

## Keeping Children Safe in Education

The following changes come into force from 1st September 2024.

Similar to the previous year, the changes for 2024 are quite minimal and there has been no consultation period. The changes will be detailed below, but a lot of these relate to the amendments to [Working together to safeguard children guidance 2023](#).

We have summarised the changes using the headings, subheadings and paragraph references from the guidance.

### Part 1: Safeguarding information for all staff

#### What school and college staff should know and do

The definition of 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' has been amended to reflect Working together to safeguard children 2023. It now includes:

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.'

#### What school and college staff should look out for

Paragraph 18 - additional information has been provided around when children may require early help, amended to reflect the revised Working together to safeguard children 2023. It now reads:

'Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should

be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer

### What school and college staff should look out for (continued)

- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.'

Paragraph 19 - the 'abuse and neglect' heading has been amended to include 'exploitation' and this is reflected across the document. It now reads:

'Abuse, neglect and exploitation

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.'

Paragraph 24 - additional information has been provided on the 'Indicators of abuse and neglect' to include 'where they see, hear or experience its effects 'when referring to domestic violence:

'Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.'

## Safeguarding issues

Paragraph 29 - the term 'deliberately missing education' has been replaced with 'unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education'.

'All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.'

## Part 2: The management of safeguarding

### Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR

Paragraphs 92 and 93 - paragraph included to comply with regulations and recommendation for school staff, governors and trustees to use the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools.

'It is important that governing bodies and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. See ICO guidance 'For Organisations' which includes information about your obligations and how to comply, including protecting personal information, and providing access to official information.'

'In addition, see the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools, which will help school staff, governors and trustees understand how to comply with data protection law, develop their data policies and processes, know what staff and pupil data to keep and follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.'

### Alternative Provision

Paragraph 171 - text has been added to clarify that schools remain responsible for the safeguarding of pupils they place in alternative provision. It reads:

'Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.'

## Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

Paragraph 204 - links have been added to additional guidance when protecting children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues:

‘Schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Further information can be found in the department’s:

- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.

And from specialist organisations such as:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: Find your local IAS service ([councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk))
- Mencap - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people
- NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people.’

## Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning

Paragraphs 205 to 209 - a disclaimer has been added as this section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published. Some additions have also been made to this section to reflect gender questioning children guidance terminology:

‘A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

‘Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.’

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

### Options to manage the report

Paragraph 497 - the text around 'Early help' has been amended to reflect 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'. It reads:

'Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.'

## Annex B: Further information

### Children and the court system

Links to two age-appropriate guides have been included for schools to support children in the court system:

'Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.'

### Preventing radicalisation

A disclaimer has been added to page 156 to outline that this section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14th March 2024. There has also been minimal changes to clarify schools' duties in relation to Prevent:

'All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard<sup>152</sup> to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism". <sup>153</sup> This duty is known as the Prevent duty.'

## Annex C: Role of the designated safeguarding lead

### Holding and sharing information

Further guidance has been added regarding the rationale for making decisions. It reads:

‘The designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children’s social care or the Prevent program etc.’

 Find summaries detailing the changes over recent years [here](#).

The December 2023 version of the guidance is split into chapters which cover the following topics:

### Chapter One: A Shared Responsibility

This chapter, newly introduced for the 2023 update, outlines how safeguarding should feature a child-centred approach, with the whole family remaining well-informed and involved. It sets out principles for working with parents and carers to build strong and trusting relationships and looks at how agencies are expected to collaborate, including sharing information. It also identifies the need for a strengths-based approach to effect positive change.

### Chapter Two: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

In this chapter, the roles and responsibilities of those working with children are outlined in more detail, including leadership roles and accountability. It looks at roles within various agencies alongside those in education, voluntary organisations and sports clubs. The chapter also examines how effective multi-agency working can be achieved alongside multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA).



## Working Together to Safeguard Children

### Chapter Three: Providing Help, Support and Protection

This chapter is split into three sections:

**Section one:** Early help. This section looks in particular at the role of education and childcare settings and examines how children in need of support can be identified.

**Section two:** Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This section focuses on children in need or at risk, such as children with disabilities, children suffering abuse and young carers. The procedures for assessment, referral and providing support to meet the needs of the child and their families and achieve good outcomes are outlined in detail.

**Section three:** Child Protection. In this section, the national multi-agency practice standards for child protection are set out. It covers the entire process of creating a child protection plan.

### Chapter Four: Organisational Responsibilities

Here, the list of organisations that must conform to this statutory guidance is examined in detail, outlining their specific roles and responsibilities. It examines practice guidelines specific to each setting and clarifies the expectations for effective safeguarding and child protection. It also looks at how allegations against those in 'positions of trust' should be dealt with, including considering their future suitability to work with children should they be dismissed from their post. The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is also outlined in relation to this.

### Chapter Five: Learning From Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents

This chapter explains the responsibilities placed on local authorities to report safeguarding incidents. It includes guidance for Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panels, including the review process and subsequent reports. By reviewing serious safeguarding incidents, lessons can be learnt and future practice can be improved as a result.

### Chapter Six: Child Death Reviews

The final chapter outlines the entire review process. It also examines the statutory requirements and responsibilities of child death review partners alongside the responsibilities of other organisations and agencies who have a role to play.

## Changes from the 2023 guidance

The 2023 guidance update emphasises securing 'positive, trusting and cooperative relationships' with parents and carers. In all versions of WTSC, the importance of information sharing amongst agencies has been highlighted, and the most recent version recognises that improvements must be made to involve families more closely. It also explains the importance of considering the needs of the whole family. For example, families with English as an additional language (EAL) may require more specialist support to keep them involved and informed.

The new version of the guidance also outlines new roles within the local authority, the police and health services. It states that the head of each sector will be named the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP), and they must appoint a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP). It is expected that LSPs will form close relationships with representatives from the education sector, who should also be involved in any strategic decisions and planning.

The changes also include:

- Guidance on considering the wider context of a child's situation when making social care assessments.
- New multi-agency practice standards to strengthen cooperation between services.
- An explanation regarding a need for local authorities to appoint lead practitioners with the capabilities to act upon referrals by completing assessments and coordinating services.
- An outline of the need for local authorities to appoint a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) to improve collaboration between social care services and the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.
- Revised guidance on improving provision for disabled children and their families.
- Guidance on recognising and responding to risk of harm to children outside the home.

 You can read more about the 2023 changes and access the full guidance [here](#).