

# **Safeguarding and child protection: awareness raising and update for governors**

**September 2026**

## **Session Objectives**

By the end of the session you should understand:

- ▶ the current guidance available to staff and governors in relation to safeguarding
- ▶ what is meant by safeguarding in schools and the categories of child abuse
- ▶ the school and governors' roles in safeguarding, including the roles of Nominated Governor and Chair of Governors

# Further references and website addresses

## **Essex Safeguarding Children Board**

<http://www.escb.org.uk/>

Includes a link to the **SET procedures** (2026)

## **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The **NSPCC Helpline** is a service for anyone concerned about the safety or welfare of a child. You can contact the helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week by phone, email or online. 0808 800 5000

## **Childline**

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

0800 1111

## **Ofsted website**

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

## **Ofsted helpline**

08456 404045

## **Educate Against Hate**

<http://educateagainsthate.com>

## **Essex Schools Infolink safeguarding resources**

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/Safeguarding.aspx>

## **Essex Effective Support for children and families** - referrals and guidance

<https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/>

**ThinkUKnow** <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

## **Brook Sexual Behaviours traffic light tool**

<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

## **The Blast Project**

<http://www.mesmac.co.uk/projects/blast>

## **Alright Charlie**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGEgn767XAk>

[www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

## **NSPCC PANTS campaign**

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

## ***Publications:***

**Keeping children safe in education –statutory guidance for schools and colleges** (September 2026)

**What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused** (2015)

**Working Together to Safeguard Children** (March 2026)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2#full-publication-update-history>

**Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings** (October 2021)

**Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex** – guidance for all practitioners in working together with children and families to provide early help and targeted and specialist support (June 2026)

**No one noticed, no one heard: a study of disclosures of childhood abuse** (NSPCC)

**How safe are our children?** NSPCC report 2018

**PREVENT Duty** – DfE guidance December 2023

**PREVENT Policy** for Southend, Essex and Thurrock

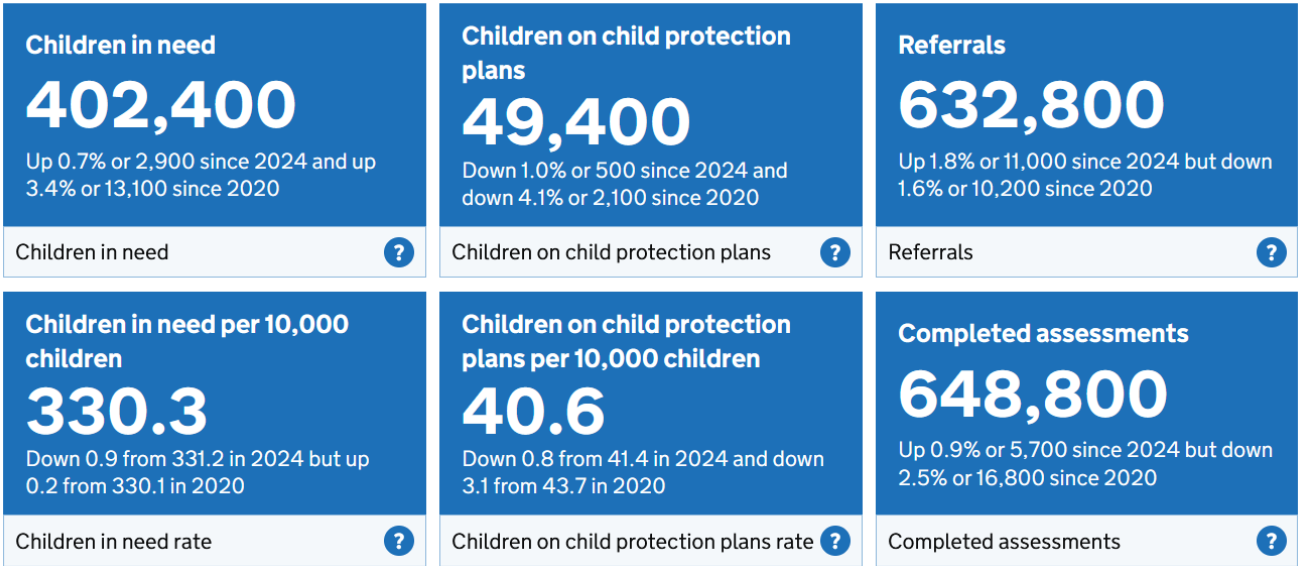
All on the safeguarding page Essex Primary Headteachers' Association [www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk](http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk)

# How many children are abused or neglected in the UK

We don't know exactly how many children in the UK are victims of [child abuse](#). Child abuse is usually hidden from view and children may be too young, too scared or too ashamed to tell anyone about what is happening to them.

## DfE Children in Need data 2025

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need>



In 2025:

- Over 400,000 children were classed as in need (around 1 in every 30 children) and nearly 50,000 children were on protection plans (around 1 in every 250 children or 1 in every 8 children in need).
- Although the associated rate (per 10,000 children) fell for the third consecutive year, following a rise in 2022 when COVID-19 restrictions on school attendance were lifted (see referrals section for more information), the number of children in need increased from 2024. The number of referrals and completed assessments also rose from 2024.
- The number and rate of children on protection plans fell for the third consecutive year, representing the lowest figures since 2014 and 2013 respectively.
- All of the headline measures were lower than 2020 (which mostly pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic in England), except for the number and rate of children in need.

The figures relate to the initial category of abuse assigned to the child protection plan rather than the most recent category of abuse.

Children in Need are a legally defined group of children (under the [Children Act 1989](#)), assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. This group includes children on child in need plans, children on child protection plans, children looked after by local authorities, care leavers and disabled children. Children in need include young people aged 18 or over who continue to receive care, accommodation or support from children's services and unborn children.

## How many children are abused or neglected in the UK – NSPCC research

[Statistics child abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

We don't know exactly how many children in the UK experience abuse, although we can use different information sources to build a picture of the scale of child abuse.

But abuse is usually hidden from view. Adults may not recognise the signs that a child is being abused and children may not recognise that what is happening to them is abuse – or they may be too young, too scared or too ashamed to tell anyone.

### Sexual abuse (*statistics briefing February 2024*)

- Concerns around sexual abuse have been identified for over 2,400 children in the UK who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register.
- Over a third of all police-recorded sexual offences are against children.
- Girls and older children are more likely to experience sexual abuse.
- The vast majority of children who experience contact sexual abuse were abused by someone they knew.

### Physical abuse (*statistics briefing April 2024*)

It's unknown how many children in the UK experience physical abuse. However, research with 2,275 young people aged 11-17 about their experiences of physical abuse suggests around 1 in 14 children in the UK have been physically abused.

- Concerns around physical abuse have been identified for around 1 in 10 children who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK.
- There were over 200,000 offences related to child physical abuse recorded by police in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2022/2023. Equivalent data is not available for Scotland.
- Physical abuse is the second most commonly mentioned form of abuse in both contacts to the NSPCC Helpline and Childline counselling sessions.

### Emotional abuse (*statistics briefing April 2024*)

Most child abuse includes an element of emotional abuse, but it is recorded as a specific concern for over 1 in 3 children who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK.

There were over 7,000 contacts to the NSPCC's Helpline and over 2,700 Childline counselling sessions in 2022/23 about emotional abuse.

There were over 61,000 police-recorded offences related to emotional abuse in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2022/23. Data was not available for Scotland.

### Neglect (*statistics briefing March 2024*)

It's difficult to measure exactly how many children in the UK experience neglect. However, research with 2,275 young people aged 11-17 about their experiences of neglect suggests around 1 in 10 children in the UK have been neglected.

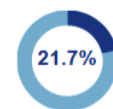
- Neglect is the most common form of abuse.
- Concerns around neglect have been identified for around half of children who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK.
- The number of police recorded child cruelty offences is increasing.
- Neglect is the most commonly mentioned form of abuse by adults contacting the NSPCC helpline.

## Essex information

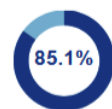
- Essex is a two Tier Local Authority with a population of around 1 ½ million people, of which over 310,000 are children.
- Essex has lower levels of deprivation than two-thirds of English Local Authorities, but relatively high levels of deprivation when compared to counties across the south-east.
- It is a county of contrasts, with very wealthy and extremely deprived neighbourhoods; and the number of children living in poverty has doubled since 2015.
- Health Services in Essex is now provided by one Integrated Care System – the Essex Integrated Care Board works across more than one Local Authority area.
- Policing services in Essex are provided by Essex Police who work across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET).
- Children's Social Care is provided by Essex County Council.
- Whilst Education is not a mandated Statutory Partner, we firmly see Education as our fourth partner and their involvement in and contribution to all we do is highly valued. Education is well represented on the ESCB Executive and all of our Sub-Committees

## Essex Contextual Information – ESCB report 2024-25

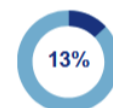
- Estimated population of 1.5 million people.
- Children and young people make up 21.7% of our population (322,812).
- 4.2% of the school population is supported with an Education and Health Care Plan.
- Around 57,218 children are taught in Essex's 208 maintained schools and 165,846 are taught in 343 Academies.
- More than 9 out of 10 of schools are judged as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted (93%).
- 13% of our children are estimated to be living in Relative Low Income households, and this rises to 25% in some locality areas.
- 20% of children at primary school and 19% at secondary school access free school meals.
- 85.1% of the population is White/ British.
- English as an additional language is used by 12% at Primary age and 9.4% at Secondary age. 7 of the top 10 other languages used in Essex are of European origin.
- 143 General Practices across Essex.



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In Essex we have four levels of need for children: Universal, Additional, Intensive and Specialist. Services for children with additional and intensive needs are sometimes known as targeted services, such as behaviour support, additional help with learning in school, extra support to parents in early years or targeted help to involve young people through youth services. Children with additional needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as Family Hubs or schools, organising additional support with local partners as needed. Our Team Around the Family Support Officers (TAFSO) and Family Solutions sit within the Targeted Services offer and Children's Social Care and Youth Offending Services delivers under Intensive Needs.

The Department for Education (DfE) has published [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) for the 2026/27 academic year. The guidance comes into force on 1 September 2026.

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. Schools and colleges in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The DfE uses the terms “**must**” and “**should**” throughout the guidance. It uses the term “must” when the person in question is legally required to do something and “should” when the advice set out should be followed unless there is good reason not to.

### **A whole school and college approach to safeguarding**

Keeping Children Safe in Education emphasises that governing bodies should ensure they facilitate a whole school or college approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

All staff must now read part 1 of KCSIE in full

*Previously, schools could decide whether to let staff who don't work directly with children read a condensed version (see page 7 under 'School and college staff').*

*Annex A (the condensed version of part 1 of KCSIE 2025) has been removed.*

### **Other key changes**

The updated document has new sections and updated expectations that include:

- Enhanced guidance on supporting pupils who are questioning their gender – schools are expected to take a ‘very careful’ approach when responding to requests related to social transition (paragraphs 252 to 282)
- New safeguarding requirements for school premises and sports – schools must not allow children into toilets, changing rooms or showers designated for the opposite biological sex, and a new section covers single-sex sports exceptions based on biological sex (paragraphs 95 to 98, 106 and 113)
- More guidance on AI – including new links to resources to support schools in making decisions around the use of generative AI (paragraph 165)
- Updated expectations for child protection policies – including procedures for handling both consensual and non-consensual making and sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI (paragraph 191)
- A new section covering mobile phones in school – all schools are expected to implement a policy where pupils don’t have access to their phones at all during the school day (paragraph 168)
- New guidance on serious violence as a safeguarding concern – including guidance around schools’ role in protecting children from violence, sharing information early and supporting those at risk (paragraphs 49 to 52)

- Clarified guidance on child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence – part 5 of KCSIE now explains that harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence (paragraph 527)
- Barred list checks for volunteers – anyone volunteering in a school who teaches, trains, instructs or supervises children frequently or more than 3 days in a 30-day period is now in regulated activity (paragraph 381)

### **Governors and trustees should:**

- Receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, which is regularly updated, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge. This is so they can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support your school to deliver a robust whole school approach to safeguarding
- Be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Make sure:
  - Your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job. Governing bodies need to give the DSL the additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out their role effectively
  - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies/procedures (this has now been specified as a responsibility of governing bodies and proprietors)
  - The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the filters and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns
  - Your school has procedures to manage **any** safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns), about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors).
  - The child protection policy reflects that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional barriers, including cognitive understanding (being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges, or the consequences of doing so).
- Seek assurance that where another body is providing services or activities, that they have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll/attend the college

## Human Rights Act

83. The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels public organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them.

84. Under the HRA, it is unlawful for schools and colleges to act in a way that is incompatible with the Convention. The specific convention rights applying to schools and colleges are:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination,<sup>25</sup> and
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education.

85. Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. Further information (including on absolute and qualified rights) can be found at Human Rights | Equality and Human Rights Commission ([equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com)).

## Equality Act 2010

86. Schools and colleges have obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act).

87. According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

88. Whilst all of the above protections are important, in the context of safeguarding, this guidance, and the legal duties placed on schools and colleges in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, governing bodies and proprietors should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils and students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

89. Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with a particular protected characteristic in order to meet their specific need, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people, including those with long term conditions. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.

90. Guidance to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act can be found at Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)), it may also be useful for colleges. For further information Equality Act guidance | Equality and Human Rights Commission ([equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com)).

## Public Sector Equality Duty

91. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is found in the Equality Act. Compliance with the PSED is a legal requirement for state-funded schools and colleges, advice on this – including on specific duties, is set out in the advice linked in paragraph 90.

92. The PSED places a general duty on schools and colleges to have, in the exercise of their functions, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The duty applies to all protected characteristics (see para 87) and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration must be given to the equality implications of these such as, for example, the need to eliminate unlawful behaviours that

relate to them such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry and racism. This is one reason why good record-keeping and monitoring of all forms of abuse and harassment is essential.

93. The PSED helps schools and colleges (which are subject to it) to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil and student outcomes. Some pupils or students may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. Such concerns will differ between education settings, but it is important schools and colleges are conscious of disproportionate vulnerabilities and integrate this into their safeguarding policies and procedures. For further information please see Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty: England | Equality and Human Rights Commission ([equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com))

## The safeguarding responsibilities of governing bodies, proprietors and management committees

| Requirement<br>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | In place<br><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> or X | Action to be taken |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Mandatory</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                    |                    |
| <p><b>All staff</b> are aware of systems in the school that support safeguarding and these have been explained to them as part of staff induction. (11) These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 1 of KCSiE and Annex B</li> <li>• the child protection policy</li> <li>• the school's behaviour policy</li> <li>• the staff code of conduct</li> <li>• the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education</li> <li>• the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies) (Annex B KCSiE)</li> </ul> |                                                                    |                    |
| The school has a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements. (8, 125 )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                    |                    |
| To ensure continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, the school has implemented robust cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable due to illness, leave or other circumstances. This could, for example, include a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted upon without delay. (127)                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                    |                    |
| All governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge, to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training is regularly updated. (85)                                                                                                                                    |                                                                    |                    |
| The Governing Body is aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. (86)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                    |                    |
| The Governing Body is aware and understands the arrangements that may need to be introduced to accommodate children who are questioning their gender and/or considering or going through social transition. (95 – 98, 105 – 116, 252-282)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                    |                    |
| Governing bodies are aware that, among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                    |                    |

| <b>Requirement<br/>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>In place<br/>✓ or X</b> | <b>Action to be taken</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. (103)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                            |                           |
| There is a whole school or college approach to safeguarding. This means involving everyone in the school and ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. (117 -119)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                            |                           |
| The school has a child protection policy and procedures in place –including a staff behaviour policy (Code of Conduct) that are in accordance with government and local authority guidance, updated annually (as a minimum) and made available publically via the school’s website. (34)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                            |                           |
| The school has put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. (121)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                            |                           |
| The school holds (where reasonably possible) more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. (124)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                            |                           |
| A senior member of the school’s leadership team is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding - the “designated safeguarding lead”, who will undertake training every two years. (125)<br>The school/academy ensures that there is a designated lead available at all times that the school is open for staff to discuss concerns. (127)<br>Any deputy is trained to the same standard as the DSL. (128)<br>In addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals, or at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role. |                            |                           |
| The job description for the person appointed as designated safeguarding leads should include specific reference to the role (125)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                            |                           |
| All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in writing. Information is kept confidential and stored securely. (72)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                            |                           |
| The school contributes to multi-agency working in line with the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children and knows that the three safeguarding partners – local authorities, health and the police – have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, in partnership with relevant agencies (including education) (130 -137)                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                            |                           |
| Governors know that all staff should be aware of the process for community-based Family Help Assessments,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                            |                           |

| Requirement<br>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | In place<br>✓ or X | Action to be taken |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <p>including the criteria for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted early help level – under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004</li> <li>• Statutory services delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, children in need</li> <li>• Referral to social care under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm</li> <li>• Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, care and supervision orders</li> <li>• Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, duty to accommodate a child (Looked after children)<br/> <a href="https://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/concerns-about-the-welfare-of-a-child/early-help-and-effective-support/">https://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/concerns-about-the-welfare-of-a-child/early-help-and-effective-support/</a></li> </ul> |                    |                    |
| <p>The school recognises the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. (139)</p> <p>The school processes personal information fairly and lawfully and keeps the information it holds safe and secure. (143)</p> <p>The school understands that fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. (145).</p> <p>Relevant staff have due regard to the data protection principles (144) and are aware that the “safeguarding of children and individuals at risk” is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information (144)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                    |
| <p>When a child leaves the school the DSL ensure that their child protection file is transferred to the next schools or college as soon as possible and obtains a receipt for the file. (148)</p> <p>Where appropriate, the DSL shares information with the new school in advance of the child leaving. (149)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                    |
| <p>All staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection (including online safety which, among other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction. (151)</p> <p>Staff receive regular child protection updates as required (and at least annually) to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. (152)</p> <p>Staff are given to opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy, in recognition of the expertise that they build by managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. (153)</p> <p>Safeguarding training, including online safety training is</p>                                                                                                               |                    |                    |

| <b>Requirement<br/>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>In place<br/>✓ or X</b> | <b>Action to be taken</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning. (154) Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. (21)<br>Training has regard to the Teachers' Standards. (155)                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                            |                           |
| Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. However, the school is careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding. (161)                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                            |                           |
| The governing body takes measures to safeguard children by protecting personal information and ensuring their school or college has appropriate cyber security systems in place. This is approached as part of the school or college's wider safeguarding responsibilities (176)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                            |                           |
| The school ensures that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. (154) The school's approach to online safety is reflected in the child protection policy. (167)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                            |                           |
| The school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and governors review their effectiveness at least annually. They ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Governing bodies and proprietors consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks. (171) |                            |                           |
| The school is a mobile-phone free environment, by default (168)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                            |                           |
| The school carries out an annual review of its approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks their children face. (179)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                            |                           |
| The school has considered the use of generative Artificial Intelligence and has a policy in line with DfE guidance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                            |                           |
| The child protection policy includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse;</li> <li>• the systems in place (and they are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously;</li> <li>• how allegations of child-on-child will be recorded, investigated and dealt with;</li> <li>• clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any</li> </ul>                           |                            |                           |

| Requirement<br>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | In place<br>✓ or X | Action to be taken |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <p>other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported;</li> <li>• a statement which makes clear there should be a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children;</li> <li>• recognition of the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; and</li> <li>• the different forms child-on-child abuse can take. (157)</li> </ul> |                    |                    |
| <p>The school is alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services. (246)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                    |
| <p>Children with medical conditions and/or allergies are supported in line with the current statutory guidance (250)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |                    |
| <p>The governors are confident that all staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. (45)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |                    |
| <p>Systems are in place to allow children to express their views and give feedback about safeguarding. (119)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                    |                    |
| <p>The school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers, including governors, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required (309)</p> <p>At least one person who conducts an interview in the school has completed safer recruitment training. (286)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                    |                    |
| <p>The school makes any further checks it thinks is appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                    |                    |
| <p>As part of the shortlisting process the school considers carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |                    |

