats online hate speech. Provides of social media services are to be given more responsibility to combat online hate speech and establish more effective complaints management mechanisms.

- **Media education in schools**

Key documents in connection with media education in schools are:

- Orientation framework for media education in schools
In 1995 the Bund-Länder committee (Bund-Länder-Kommission, BLK) adopted an orientation framework for media education in schools (Orientierungsrahmen für eine Medienerziehung in der Schule [9]).

- Declaration on media education in schools

The declaration on media education in schools (Erklärung zur Medienbildung in der Schule [10]) was adopted on 8 March 2012 by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz). It is designed to make media education an integral part of the mandatory school curriculum and to provide schools and teachers with guidance on media education in the classroom.

- Education in the digital world

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK) adopted the strategy “Education in the digital world (Bildung in der digitalen Welt [11]) in December 2016. It contains objectives and areas of action for all 16 federal states, the federal government, local authorities, school organisations and schools. By the end of 2017, a working group is to be set up at the state secretary level that will draw up a federal/state agreement (Bund-Länder-Vereinbarung) to promote education in the digital world in schools (also known as the Digital Pact for Schools, or Digitalpakt Schule). The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz) agreed on the basic outline of the agreement in June 2017. As part of the talks, the federal government pledged around five billion euros for the period 2018 to 2022 for expanding the IT infrastructure in general-education, vocational and special-needs schools in the public and private sector.

More information, analyses and opinions on the situation regarding media teaching and education are available on the website of the initiative “No education without media!” (Keine Bildung ohne Medien! [12]).

Relevant organisations

At the federal level, a number of ministries are supporting projects and activities that promote media literacy and digital education from a variety of angles. They include the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend), the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz) in matters relating to consumer protection, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung), the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie), the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern), and the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (Bundesministerium für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur).

Given that the federal states are responsible for education, media education is also part of their remit. The state media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten) are active both in the field of statutory youth media protection and in preventive youth protection. Promoting media literacy among children, adolescents and multipliers plays a major role in this respect, both in the formal and in the non-formal education sector. The Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media (Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz, KJM [13]), part of the state media authorities, verifies whether content disseminated by private-sector radio and telemedia whether it violates the Inter-State Agreement on Youth Protection in the Media (Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag, JMStV) and where necessary decides to sanction such content.
Additional organisations dealing with various media (film, games, print media and audio, TV and radio, media education) are listed on the website of the Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors (Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien [14]).

The Institute for Media Research and Media Education (Institut für Medienpädagogik in Forschung und Praxis, JFF [15]) is a one-of-its-kind institution in Germany. It deals with research and educational practice in the field of media consumption of adolescents. The outcome of their research provides input for model approaches in education and cultural work with children and adolescents.

**Media literacy and online safety through formal education**

**Integration in curricula**

Media education and media literacy is the responsibility of the federal states, which is why the degree to which media literacy is integrated into the curricula varies from state to state.

For instance, North Rhine-Westphalia’s education act (Schulgesetz [16]), specifically Section 2 (6) item 9, states that pupils should “learn to use media responsibly and confidently”. This is where, e.g., the media passport (Medienpass NRW [17]) comes into play, an initiative of the North Rhine-Westphalian government from 2010. The aim is to make media literacy a firm part of the school day and to improve the connection between schools and non-school activities in this field. Medienpass NRW is a source of orientation for instructors and teachers that helps them to understand what skills children and adolescents should have. A curriculum compass (Lehrplankompass) suggests how and where the relevant exercises can be integrated into the classroom. It also provides practical advice for teachers. The project “Media scouts” (Medienscouts NRW [18]) of the North Rhine-Westphalian media authorities (Landesanstalt für Medien in Nordrhein-Westfalen) trains small groups of secondary school pupils to become knowledgeable scouts.

In 2016, a basic course in media education (Basiskurs Medienbildung [19]) was introduced in Gymnasium-type schools in Baden-Württemberg. Taught in year 5, the basic course is an entry-level class in learning how to handle and consume media independently and responsibly. Pupils who have completed the course are issued with a media passport (Medienpass).

In 2009, the Bavarian State Chancellery (Bayerische Staatskanzlei) and the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture (Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus) introduced a “media driver’s licence” in Bavaria (Medienführerschein Bayern [20]). It serves to strengthen media literacy among children, young people and adults. It offers lesson plans for primary and several types of secondary schools (Mittelschule, Realschule, Gymnasium).

