

Safeguarding In Schools

with Specialist Safeguarding Consultant, **Andrew Hall**



Safeguarding Briefing - 13th January 2025

Challenges in record-keeping

The safeguarding disconnect affecting teachers and children (TES)

The TES carries a story this week (10.1.25) headlined 'The safeguarding disconnect affecting teachers and children' in which legal experts say a misalignment of guidance used by professionals to record allegations of sexual abuse is failing teachers and pupils – with potentially devastating consequences. You can find the full story here:

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/kcsie-abe-safeguarding-disconnect-affecting-children-teachers>

[Whilst the TES has paywalled content for its subscribers, I found that this article could be accessed without a subscription. This could be because I only access a few pages a month, so your access may be blocked.]

Although I recommend reading the whole article, if you can't access it I think the issues raised are so important that I've précised it below.

The article discusses the difficulties that teachers have in recording disclosures of sexual abuse. In one court case cited, the DSL had written up a conversation they had had with a child in line with the guidance given in Keeping Children Safe in Education (paragraph 477): *"Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second member of staff is present). However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking."*

The TES reports one court case in which the judge went through the teachers' records in detail, describing them as "vague" and "confusing and shifting". She pointed out that they were not verbatim accounts of what the girl said and that they contradicted statements the teachers had made later.'

KCSIE v ABE

This challenge in recording keeping is in part due to the difference in the guidance set out in KCSIE and the guidance given to social workers and police officers by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) called Achieving Best Evidence (ABE). However, in many cases it would not be practical (or even appropriate) for schools to follow the detailed standards that investigation professionals are held to, for example, video recording the conversation with the child, so that 'there is a verbatim account of what was said'.

Importance of recording exact language used

The guidance given in KCSIE and the MoJ's ABE is not currently aligned and differences are perhaps inevitable. In school, DSLs need to ensure that they are being detailed and precise in relating what the child has said. Jake Walker, a barrister at Coram Chambers is quoted in the TES article: '[the teacher must] use the exact language of the child - including the tense, how the child describes body parts and what names they use for people.

For example, [Walker] says: "When the child says, 'daddy did it' and this child has two dads, one they call 'dad' and one they call 'daddy', and the teacher records 'their father', well, which one are they talking about?"

"Another crucial issue of recording terminology accurately comes with prepositions, such as the difference between a child saying someone touched them "in" or "on" a body part - something it could be easy to misremember when writing notes after a conversation."

The full article can be found here:

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/kcsie-abe-safeguarding-disconnect-affecting-children-teachers>

Knowledge Hub - TAC Access

Knowledge is key to understanding and dealing with the situations we face in life. TAC Access is a site that regularly publishes blog content,

covering various aspects of mental health to act as a resource for their clients. They also offer professional parties an opportunity to share their experience and knowledge in the form of guest blogs. Lastly they maintain a calendar listing of events taking place across the country regarding CYP mental health. The hub is an excellent aggregate of all you need to know in the mental health sphere. If interested in their services and the wealth of information they hold, please follow the link below:

<https://www.tacaccess.com/knowledge-hub>

Ofsted Chief Inspector attends the Education Committee

Last week His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver from Ofsted attended the House of Commons Education Committee. Looking to the future of inspection around safeguarding he said:

'Safeguarding should be separate and not a part of leadership and management as it is right now...also, because safeguarding is very much a met/not met judgment, it is very difficult to say safeguarding is outstanding. Even in outstanding settings where good things are happening, bad people can still exist and bad things can still happen. We have seen that, sadly, in far too many cases across all the remits in which we work. It is nonsense to try to judge anything other than met/not met.'

'We can be clear; we can take the really difficult tome, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which is an inch and a bit thick, and that is a difficult job. Every year it is updated. If you are a standalone primary headteacher, you have to try to get through that every year. Even though it summarises what is different, it is still a big requirement. I have tasked Lee with explaining in the new framework what are the key aspects of that against which we will hold people to account.'

'It is going to be unbelievably obvious what we will inspect on. I do not expect anyone to fail safeguarding, because I do not want any children to be unsafe anywhere.'

You can read Sir Martyn's remarks in full here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/15193/html/>

Online Training Programmes - Children Heard + Seen

Children Heard and Seen, is an organisation committed to identifying and supporting children with parents in prison. Their activities focus on ensuring essential support is provided to these pupils so they can thrive and feel secure, in a nurturing and non-judgmental environment. Their training programme is designed to impart tools and support frameworks, required to create a parental imprisonment aware environment. They currently host a six session long online course, designed to produce this outcome. The programme looks at the emotional, physical, behavioural and mental health implications associated with the parental prison experience. By delving into this recognised Adverse Childhood Experience, they aim to address the invisibility and stigma surrounding parental imprisonment and foster greater awareness and understanding. There are currently five free places available for readers of the briefing, when these courses get going later this year. If interested, please click on the link below:

<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/training-for-schools/>

To redeem the free course offer, please email Children Heard + Seen at: info@childrenheardandseen.co.uk

Question of the Week

What are some of the reasons children and young people might not disclose things that are happening to them?

How can we (as a school and individually) overcome some of these possible barriers?

Children with additional needs are often more vulnerable than most children. What further specific barriers might affect these pupils?

For example, for children with communication difficulties, how do we enable them to tell us something they are anxious about?

(See [KCSIE 2024, paragraph 17](#) *"All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead if they have concerns about a child.*

It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people.”)

Do you have new staff that need a safeguarding induction or refresher?

Safeguarding.Pro offers a range of on-demand safeguarding CPD, this can be especially useful when new staff join a school. For more details or to join, go to <https://safeguarding.pro/>

What's Porn Got to Do With It Seminar - Lucy Faithfull Foundation

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, is an organisation designed to prevent child sexual abuse by intervening with 'at risk' people. Their vision is to produce a world where children live free from sexual abuse. On the 4th of March 2025, the charity will be hosting an online seminar on Microsoft Teams looking at the damaging effect of pornography on children. In 2023, the Children's Commissioner's office shared that "by age nine 10% had seen pornography, whilst 27% had seen it by age eleven." The event will be co-hosted with NWG Network and examine the effect of pornography on producing sexually harmful behaviours, among young people and adults. If interested in attending, please follow the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/whats-porn-got-to-do-with-it-tickets-1111257223269>

Advanced Safeguarding for DSLs

"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 course - 15th January 2025

Wednesday 15th January 2025 [Book here](#)

The on-demand course is always available and is updated after each live session [Book Online](#)

Other available online courses include:

- Whole School Safeguarding Course for 2024/2025 (2 hours of content plus a break)

Online courses - Safeguarding.Pro

All our other courses are now available in [Safeguarding.Pro](https://safeguarding.pro/) These courses can be accessed for a full year.

Current courses include:

- Safeguarding Refresher
- An Introduction to Cybersecurity
- Safeguarding for Governance
- Safeguarding Induction for new staff

For further details, go to: <https://safeguarding.pro/>

Until next time, keep safe,

Andrew Hall

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Are you a busy DSL with no time?

Need a place to ask questions. find support and download resources

Click here and join Safeguarding.Pro today!