Department for Education

Guidance

Safeguarding - a statutory duty

Updated 23 October 2026

Applies to England

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Education settings must follow all core obligations that are legally required. They should also follow all relevant other guidance.

Leaders of education settings should:

- know their responsibilities
- identify risks
- respond to early warning signs
- work with multi-agency partners to manage risks and share information where necessary to safeguard children

Keeping children safe in education

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) helps education settings identify and deal with safeguarding concerns, including those associated with serious violence and exploitation.

KCSIE helps education settings:

- understand the legal responsibilities of school and college staff
- strengthen their safeguarding practice
- guide decision making, escalation, and multi-agency working with police and social care
- spot early warning signs of serious violence and criminal exploitation, including:
  - changes in behaviour
  - unexplained absences
  - going missing
  - associations with older individuals or groups
  - patterns of vulnerability

Part 1 sets out what all staff must know and do, including how to recognise concerns and respond appropriately. It emphasises that staff should act on concerns immediately and follow their setting's child protection policy.

Annex A provides additional information on specific safeguarding issues relevant to violence prevention, including criminal exploitation, county lines, and serious violence.

Working together to safeguard children

Working together to safeguard children helps education settings to:

- work confidently with safeguarding partners to contribute to contextual safeguarding and multi-agency risk assessments

- understand expectations around information sharing, joint decision-making and responding to harm, including risks that occur outside school
- know when and how to escalate concerns

Relevant expectations run throughout the guidance, particularly in sections defining partner roles and multi-agency practice standards.

Information sharing duty

Information sharing to safeguard children and young people statutory guidance covers the s16LA Children Act 2004 duty to share information relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The guidance explains what organisations and practitioners:

- must do to comply with the information sharing duty
- should do to ensure consistent and effective information sharing to safeguard children and promote their welfare

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