| <b>Requirement<br/>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>In place<br/>✓ or X</b> | <b>Action to be taken</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview. The school informs shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks. (299)                                                                                                             |                            |                           |
| Staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after and previously looked after children safe. (233)<br>The school has appointed a designated teacher to promote the education achievement of registered pupils who are looked after, who has the appropriate training and relevant qualifications and experience. (237)                                                                                                          |                            |                           |
| The child protection policy reflects that fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse or neglect of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions (247)                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                            |                           |
| The school has processes and procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns about staff members (431) and for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and also any allegations against other children. The school has policies and procedures in place to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold – low level concerns. (Part 4)                                                       |                            |                           |
| The headteacher and all other staff working with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection, which is regularly updated. All staff members should receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually. (151)<br>All staff are aware that any child may benefit from Family Help/early help, and that some have particularly vulnerabilities. (6) |                            |                           |
| A member of the governing body (usually the Chair) is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the headteacher (437)                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                            |                           |
| If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher know that they must report this to the police (via the DSL) (page 171)                                                                                                                                                                                         |                            |                           |
| A single central record in place and is up to date and complete. (345)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                            |                           |
| Schools need to ensure that appropriate checks are made in relation to the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2006.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                            |                           |

| <b>Requirement<br/>(KCSiE September 2026 paragraph reference in brackets)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>In place<br/>✓✓ or X</b> | <b>Action to be taken</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| (343)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                             |                           |
| There are procedures in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned. (425)                       |                             |                           |
| The school has an admission register and attendance register. All pupils are places on both registers.<br><a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk">School attendance guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>                                                 |                             |                           |
| All schools must inform the Local Authority within five days when a child is removed from the school roll or starts at school out of normal transition dates. <a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk">Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a> |                             |                           |
| <b>Good practice</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                             |                           |
| A nominated governor has been appointed to champion child protection and monitor safeguarding. They attend regular updates, such as the termly forum for governors run by the Essex Safeguarding team.                                                           |                             |                           |
| The school completes a schools and colleges audit (Section 11 audit) in line with the requirements of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (or as directed)                                                                                                     |                             |                           |
| An annual safeguarding audit and report to governors is completed                                                                                                                                                                                                |                             |                           |

## **The Key for School Leaders offers helpful information on questioning and the evidence that governors can look for.**

To ask good questions, be sure to keep them:

- Open-ended - invite an explanation, instead of a 'yes' or 'no' answer
- Strategic - focus on the top level and don't get operational, i.e. don't ask about the practical day-to-day running of the school
- Focused - ask questions with a clear idea of what you need to find out

To probe deeper on a safeguarding question, great question starters are:

- How do you know...?
- Why do you think this is happening...?
- What are you doing about...?

You'll probably ask a few questions that are too operational. If you do, your DSL should let you know.

The more you know about safeguarding, the easier it'll be for you to tell a good answer from a weak or unhelpful one. But even before you've developed an in-depth knowledge of safeguarding, there's a key principle to help you evaluate an answer:

A good answer will tell you how your DSL knows something, not just what they know. Good answers are tangible and specific, and refer to **evidence** such as:

- Outcomes of staff/pupil/parent surveys
- Conversations with staff, pupils and parents
- Policies, documents and procedures (e.g. the child protection policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education)
- Facts and figures (e.g. number of reports and referrals)
  - Remember, having referrals shows your procedures are working. Pupils disclosing information shouldn't be seen as an inconvenience or as something your school is doing wrong
- Plans and priorities (e.g. the school improvement plan or an action plan)
- Lesson observations carried out by the DSL
- Interventions that are in place
- Courses staff have attended
- Focus days and curriculum content

## How do we act to safeguard children in our school?

|                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Teachers</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Risk assessments<br>Undertake training<br>Identify signs and symptoms<br>First aid                                           | Teaching in the curriculum<br>Assemblies/circle time<br>Safer recruitment accreditation<br>Management of Early Years settings<br>Information technology<br>Understanding of Prevent, CSE, FGM<br>Data protection and information sharing |
| <b>Support staff</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Risk assessments<br>Undertake training<br>Identify signs and symptoms                                                   | Pastoral support<br>Child-centred contracts (one to one SEN)<br>Intimate care<br>Management of Early Years settings<br>Administering medicines<br>First aid<br>Data protection and information sharing                                   |
| <b>Administrative staff</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Risk assessments<br>Undertake training<br>Identify signs and symptoms<br>Data protection and information sharing | Attendance<br>Pupil records<br>Welfare<br>Single Central Record<br>Identity and recruitment checks<br>Administering medicines<br>First aid                                                                                               |
| <b>Midday Assistants</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Risk assessments<br>Undertake training<br>Identify signs and symptoms                                               | Behaviour management<br>Anti-bullying<br>Data protection and information sharing                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Site Managers</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Risk assessments<br>Undertake training                                                                                  | Security<br>Managing split sites<br>Suitability and safety of outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture and equipment<br>Data protection and information sharing                                                                              |
| <b>Catering and cleaning staff</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Undertake training                                                                                        | Maintenance of premises<br>Identifying children with eating disorders (over and under-eating)<br>Data protection and information sharing                                                                                                 |
| <b>Governors</b><br>Listen/refer<br>Risk assessments<br>Undertake training<br>Data protection and information sharing<br>Filtering and monitoring               | Policies and procedures<br>Safer recruitment accreditation<br>Ensuring safe recruitment checks are carried out<br>Monitoring and accountability<br>Resources                                                                             |

## **All schools should protect children and promote their welfare by:**

- providing a safe environment for children to learn in;
- creating a culture which recognises and understands the importance of safeguarding - including listening to and discussing with children;
- identifying children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, both at school and at home, and referring immediately any concerns to the local authority children's social care services;
- preventing unsuitable people from working with children;
- having systems and processes that ensure children are kept safe and allow for poor and unsafe practice to be challenged;
- identifying instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare, and initiating or taking appropriate action to keep them safe; and
- contributing to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing safeguarding services for children.

## **Recognising Child Abuse**

**The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse**

### **The Child**

- Shows sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty) concentrating, that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late and does not want to go home

### **The Parent**

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies the existence of – or blames the child for – the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention and satisfaction of emotional needs

### **The Parent and Child**

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

## The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Person was specified in the Children Act 2004 and ensured the every organisation had a “named person” for safeguarding children and young people. Prior to that, the role had frequently been known as the Child Protection Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Person has a responsibility at both a strategic level within the organisation and on a day to day basis.

**The school/academy’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the first point of contact for any member of the school staff who has a concern about the safety and well-being of a pupil.**

|                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Our school’s<br/>Designated Safeguarding Lead is</b> |
| <b>Our Deputy DSL is</b>                                |
| and                                                     |
| and                                                     |

### **Key Aspects of the Designated Person role includes:**

- Making sure all staff are aware how to raise safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring all staff understand the symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Referring any concerns to social care
- Monitoring children who are the subject of child protection plans
- Maintaining accurate and secure child protection records

Governing bodies, proprietors and management committees should appoint an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school or college leadership team, to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This should be explicit in the role-holder’s job description. This person should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. They should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children.

### *Deputy designated safeguarding leads*

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding leads. Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this **lead responsibility** should not be delegated.

**Keeping Children safe in Education 2026 sets out the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead in Annex B, which includes the following responsibilities:**

#### *Manage referrals*

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

#### *Work with others*

- Liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- As required, liaise with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); and
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

#### *Undertake training*

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead should undertake Prevent awareness training.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;

- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college;
- can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

#### *Raise Awareness*

- The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the school or college's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- Ensure the school or college's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this; and
- Link with the local LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

#### *Availability*

- During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such mediums is acceptable.
- It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

KCSiE 2026 introduces a new requirement (paragraph 127)

To ensure continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, the school has implemented robust cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable due to illness, leave or other circumstances. This could, for example, include a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted upon without delay.