The city-state of Hamburg issues media passports (Medienpass [21]) with five modules. It helps teachers accompany children and adolescents as they move through the digital world and assist them in learning to handle digital services and information in a socially responsible, competent way. For Hamburg’s schools, including this material in the curriculum is mandatory.

More information on the various reference frameworks, concepts and curricula in the field of media education is available on the German Education Server (Deutscher Bildungsserver [22]).

See also the report by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend) entitled “Promoting media literacy among children and adolescents. Situation report” (Medienkompetenzförderung für Kinder und Jugendliche. Eine Bestandsaufnahme [23]).

**Technical and Vocational Education and Training**
The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) has launched a promotion programme on digital media in vocational training (Digitale Medien in der beruflichen Bildung [24]). The aim is to promote media literacy and media education competence among employees who provide tuition to apprentices inside companies. The sectors in question include industry (e.g., automotive), retail, crafts and trades, and horticulture and landscape engineering. The projects affiliated with the project seek to establish media literacy as a firm element of in-company vocational training. The programme receives funding from BMBF and the European Social Fund (ESF) (programme period: 2014-2020).

Media literacy issues

Media literacy is taught in very different ways in schools. It spans a wide variety of themes and is taught using various methods. Some themes are closely aligned with the curriculum; here, media are used largely as teaching devices. Some media-related issues such as cyberbullying, e-debt, love and online dating are given special treatment. Some schools focus on the creative, productive use of media, including internet research and usage rights. A wide variety of media are used in the classroom: digital images, video clips, learning platforms, online encyclopaedias, blogs and webquests [23].

Support for teachers

A wide variety of institutions offer training courses on media education and media literacy. They include the state institutions for teacher training and school development, the state media authorities, adult education centres, media education associations and educational organisations.

Examples of training courses, e.g., offered by the state media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten [25]):

- Authority of the State of Hesse for private radio and new media (Hessische Landesanstalt für privaten Rundfunk und neue Medien): News caching – News, fake news, hate speech & co. How to navigate online news. ([News Caching - Nachrichten, Fake News, Hate Speech & Co - Zurechtfinden in Online-Nachrichten] [26]). School project with integrated teacher training
- Media authority of the State of Berlin-Brandenburg (Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg): Teaching 2.0 – Media literacy in the classroom ([Teaching 2.0 - Medienkompetenz im Klassenzimmer] [27]). For trainee teachers.
- Media authority of the State of Saxony-Anhalt (Medienanstalt Sachsen-Anhalt): Teacher training course “Radio in the classroom” ([Radio im Unterricht] [28])

Teachers have a range of online resources at their disposal to prepare and debrief their lessons. Among the most frequently used resources are specialist websites, online encyclopaedias, education servers and online video portals [29].

- Internet ABC for teachers ([Das Internet-ABC für Lehrkräfte] [30]) offers guidance on preparing children for using the internet. The resource includes teaching material, tips on how to use the “internet ABC” in the classroom plus information on children and the media.
- [www.so-geht-medien.de] [31] is a resource produced by the public media ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio on media literacy. It is aimed mainly at teachers and pupils. The aim of the website is to assist them in teaching and acquiring media literacy skills.
- [www.lehrer-online.de] [32] offers teachers at all levels (primary, secondary and vocational) lesson plans, exercises and information on education, didactics and media literacy with a focus on the use of digital media in the classroom.
- The state education servers ([Landesbildungsserver] [33]) offer information and material on media
literacy. List of state education servers:

**Regional level (Länder)**

The state institute for school and media (Landesinstitut für Schule und Medien) of Berlin-Brandenburg is the publisher of a manual on cyberbullying (*Cybermobbing ist nicht cool* [34]). It contains a project report plus recommended measures to prevent and address cyberbullying incidents. The manual was distributed free of charge to schools across the state.

The senate administration for justice, consumer protection and anti-discrimination (Senatsverwaltung für Justiz, Verbraucherschutz und Antidiskriminierung) in Berlin promotes interactive workshops in schools on how to manage online data and on cyberbullying and cyberstalking [35] (in German).

**Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning**

**Projects and initiatives at federal level (Bund)**

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ [36]) promotes the following projects and initiatives:

- The initiative LOOK OUT! How your child handles media (*SCHAU HIN! Was Dein Kind mit Medien macht* [37]) offers parents and guardians of children aged 3 to 13 guidance on handling digital media. It provides hands-on tips and activities on how to address children’s media consumption.
- The multimedia award (*Multimediapreis* [38]) mb21 recognises creative projects run by young media producers in various age groups (11-15, 16-20 for school pupils and 12-25 for university students and apprentices). It was established in 1998. A theme-specific special award is given away every year (2019: „Something about media“).
- The Dieter Baacke Award (*Dieter Baacke Preis* [39]) recognises educational, social and cultural model projects in the non-formal education area as well as cooperation projects between formal and non-formal educational organisations that encourage young people and families to develop a creative, critical way to handle media and develop media literacy. A special award was presented in 2019 "Be cheeky, wild and wonderful" (special award 2017 was on the critical use of media, echo chambers, hate speech and fake news). The Dieter Baacke Award manuals (*Handbücher* [40]) provide an introduction to the winning projects and give users helpful tips on methods, opportunities and challenges in media education.
- The funding guidelines of the national programme “Live democracy” (*Demokratie leben* [41]) make reference to the importance of civic commitment online and of combating online hate speech. The programme promotes model projects that are designed to strengthen democracy and civic commitment online. Its innovative educational formats seek to help children and adolescents, but also parents and multipliers and teachers to develop the skills they need to respond adequately to hate speech and hostility online. Individuals and groups on the receiving end of racism and discrimination are to be empowered through the development of new formats. Projects that work with adolescents at risk of engaging in hostile behaviour as well as with radicalised young people are also supported under this programme.

Between 2009 and 2015 the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, BMJV [42]) ran the project “Watch your web” [43]”. It offered young people information on safety in social networks, internet scams, mobile phone security, data protection, consumer rights and copyright issues on the internet. Amongst other things, the project developer a smartphone app to raise awareness among young users in a playful manner of safe internet use. It also produced an “education package” with material that young people could use to prepare and hold their own workshops and activities on online safety, data protection and copyright
issues. The project brochure “My digital life - A brief guide on legal issues” (Mein digitales Leben - Rechtliches kurz erklärt) helps young people to understand complex matters such as copyright, personal rights and data protection. More outcomes and project documents (Projekte und Dokumente [43]).

The Watch your web project also launched the WebDays event [44], which was spun off to become a separate project in 2016. At WebDays, young people meet up with politicians and experts to discuss consumer protection in the digital world. Event Webdays 2018 [45], Results 2016 (Ergebnisse 2018 [46]). Young people drew up an agenda for data and consumer protection in the digital world (Agenda zu Daten- und Verbraucherschutz in der digitalen Welt [47]) and presented it to Germany’s Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection and at the national IT summit. Agenda with requests addressed to politicians. Further WebDays events will be held between 2017 and 2020.

The initiative “No education without media!” (Keine Bildung ohne Medien [48]) is a nationwide initiative to promote media education in all areas of society. Its aims are:

- Media education in early-learning centres and schools, non-school educational settings and in inclusive activities for individuals with disabilities
- Media education for parents, especially those who are less educated
- Funding for media education activities
- Setup and promotion of media education networks
- Mandatory media education in educational degree courses; more research on media education.

More examples to foster media literacy funded by the federal government in Germany: Answer of the federal government to members of parliament (Thomas Hacker, Katja Suding, Nicola Beer, and more and the parliamentary group of the liberals) (Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Thomas Hacker, Katja Suding, Nicola Beer, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der FDP – Drucksache 19/3226 [49])

Projects and initiatives at regional level (Länder)

The state media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten [25]) are responsible for promoting media literacy and media education among young people. They offer a variety of projects to promote media literacy. Examples:

- The project “Smartphone sector” (Handysektor [50]) is run by the state media authority for North Rhine-Westphalia. It raises awareness among young users of potential dangers when using smartphones and encourages the responsible use of these devices.

More information on the media literacy activities of the state media authorities is given at Die Medienanstalten: Medienkompetenz [51]

Training

Training for child and youth services experts, youth workers and multipliers is offered by, inter alia:

- The Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, BpB), which has a collection of materials on media education (BpB: Material Medienpädagogik [52]).
- The German chapter of the International Federation of Educative Communities (Internationale Gesellschaft für erzieherische Hilfen [53]) offers media literacy and education support for child and youth services workers: Two-part in-service training course.
- The clearing house for media literacy (Clearingstelle Medienkompetenz [54]) of the German Bishops’ Conference (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz) at the Catholic University of Applied
Sciences (Katholische Hochschule) in Mainz offers a course on media education ([Zertifikationskurs](#)) in practice for multipliers, who are awarded with a certificate upon successful completion.

- The institute for youth work (Institut für Jugendarbeit) in Gauting offers a course in media education in youth work ([Medienpädagogische Praxis in der Jugendarbeit](#)).

