

[Home](#) > [Education, training and skills](#) > [Inspections and performance of education providers](#)
 > [Inspection and performance of schools](#)

Guidance

Report an unregistered school

How to refer a possible unregistered school to Ofsted for investigation.

From: [Ofsted](#)

Published 15 November 2021

Applies to England

Contents

- [What is an unregistered school?](#)
- [Penalties for running an unregistered school](#)
- [How to tell us about a possible unregistered school](#)
- [Information to provide](#)
- [What happens after you make a referral](#)
- [What to do if you have safeguarding concerns](#)
- [How we protect your confidentiality and process your personal information](#)

 [Print this page](#)

What is an unregistered school?

An unregistered school is a setting that is operating as an independent school but is not registered with the Department for Education.

Anyone who wishes to run an independent or private school must

[register as a school](#) with the Department for Education, the regulatory body for independent schools.

Independent or private schools provide full-time education to either:

- 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age
- at least one pupil who has an education health care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs, or who is looked after by a local authority

Penalties for running an unregistered school

If a school is not operating legally, the person who runs it is guilty of an offence under section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. If convicted, they could be fined an unlimited amount and/or imprisoned for up to 6 months.

How to tell us about a possible unregistered school

To protect children that attend illegal schools, we need your help.

If you think you know of a possible unregistered school, email us at unregisteredreferrals@ofsted.gov.uk.

Information to provide

Please give us as much information as you can about the school and why you think it might be an unregistered school. This can include the address and name of the school or any other relevant information.

Providing your contact information (name, email address or phone number) will help our investigation, but if you wish to remain anonymous we will respect your wishes.

What happens after you make a referral

We will review all the information in your referral. Our inspectors may check the [Get information About Schools](#) database and speak with other public bodies such as the Department of Education. If you give us your contact details, we may contact you for more information.

What to do if you have safeguarding concerns

If you have concerns about safeguarding in a particular setting, please also contact the local authority or call the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. To find the relevant local authority, use the [Find your local council](#) service and enter the postcode of the setting.

If a child is in immediate danger of harm, please call the police on 999.

How we protect your confidentiality and process your personal information

For more information on how we process personal data, please see our [privacy notice](#).

Published 15 November 2021

 [Print this page](#)

Explore the topic

[Inspection and performance of schools](#)

[Safeguarding and social care for children](#)

Is this page useful?

Yes

No

[Report a problem with this page](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support](#)

Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

Brexit

[Check what you need to do](#)

Departments and policy

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Services](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[News and communications](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency and freedom of information releases](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#) [Terms and conditions](#)

[Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#) [Government Digital Service](#)

OGI All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright