

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026

Implementation Brief



**Safeguarding
is everyone's
responsibility.**

Every member of staff plays a vital role in keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. A child-centred approach should underpin all decisions and actions.

Introduction

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 is the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges in England. It sets out the legal duties and expectations that education settings must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18. The guidance applies to all schools and colleges, including maintained schools, academies, independent schools, alternative provision settings and further education providers. It is relevant to governors, trustees, proprietors, senior leaders, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), teachers, support staff and volunteers. Safeguarding remains everyone's responsibility and KCSIE continues to promote a whole-school approach to keeping children safe.

KCSIE 2026 introduces important updates that reflect changes to children's social care systems, developments in information sharing, growing concerns regarding serious violence, developments in technology and artificial intelligence, changes to regulated activity, and strengthened expectations around safeguarding culture and accountability.

This briefing provides school and college leaders with a practical overview of the changes, key consultation outcomes and implementation priorities ahead of KCSIE 2026 coming into force on 1 September 2026.

What happened following the consultation?

One of the key findings from reviewing the consultation draft against the final publication is that there were very few significant policy reversals. Instead, the final guidance largely confirms the direction proposed in the consultation, with greater clarity around implementation, governance and operational expectations.

Consultation Proposal

Final Outcome

Information sharing reforms	Retained and strengthened
Mobile phone-free schools	Retained
AI and deepfake safeguarding content	Retained and expanded
Serious violence content	Retained and strengthened
Enhanced filtering and monitoring expectations	Retained and strengthened
Regulated activity changes	Retained
Volunteer vetting changes	Retained
Gender-questioning children guidance	Retained
Alternative provision safeguarding oversight	Retained and expanded
DSL continuity arrangements	Retained with additional detail

To access our resources scan the code opposite or contact the team for anything else at all. Just scan the QR codes.



Our Resources

Overall, KCSIE 2026 reflects a continuation of policy direction rather than significant change following consultation.

KCSIE structure

01. Part One Safeguarding Information for All Staff

What all school and college staff need to know about safeguarding, recognising concerns and responding appropriately. All staff are expected to read this section.

02. Part Two The Management of Safeguarding

Guidance for leaders, governors, trustees and DSLs on creating and maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements, including policies, training, multi-agency working and online safety.

03. Part Three Safer Recruitment

Information on recruitment, pre-employment checks, regulated activity, the Single Central Record and ongoing safeguarding responsibilities for staff and volunteers.

04. Part Four Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations About Adults

Procedures for managing concerns, allegations and low-level concerns relating to staff, supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors.

05. Part Five Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Detailed guidance on recognising, responding to and managing incidents of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence between children.

Annexes

- **Annex A** - Further Information - Additional information on safeguarding issues, vulnerabilities and emerging risks.
- **Annex B** - Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead - Detailed guidance regarding DSL responsibilities, knowledge and expectations.
- **Annex C** - Regulated Activity - Detailed guidance on regulated activity and supervision requirements.
- **Annex D** - Summary of Changes - A summary of changes from KCSIE 2025.

Read the full guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>

Key Updates in 2026

A significant theme throughout KCSIE 2026 is the importance of identifying concerns early and providing support before difficulties escalate. The guidance places increased emphasis on Family Help arrangements, safeguarding thresholds and effective multi-agency working.

Schools are expected to ensure staff understand

- Family Help pathways
- Escalation procedures
- Local safeguarding thresholds
- Referral processes
- Their role in supporting children and families early

Serious Violence and Contextual Safeguarding

The guidance strengthens expectations around:

- Weapon carrying
- Serious violence
- Gang affiliation
- Peer conflict
- Exploitation
- County lines activity

Schools should ensure processes are in place for:

- Risk assessment
- Safety planning
- Early intervention
- Multi-agency working

Mental Health and Safeguarding

KCSIE 2026 further reinforces the relationship between safeguarding and mental health.

Schools should ensure staff understand:

- Mental health concerns may be indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Self-harm and suicidal ideation may constitute safeguarding concerns.
- Mental health presentations should not be viewed solely through a behaviour-management lens.
- Safeguarding assessments should consider underlying causes and contextual factors.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Misogyny

The guidance contains a stronger focus on:

- Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- Child-on-child abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Misogyny and harmful attitudes

Schools should continue to challenge inappropriate behaviours at the earliest opportunity and ensure a culture of zero tolerance towards abuse and harassment.

Read the full guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>

Strengthened areas of focus following consultation

Key Changes Include

A significant theme throughout KCSIE 2026 is the importance of identifying concerns early and providing support before difficulties escalate. The guidance places increased emphasis on Family Help arrangements, safeguarding thresholds and effective multi-agency working.

Regulated Activity Changes

The supervision exemption has been removed.

- Frequent activity is now defined as more than three days within a 30-day period.
- Overnight activities remain regulated activity.
- More volunteers may now fall into regulated activity.
- Schools must review volunteer arrangements and safer recruitment procedures accordingly.

Many existing voluntary roles may now require enhanced scrutiny and potentially additional DBS checks.

Volunteer Vetting and DBS Requirements

Schools should undertake a review of:

- Reading volunteers
- Parent volunteers
- Sports coaches
- Educational visit volunteers
- Mentors
- Enrichment providers

Leaders should ensure that volunteers engaging in regulated activity are receiving the appropriate level of DBS and barred list checking.

Filtering and Monitoring

KCSIE 2026 significantly strengthens expectations regarding filtering and monitoring systems.

Schools should:

- Review filtering systems annually.
- Maintain records of reviews.
- Ensure leadership oversight.
- Ensure governors receive assurance regarding effectiveness.
- Confirm systems remain effective across all devices and networks.

This represents one of the most significant governance-related safeguarding developments within KCSIE 2026.

Mobile Phone-Free Schools

KCSIE 2026 confirms the expectation that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

Schools should review:

- Behaviour policies
- Mobile phone arrangements
- Expectations during lessons
- Break and lunchtime arrangements
- Staff communications to parents and pupils causes and contextual factors.

This will be an area of significant interest from both inspectors and governing bodies.

Online Safety, Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology

Online safety continues to be a major safeguarding priority.

New and emerging concerns include:

- AI-generated imagery
- Deepfakes
- AI-assisted harassment
- Image-based abuse
- Technology-facilitated coercion
- AI chatbots and grooming risks
- Generative AI safeguarding implications

Schools should ensure staff training reflects these developments.

Information Sharing:

A central message throughout KCSIE 2026 is that:

Data protection legislation should never become a barrier to safeguarding children.

- Information is shared early.
- Staff understand lawful information sharing.
- Child protection files transfer promptly.
- Safeguarding records are accurate, secure and accessible

Continued

Key Changes Include

Alternative Provision

KCSIE 2026 strengthens expectations around commissioning and overseeing alternative provision.

Schools should:

- Conduct safeguarding due diligence.
- Obtain written assurances regarding safer recruitment.
- Monitor attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Review placements regularly.
- Maintain oversight of all commissioned provision

Children Questioning Their Gender

KCSIE 2026 includes a substantial dedicated section relating to children questioning their gender.

Key principles include:

- A safeguarding-centred approach.
- Consideration of the child's best interests.
- Active involvement of parents in the vast majority of cases.
- Careful consideration before supporting social transition.
- Clear expectations regarding access to toilets, changing facilities and accommodation.
- Accurate record keeping.
- Ongoing review of decisions.
- Consideration of support for children who wish to detransition.

Schools should ensure leaders and DSLs are familiar with this section before responding to requests for support.

Top 10 Priorities Before 1st September 2026

01. Update Child Protection Policy.
02. Review Behaviour and Mobile Phone Policies.
03. Review Volunteer Arrangements.
04. Audit DBS and Regulated Activity Requirements.
05. Update Whole Staff Training.
06. Review Filtering and Monitoring Arrangements.
07. Review Information Sharing Procedures.
08. Review Alternative Provision Oversight.
09. Update Online Safety and AI Content.
10. Brief Governors and Trustees on KCSIE 2026 Changes.

Questions Governors and Trustees should ask

Governance oversight remains critical to safeguarding effectiveness

Key questions include:

- Q How have we implemented KCSIE 2026?
- Q What safeguarding training has been updated?
- Q Are our volunteer arrangements compliant with regulated activity requirements?
- Q How do we know filtering and monitoring systems are effective?
- Q Has our mobile phone policy been reviewed?
- Q How are AI-related safeguarding risks being addressed?
- Q How do we assure ourselves that alternative provision arrangements are safe?
- Q Have safeguarding policies been updated and communicated to staff?
- Q Are safeguarding records transferred appropriately when pupils move schools?
- Q What assurance do we have that information sharing practices are effective?

KCSIE 2026 Implementation Checklist

Action	Lead	Status
Child Protection Policy Updated	DSL	☐
Behaviour Policy Reviewed	SLT	☐
Mobile Phone Policy Reviewed	SLT	☐
Staff Training Updated	DSL	☐
Governor Training Updated	Safeguarding Governor	☐
Volunteer Audit Completed	HR/DSL	☐
DBS Review Completed	HR	☐
Filtering and Monitoring Review Undertaken	IT Lead	☐
Online Safety Curriculum Updated	DSL/PSHE Lead	☐
Alternative Provision Review Completed	DSL	☐
Information Sharing Procedures Reviewed	DSL	☐
SCR Audit Completed	HR/DSL	☐
KCSIE Briefing Delivered to Governors	Headteacher/Principal	☐

Actions for Leaders

- Review and update safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, staff conduct and online safety policies.
- Audit regulated activity and volunteer arrangements.
- Review DBS arrangements and Single Central Record processes.
- Ensure all staff receive updated safeguarding training.
- Review Family Help and referral pathways.
- Strengthen information-sharing procedures.
- Audit filtering, monitoring and cyber security arrangements.
- Review curriculum provision relating to relationships, consent, online safety and healthy relationships.
- Strengthen contextual safeguarding processes.
- Review alternative provision oversight arrangements.
- Ensure governors and trustees receive detailed safeguarding briefings.
- Promote a strong safeguarding culture where children's welfare remains central to decision-making.

Actions for Staff

- Read and understand Part One of KCSIE 2026.
- Remain professionally curious.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Be vigilant to indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Understand emerging risks linked to AI and technology.
- Record concerns accurately and contemporaneously.
- Challenge inappropriate attitudes and behaviours.
- Support children to stay safe online.
- Participate fully in safeguarding training.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Always act in the best interests of the child.

Conclusion

KCSIE 2026 reinforces safeguarding as everybody's responsibility while placing increased emphasis on early intervention, information sharing, contextual safeguarding, serious violence, AI-related risks, volunteer vetting, regulated activity, online safety and whole-school safeguarding culture.

For leaders, DSLs, governors and trustees, the priority is now implementation. The coming months provide an opportunity not only to achieve compliance but to strengthen safeguarding practice and ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

Reference to guidance documents:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#)
- [Working Together to safeguard Children](#)