The regional association of Westphalia-Lippe ([Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, LWL](#)) offers training courses on media education.

For an overview of training courses on media education, go to the website of the Association for Media Education and Communication Culture ([Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur, GMK](#)).

**Funding**

Federal programmes, projects and initiatives on media literacy and online safety receive funding from, inter alia, the budget of the Child and Youth Plan of the federation ([Kinder- und Jugendplans des Bundes](#)) or the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection (Verbraucherschutzministerium). The projects of the state media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten) are funded by federal state budgets or TV/radio licence fees ([GEZ-Gebühren](#)). Since 1 January 2013 every German household has been liable to a standard TV/radio licence fee of 17.50 euros per month (as at November 2019).

**Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media**

**Information and advice**

The Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors ([Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien, BPjM](#)) is an independent supreme federal authority that is affiliated with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth ([Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ](#)). It verifies whether media content is harmful to young people or not. It is also responsible for promoting media education and media awareness and advising members of the public on matters relating to protection of youth from harmful media.

Information and advice online:

- [jugendschutz.net](#) monitors mostly youth-related content and activities online for youth protection breaches. The nationwide platform documents reactions to and measures taken against content that is in violation of the relevant legislation. Internet users can also report breaches via the site.
- The website “[internet-beschwerdestelle.de](#)” is another place where users can report content that is harmful to minors. The website is run by the German Association for Voluntary Self-Regulation of Digital Media Service Providers (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Dienstanbieter, FSM) and the Association of the Internet Industry (eco – Verband der Internetwirtschaft).
- The independent platform “[Internet-ABC](#)”, which is run by the organisation “Internet-ABC e.V.”, an affiliate of the state media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten), offers information for parents, teachers and children on how to use the internet safely.
- The portal [www.juuuport.de](#) is a platform for young people to offer peer-to-peer support if they encounter trouble while using the internet. Juuupro scouts are specially trained to provide this service. A forum allows users to share experiences. Juuupro is run by seven state media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten), with Lower Saxony taking the lead.
- Between 2012 and 2015 the free online resource “End bullying!” ([Mobbing - Schluss damit!](#))
for children, young people, adults and schools received funding as part of the initiative “A network for children” (Ein Netz für Kinder) by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien) and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend). The website continues to exist.

- The portal “youngdata.de” is where young internet users learn about handling their own data and that of others and how to navigate the internet. It is the youth portal of the independent data protection authorities of the federal and state government and of the Canton of Zurich (Switzerland).
- The website “Riskfree chatting” (Chatten ohne Risiko) by jugendschutz.net and the state authority for communication (Landesanstalt für Kommunikation) in Baden-Württemberg offers young people information and tips on safe online communication.
- Website of the police’s national and state criminal prevention scheme (Polizeiliche Kriminalprävention der Länder und des Bundes)
- State media authorities (Landesmedienanstalten),
- Online counselling service of the federal organisation for education counselling (Bundeskonferenz für Erziehungsberatung, bke) for young people and young adults
- Youth information centres (Jugendinformationszentren), e.g. Jugendinfo Bremen.

The free child and youth helpline (Nummer gegen Kummer 116111) provides advice to young people by phone and via online chat if they need help after having been bullied or harassed online.

Face-to-face counselling and information is also offered by the consumer advice centres (Verbraucherzentralen) in the 16 federal states.

**Initiatives for more risk awareness**

The initiative “Online safety” (Sicher online gehen) of the federal government (specifically BMFSFJ), the federal states and the private sector was launched in July 2012 to help protect children online.

BMFSFJ runs various projects to assist children in growing up safely while using media. Amongst other things, it supports the No Hate Speech campaign of the Council of Europe. In Germany, the campaign NO HATE SPEECH is managed by the organisation New German Media Professionals (Neue Deutsche Medienmacher). Young people, too, need to be made aware of hate speech online. The initiative LOOK OUT! How your child handles media (SCHAU HIN! Was Dein Kind mit Medien macht) is aimed at parents and guardians of children aged 3 to 13 and provides guidance on handling digital media.

Germany has signed up to the EU campaign klicksafe. It serves to help internet users become critical and competent users of the internet and new media. In Germany, the state authority for media and communication (Landeszentrale für Medien und Kommunikation, LMK) of Rhineland-Palatinate and the state authority for media (Landesanstalt für Medien, LfM) of North Rhine-Westphalia are jointly responsible for implementing it. Among the materials published by Klicksafe is a manual about how to combat cyberbullying (Ratgeber Cyber-Mobbing).