

## Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2023

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. This version is statutory from September 2023.

For the purposes of this guidance, children includes everyone under the age of 18.

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 working directly with children are expected to read at least part 1 of KCSiE and Annex B. Those who don't work directly with children can now read the condensed version of part 1, in Annex A, if that is what the school prefers.

### **There are a limited number of changes this year:**

- Staff need to understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring systems (paragraph 14). This new emphasis is repeated several times throughout the guidance.
- The term ‘children missing education’ is different from ‘children absent from education’. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The guidance specifies it's important that your school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying any abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risks of them becoming a child missing education in future (paragraph 175)
- That some children are at greater risk of harm than others, both online and offline (previously, it didn't make reference to online) (paragraph 170)

In more detail, the changes are as follows:

### **Part 1: safeguarding information for all staff**

An emphasis on filtering and monitoring:

As part of their safeguarding and online safety training, staff need to understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring systems (paragraph 14). This new emphasis is repeated several times throughout the guidance

This section also now links to the latest version of the [behaviour in schools guidance](#).

## Part 2: the management of safeguarding

This sets out the responsibility of governing bodies, proprietors and management committees.

Around filtering and monitoring:

- Your governing board should make sure the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) takes responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place as part of their role (paragraph 103)
- Your board should also make sure all staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of their safeguarding training (paragraph 124)
- Your child protection policy should include how your school approaches filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks (paragraph 138)
- Governing boards should review the DfE’s [filtering and monitoring standards](#). Your board should discuss with your IT staff and service provider what needs to be done to support your school in meeting the standards (paragraph 142)

New wording added for clarification:

- That some children are at greater risk of harm than others, both online and offline (previously, it didn't make reference to online) (paragraph 170)
- Around how the term ‘children missing education’ is different from ‘children absent from education’

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The guidance specifies it's important that your school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying any abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risks of them becoming a child missing education in future (paragraph 175)

A new line has been added into the section on elective home education (EHE):

If the parent/carer of a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has expressed their intention to educate their child at home, local authorities will need to review the plan and work closely with parents/carers (paragraph 178)

When thinking about information security and access management, your school should consider meeting the [cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#) (paragraph 144)

When out-of-school-setting providers use your school premises for non-school activities, guidance on [keeping children safe in out-of-school settings](#) lists the safeguarding arrangements you should expect these providers to have in place (paragraph 167)

For further support on children with special educational needs, schools can use the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS) (paragraph 202)

## Part 3: more details on safer recruitment measures

You should:

- Inform shortlisted candidates that you might conduct an online search as part of due diligence checks in the recruitment process (paragraph 221). Schools were prompted to consider doing these checks in KCSIE 2022, and now KCSIE 2023 adds that it's good practice to let shortlisted candidates know about these checks

- As part of ongoing vigilance, create the right culture so staff feel comfortable discussing safeguarding matters in and outside of work – the guidance has added that this includes online (paragraph 343)

#### **Part 4: handling allegations against staff**

There's a new heading and paragraph in this section titled 'organisations or individuals using school premises'. It says that if your school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using your school premises for running an activity for children, you should follow your safeguarding policies and procedures and inform the local authority designated officer (LADO), as you would with any safeguarding allegation (paragraph 377).

#### **Part 5: child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

The word 'sanction' has replaced the word 'discipline' to reflect the most recent behaviour guidance:

Paragraphs 542 and 544 now say that teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them

The heading above paragraph 544 has been tweaked to 'sanctions and the alleged perpetrator(s)'

#### **Annex A: safeguarding information for school and college staff**

The changes here reflect the changes in section 1 of the guidance: all staff should receive appropriate safeguarding training that includes understanding their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of online safety (page 136).

#### **Annex B: further information**

Children who are absent from education

This section has been updated to reflect the difference between children absent from education and children missing education. It says that children being absent from school repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, as well as children missing education, can act as a warning sign of potential safeguarding issues. Early intervention is essential to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future

Note: it isn't completely clear, but the guidance implies that 'children missing education' is the next step up from children being absent from education (pages 144 and 145, also see paragraph 175)

Mental health

Attendance has been added to the list of things which can be impacted by mental health (page 148)

Radicalisation, the Prevent duty and Channel

The section on preventing radicalisation says children may be 'susceptible' to extremist ideology and radicalisation, rather than 'vulnerable' on preventing radicalisation (page 149)

The section on Channel has also removed the term 'vulnerable', and now refers to people as 'susceptible' and 'at risk' of being drawn into terrorism (page 151)

There's more clarity around the fact that someone referred to Channel will be required to provide their consent before any support through the programme is provided (page 151)

Forced marriage

Since February 2023, it’s been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. This applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages (pages 155 and 156)

**Annex C: role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**

The only change here is that the DSL's responsibilities have been updated to include their role in taking the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place in school (page 164).

**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.** The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children’s social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Our school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Our Deputy DSL(s) is/are	

**Additional guidance and further reading**

- Keeping children safe in education –statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (September 2021)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (2021)
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (February 2022)
- 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
- Essex Schools Infolink safeguarding resources <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/Safeguarding.aspx>
- Essex Primary Headteachers’ Association <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/safeguarding/>