

# Safeguarding Briefing

Edited by Andrew Hall  
*Specialist Safeguarding Consultant*



12th January 2026

## **NEW Safeguarding Companion - member's only audio CPD Feed**

Have you ever started a project and then not looked at it for a few weeks? Then, when you come back to it, sometimes you see it in a different way.

That's just happened to me.

At the end of last term, I had an idea which turned into Leading Safeguarding and I shared with you last week.

### **Sometimes when you reflect**

I had a bit of distance from the project over Christmas and now I'm not sure if I gave the best title.

Whilst the content of the audio feed is the same, I'm going to make a change to the name which I think will make it more meaningful.

### **What is Safeguarding Companion?**

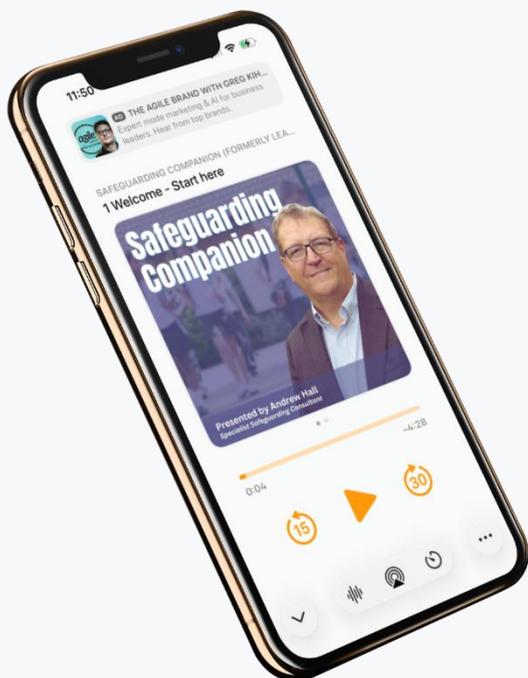
I wanted to create a dedicated space where I could talk about safeguarding to more people, more often. I wanted it to be audio because if you're anything like me, you're trying to reduce the time you spend looking at screens. You can listen in the car, on a walk or wherever is comfortable for you.

Looking back, I think the previous title suggests it is only for safeguarding leaders which isn't the case. Having reflected on this over the last few days, I've decided to make a change.

**The new name for Leading Safeguarding is the 'Safeguarding Companion'.**

Although I've only just launched this audio CPD strand, I felt that if I was going to make the change I better do it sooner rather than later.

**Listen to a sample episode now!**



### **The Safeguarding Companion**

- members-only audio-first CPD
- published on Mondays during term time, alongside the Safeguarding Briefing
- listen on your commute, during a walk, or at the end of the day
- informed by current issues, emerging topics, serious case reviews, and my four decades in schools
- £9.97 monthly

**Join Safeguarding Companion**

### **New resource: Voice of the Child (NYSCP)**

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) has launched a new Voice of the Child resource, designed to support professionals to better hear, record and respond to children's lived experiences. The resource includes an easy-access practical toolkit and is freely available via the NYSCP website.

To accompany the launch, NYSCP delivered a [free 60-minute learning event](#), now available to watch on their YouTube channel. Feedback from

practitioners across North Yorkshire has been particularly strong, highlighting the impact on day-to-day practice. Participants reported feeling more confident in asking children open, reflective questions, noticing and recording non-verbal communication, and capturing behaviour and context more meaningfully in safeguarding records.

This is a really useful resource for anyone seeking to strengthen authentic Voice of the Child practice.

For more information:

<https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/forms-and-tools/voice-of-the-child>

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## Question of the Week

A child tells you they love playing Roblox, and their parent's only advice is "just be sensible." What might we want to explore further?

### An answer

Roblox is used by children from a very young age, with many starting in primary school and a particularly large number of players aged around 8 - 12. There is no fixed minimum age to play, and children often share games and social spaces with much older users. This mix of ages, combined with user-generated content and social features such as chat and voice chat, means children's experiences can vary widely. As a result, generic advice like "just be sensible" gives us very little insight into what a child is actually seeing, doing, or who they are interacting with.

Helpful lines of curiosity include:

- What games are they accessing, and are they age-appropriate?
- Is chat enabled, and who can message them?
- Have they come across anything violent, hateful or worrying?
- Are they using private servers or public spaces?
- Are parental controls or age settings in place and actively used?
- Does the parent feel confident managing the platform?

Disclosures of concerning content on Roblox should be treated as safeguarding issues, not just IT problems, and may relate to online safety, digital resilience or Prevent duties. The goal is curiosity, not panic.

We want to help children talk openly about what they encounter and support parents to move beyond “just be sensible”.

### **What helps most in practice includes:**

- Regular, interested conversations about what children enjoy playing, who they play with, and what they notice online
- Adults showing curiosity, including watching or playing alongside children, so games are not treated as a secret or separate world
- A clear understanding of personal information, including why chats should stay about the game and when to tell an adult
- Agreed rules around spending, with children knowing when real money is involved and when permission is needed
- Reassurance that worries should be shared, including exposure to upsetting content, mean behaviour or hate-based language
- Confidence using block and report tools, so concerns can be addressed calmly and practically
- Active use of safety settings, including age-appropriate controls, chat restrictions and parent account oversight

More information can be found here: <https://corp.roblox.com/safety-by-age>

Download an editable table of settings:

<https://6282.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Roblox+Safer+settings+January+2026.docx>

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## **Proposed Child Protection Authority (DfE)**

The government is consulting on the creation of a new Child Protection Authority (CPA) to strengthen national leadership, learning and accountability in child protection. The proposal responds to repeated concerns that safeguarding systems have been fragmented and slow to learn from serious incidents.

For schools and DSLs, the CPA would not change statutory safeguarding duties, but it would shape the wider system schools operate within. The Authority would provide national oversight, identify emerging risks (including online and extra-familial harm), and help ensure learning from serious case reviews leads to consistent improvement across agencies.

A key issue for education is recognition. Schools are often the first to identify concerns and emerging risks, yet education has not always been

fully embedded in system-level safeguarding decision-making. The consultation offers an opportunity for schools to press for stronger recognition of their safeguarding role and more practical, joined-up systems that genuinely support children being kept safe.

To find out more about the consultation, go to:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/child-sexual-abuseexploitation-team/child-protection-authority/>

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## **Safeguarding Companion - Latest Episode**

### **How growing up the '70s helped my thinking (15 minutes)**

A personal reflection on the moments that shaped a lifelong commitment to safeguarding and an invitation to explore your own “why.”

[Join the Safeguarding Companion here](#)

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## **Legal briefing from Irwin Mitchell solicitors**

As we move into 2026, this Irwin Mitchell Legal review highlights three recent cases with important lessons for schools and colleges. Two cases with particular safeguarding relevance, include:

- How should you safeguard children when they are on school trips?
- What training should you provide to teachers about inappropriate teacher/pupil relationships

Covering safeguarding on school trips, professional boundaries between staff and pupils, and responsibility for delivering EHCP provision, the cases offer clear reminders about statutory duties, decision-making under pressure, and where legal accountability ultimately sits. It's a concise but valuable read for leaders, DSLs, and governors.

To read their article, go to:

<https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/expert-comment/post/102lz7g/2025-in-review-three-key-cases-for-schools-and-colleges>

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## **Forthcoming Courses**

## Advanced Safeguarding for Designated Safeguarding Leads

*"I just wanted to say that I thought today's training was absolutely fantastic. By a mile it was the most engaging training I have done."*

### Next live online Advanced Safeguarding Course:

Wednesday 21st January 2026 [Book Online](#)

The on-demand version is available year-round and is updated regularly [Book Online](#)

### Take a look at our other courses here:

<https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/availablecourses>

Many of our online courses are available in [Safeguarding.Pro](#) with full-year access included.

Until next time, keep safe,

Andrew Hall

Specialist Safeguarding Consultant



**Safeguarding Companion**  
Learn more about the Safeguarding Companion audio series

[Click to find out more](#)

The banner features a smartphone on the left displaying the 'Safeguarding Companion' app interface. On the right is a portrait of Andrew Hall, the specialist safeguarding consultant mentioned in the text above. The background is a solid dark blue color.

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