

# Busy Governor's Guide to Safeguarding

**1. What is safeguarding?** In relation to children and young people, safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined in [Working together to safeguard children](#) as: protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. The guidance applies to all schools (whether maintained, non-maintained or independent), including academies, free schools, pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools. The guidance applies to further education colleges, sixth form colleges and institutions designated as being within the further education sector and relates to young people under the age of 18, but excludes 16 to 19 academies and free schools (which are required to comply with relevant safeguarding legislation by virtue of their funding agreement).

**2. Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm.** It includes: pupils' health and safety, the use of reasonable force, meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions, providing first aid, educational visits, intimate care and emotional well-being, online safety and arrangements to ensure school security.

**3. Safeguarding can involve a range of issues such as:** bullying (including cyberbullying/prejudice based bullying), racist disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse, radicalisation and extremist behaviour (Prevent), child sexual exploitation, sexting, substance misuse, specific issues to a local area (gang activity and youth violence) and issues affecting children including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. See also Busy Governors Guide to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Busy Governors Guide to Prevent.

**4. Governing boards (GBs) and proprietors must ensure that they comply with their safeguarding duties under legislation:** They must ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their schools are effective and comply with the law at all times, see '[Keeping children safe in education](#)' – updated 01 September 2023. [Safeguarding and remote education](#) was updated in July 2021 and remains relevant. It is useful if all GB members have safeguarding training to have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities. From September 2022 Governing bodies and proprietors needed to ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

**5. GB responsibilities include:** Prioritising the welfare of children and young people and creating a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns. GBs responsibility also includes their contribution to inter-agency working, including

providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified. See the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

**6. GBs must have a child protection policy** that is approved by the full GB, updated annually. The policy should be available to all staff, parents and volunteers. It is advisable that it is published on the school website. GBs must also ensure that there is a school behaviour policy, staff behaviour policy/code of conduct policy and these policies are provided to all staff during induction along with part one of the latest version of 'Keeping children safe in education'. Consider also having a link on your website to the [Devon Children and Families Partnership](#) for the latest information for parents and carers and staff.

**7. GBs must ensure a designated safeguarding lead** (from the school leadership team) is appointed who should undergo child protection training and ensure that this is updated every two years. GBs should also ensure that there is also a trained deputy designated safeguarding lead available and that a named governor leads on safeguarding within the GB and that there is a deputy safeguarding governor available. GBs and proprietors should ensure that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. A governor (often the Chair) will need to be nominated to deal with the Local Authority in the case of allegations against the headteacher, see below.

**8. The role of the chair of governors in allegations against the headteacher or principal:** If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will need to consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), **without** notifying the headteacher first. This process needs to be handled **urgently** and all chairs should ensure that they can identify the emergency contact details for the LADO within their child protection policy. The school will then follow the Devon procedures for managing allegations against staff, procedures set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and the school's Managing Allegations policy and procedures.

**9. GBs should prevent people who pose a risk of harm** from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, take proportionate decisions on whether to ask for checks beyond that which is required, ensure that volunteers are appropriately supervised, ensure safer recruitment training takes place, ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children and have appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from educational settings.

**10. GBs must receive an annual statement** on safeguarding from the designated safeguarding lead and also undertake a safeguarding audit annually. GBs should also consider how they know their school is safeguarding children and ensure that they are not only getting information from the senior leadership team. GBs should ensure that they know how children are taught about safeguarding including when online.

**11. GBs must appoint a designated teacher** to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after and ensure this person has appropriate training.

**12. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be undertaken but** will depend on the role and duties of an applicant to work in school or a supervised volunteer. This is a legal duty and failure to refer when the criteria are met is a criminal offence. Since April 2016 all maintained

school governing boards must apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate for any newly appointed governor within 21 days of appointment. The latest guidance recommends that schools contact The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Teacher Services to check if a person they propose to recruit as a governor is barred as a result of being subject to a section 128 direction.

Proprietors of independent schools, including academies and free schools and proprietors of alternative provision academies will find detailed information on checks required within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

**13. Schools and colleges MUST keep a single central record.** This records whether or not the following checks have been carried out and certificates obtained and the date the checks were completed: identity check, a barred list check, an enhanced DBS check, a prohibition from teaching check, further checks on people living or working outside the UK, a check of professional qualifications and a check to establish the person's right to work in the UK. The record must cover the following people:

- all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff who work at the school. In colleges, this means those providing education to children; and
- for independent schools, all members of the proprietor body. In the case of academies and free schools, this means the members and trustees of the academy trust.

Ofsted will expect governors to know that it is in place and is up to date and they will ask them how they know. Ofsted will check the record to ensure it is complete, up to date and meets statutory requirements.

#### **14. Filters:**

Online safety and the school or college's approach to it should be reflected in the child protection policy which, amongst other things, should include appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks. GBs and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. KCSIE notes that the appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like: UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring. South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) have created a tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content)."