Department for Education

Guidance

Supporting children affected by serious violence

Updated 23 October 2026

Applies to England

Contents

Ensure welfare and emotional safety
Provide trusted adults and ongoing support
Consider individual safety and support plans

All children connected to an incident, including those harmed, witnessing harm, or engaging in harmful or risky behaviour need to be supported. The guidance on this page is based solely on existing safeguarding duties and guidance.

Ensure welfare and emotional safety

To make sure every child involved is safe after an incident, you should:

- check each child’s immediate welfare, ensuring they feel safe and supported

- provide a calm, private space to speak with each child
- avoid asking leading or investigative questions and record only what you see and hear
- report all concerns to your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) immediately
- inform parents or carers, where appropriate, unless doing so would place the child at further risk

Provide trusted adults and ongoing support

Children may need continued reassurance and support to feel safe following violence.

You should:

- ensure each child has access to a trusted member of staff, so they feel listened to and supported
- provide regular pastoral check-ins and ensure support is coordinated through your DSL
- consider risks in the wider context (including peers, locations and times of day) and put appropriate measures in place to reduce harm
- remain aware of peer dynamics and online behaviour, including behaviour that may continue beyond the incident
- be alert to indicators of exploitation or coercion, including:
  - county lines exploitation
  - criminal exploitation

Consider individual safety and support plans

If concerns or risks continue, you may need to put in place an individual safety and

support plan which should include:

- key risks and protective factors
- supervision arrangements at times and places of higher risk
- safe arrival and departure arrangements
- communication with parents or carers
- involvement of safeguarding partners if thresholds are met
- adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

These plans help you coordinate support and reduce risk by having a consistent approach across staff, in line with a clear, joined-up safeguarding approach.

SEND, additional needs and dysregulation

Where a child has SEND, additional needs or is experiencing dysregulation, support should be planned carefully with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), DSL and relevant pastoral staff. Staff should consider whether behaviour may be linked to communication needs, sensory needs, anxiety, or unmet support needs, while still acting immediately where there is a risk of harm.

Plans should set out:

- the support that will be provided
- the roles of relevant staff
- arrangements for communication with parents or carer
- involvement of specialist services, where appropriate
- any reasonable adjustments required if the child or young person is disabled

↑ Back to top

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. Please fill in this survey (opens in a new tab).

Services and information

Benefits

Births, death, marriages and care

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

Government activity

Departments

News

Guidance and regulation

Research and statistics

Policy papers and consultations

Transparency

How government works

Get involved

Help Privacy Cookies Accessibility statement Contact
Terms and conditions Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg
Government Digital Service

OGL

All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright