

Early Years Foundation Stage

Updates for September 2025

The guidance should be read alongside:

- Statutory guidance “Early Years Foundation Stage Framework safeguarding reforms” - ([Government consultation response](#)) October 2024

Safer Recruitment

- Providers and childminders must obtain references before employing assistants.
- Records must be kept of staff qualifications, identity checks, vetting processes, and criminal record checks (including reference numbers and dates).
- References must not be taken from family members.
- All references must be verified for validity.
- All staff, including assistants and those in regular contact with children, must be suitable, trained, and pass required checks.
- Safeguarding policies must outline procedures for checking new recruits' suitability.
- References should be factual and confirm suitability to work with children.
- References must include substantiated safeguarding concerns meeting the harm threshold.
- References must exclude unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious allegations.

Child Absences

- Providers/Childminders must follow up on absences in a timely manner.
- Contact must be made with parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts (a minimum of two) if a child is absent without notification.
- Prolonged absences should be identified based on patterns, trends, and the child's personal circumstances.
- Professional judgment must be used to determine if an absence is prolonged.
- Consideration must be given to the vulnerability of the child, parents/carers, and their home life.
- Any concerns must be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Lead Practitioner to Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Every setting must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The DSL is responsible for coordinating with local children's services and Local Safeguarding Partners.

Safeguarding Training Annex

- Providers and childminders must ensure all practitioners receive safeguarding training every two years, as outlined in Annex C.
- Practitioners must be supported in effectively implementing safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must provide ongoing guidance on safeguarding matters.
- Training should cover safeguarding concepts, types of abuse, recognising signs, responding appropriately, and the setting's policies.
- Childminders, as DSLs, must ensure assistants are trained and kept up to date on safeguarding issues.
- DSL training must include safer recruitment, managing allegations, online safety, and local child protection procedures.
- Practitioners should renew their training periodically, with refresher courses recommended to stay current.

Safeguarding Training Information

- Safeguarding policies must detail how safeguarding training is delivered.
- Policies must outline how practitioners are supported to apply training effectively in practice.

Paediatric First Aid for Students and Trainees

- Suitable students on long-term placements, volunteers (17+), and apprentices (16+) may be included in staff:child ratios if they hold a valid and current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification.
- Their inclusion must be at a level below their study.
- Providers must be confident in their competence and responsibility.

Safer Eating

- A staff member with a valid paediatric first aid certificate must always be present while children are eating and children must be in sight and sound when eating.
- Providers must gather information on each child's dietary needs, allergies, intolerances, and health requirements before admission.
- All staff involved in food preparation must be informed of children's dietary needs.
- Providers must collaborate with parents, carers, and health professionals to create and update allergy action plans.
- Staff should be aware of allergy symptoms, anaphylaxis treatment, and how allergies can develop.
- Food must be prepared according to the child's developmental stage, considering texture and food safety to prevent choking.
- Children should eat in safe, distraction-free spaces and always be within sight and hearing of staff.
- Choking incidents must be recorded, parents informed, and trends reviewed to reduce future risks.

Toileting and Privacy

- Children's privacy must be respected during nappy changing and toileting.
- Safeguarding and support needs must be balanced.
- Clean supplies must be available at all times.
- Hygiene must be maintained throughout the process.
- Staff should use a separate toilet where possible.

Whistleblowing

- Develop a clear whistleblowing policy outlining when, how, and to whom concerns should be reported.
- Ensure the policy is accessible to all staff.
- Provide regular training to familiarise staff with procedures, emphasise support, and encourage reporting.
- Foster a culture of open communication, reassuring staff about confidentiality and protection from retaliation.
- Take all concerns seriously and establish clear reporting channels.
- Include anonymous reporting options to ensure timely and fair investigations.

Notes

