

Safeguarding Briefing

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Monday 23rd February 2026

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Consultation published for September 2026

The DfE has published a consultation on the proposed revisions for September 2026. I think this is the most comprehensive revision of KCSIE since it was first published in 2014.

In thinking about this consultation version, it is important to remember that a revised KCSIE does not come into force until September 2026. The final version may differ from these proposed changes. Schools should therefore not move away from the current KCSIE 2025 expectations.

Key themes have been added into this consultation version:

- children who are questioning their gender
- mental health
- artificial Intelligence
- child-on-child abuse
- serious violence
- misogyny
- CCE and CSE

Key changes have been proposed mainly to Parts One, Two and Five, (Incidentally, it is proposed that all staff should read and understand Part One, and the Annex A summary should be removed.)

Part One (Safeguarding information for all staff) proposed changes include:

- the phrase 'Early Help' replaced throughout by 'Family Help', reflecting the shift to a two-tier model of universal early help and targeted Family Help.
- statutory guidance EYFS section 3 (Welfare) should be read alongside KCSIE where children aged 0-5 attended school-base nurseries. (This brought in important statutory changes

around paediatric first-aid, safer eating, recruitment training and intimate care procedures.)

- changes to some definitions of harm, including sexual abuse, emotional abuse and online abuse
- updated indicators for support 'before statutory intervention'
- Modern slavery

Part Two (The management of safeguarding) proposed changes include:

- clarification of expectations related to children questioning their gender, including sport; changing rooms, showers, toilets; and boarding and residential accommodation. (It is important to note that the provisions relating to toilets, changing rooms and boarding and residential accommodation are mandatory requirements.)
- DSL cover arrangements to include the provision of a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system
- need to broaden the records shared with any new school (risk to others, concerns around serious violence or harmful sexual behaviour; and that DSLs should have a conversation before transfer where there are issues of concern
- widening range of topics in RSHE, AI and misogynistic influencers
- mobile phones
- AI and online safety
- young carers
- children with medical conditions

Part Three (Safer Recruitment) now includes a Single Central Record template

Part Four (Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff) now specifically includes 'trainee teachers' in the guidance

Part Five (Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence) proposed changes include:

- reorganised to place Harmful Sexual Behaviour as the framework for this section
- consequently this part has been largely rewritten and reordered

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework (Section 3 - Welfare)

Section 3 of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework should be read alongside KCSIE where children aged 0–5 attend school-based nurseries or reception classes. This brings in

statutory expectations around paediatric first aid, safer eating, recruitment, training and intimate care procedures.

You can find the consultation documents and the proposed KCSIE 2026 here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/independent-education-and-school-safeguarding-division/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2026-revisions/>

WEBINAR

Understanding Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Thursday 26th February 2026 at 4.00 - 5.30pm

I will be presenting a webinar exploring the proposed changes in greater detail to help you be more confident ahead of September 2026.

Join me this coming Thursday at 4pm. Places are £59+vat and you can book here: <https://checkout.safeguardingschools.co.uk/kcsie2026>

DfE publishes additional mobile phone guidance for schools

The Department for Education has published updated supporting materials linked to its January 2026 Mobile phones in schools guidance. The non-statutory guidance comes into effect from 1 April 2026, with the expectation that schools operate as mobile phone-free environments by default.

The previous toolkit has been replaced with a new document focused on helping schools communicate their mobile phone policy clearly to parents. Additional case studies have also been published, providing practical examples of how schools have implemented and embedded phone-free approaches.

There is no new compliance requirement, but leaders reviewing or relaunching their policy may find these materials helpful.

Read more here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

Question of the Week

A pupil tells you there was a “big argument” at home last night and that the police came. You report this to the DSL straight away. The next day, the pupil seems quieter than usual but says they are “fine.”

When a child discloses something worrying, how do we avoid mentally “closing the case” once we’ve told the DSL?

Possible answer

We avoid “closing the case” by remembering that reporting is one part of safeguarding, not the end of it. Once we have passed information to the DSL, our role shifts but it does not disappear.

- Reporting to the DSL is essential, but it is not the end of our responsibility.
- After passing information on, our role shifts but does not disappear.
- Stay professionally curious in the days that follow.
- Remain observant for changes in mood, behaviour or engagement.
- Do not assume that “I’m fine” means everything is resolved.
- Offer a quiet, low-key check-in without pressing for more information.
- Record and pass on any new comments, behaviours or concerns promptly.

Safeguarding isn’t a handover. It’s the start of a shared vigilance.

NICE update on child maltreatment guidance (Clyde & Co)

Child maltreatment is often difficult to identify. It usually happens behind closed doors, and the signs can be subtle or easily explained away as everyday childhood accidents. The challenge for us is recognising when isolated incidents form a pattern that requires professional curiosity and escalation.

NICE has recently updated its guidance on child maltreatment. Clyde & Co have produced a short overview outlining what has changed and what this may mean in practice.

You can read more here:

<https://www.clydeco.com/en/insights/2026/01/nice-updates-guidance-on-child-maltreatment>

Safeguarding Companion - Latest Episodes

Managing digital access as a safeguarding risk (18 minutes)

In this episode specialist safeguarding consultant, Andrew Hall examines cybersecurity as a safeguarding issue in schools.

The episode considers why cybersecurity failures should be understood as safeguarding concerns, not just technical problems.

Safeguarding risk in out of school settings (20 minutes)

In this episode, Andrew reflects on a serious safeguarding case at a summer camp, exploring how harm can remain hidden behind plausible explanations and trusted leadership.

[Explore all Safeguarding Companion episodes](#)

[You can now find the Safeguarding Companion on Spotify](#)

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:

Friday 13th March 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



The banner features a dark blue background. On the left, a smartphone displays the 'Safeguarding Companion' app interface. In the center, the text 'Safeguarding Companion' is written in large, bold, white letters. Below this, in smaller white text, it says 'Learn more about the Safeguarding Companion audio series'. At the bottom center, there is a white underlined link that says 'Click to find out more'. On the right side of the banner is a portrait of Andrew Hall, a man with glasses wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt.