

Keeping Children Safe in Education - Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges: September 2016

Summary

This version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf) came into force on 5th September 2016. It revises and replaces the 2015 guidance and the May 2016 update to that guidance.

The May 2016 update emphasised issues such as the importance of regular safeguarding training and focused on ensuring there are robust processes in schools in relation to matters such as online safety, female genital mutilation (FGM) and the teaching of matters relating to safeguarding.

The current set of amendments and updates build on the previous guidance and contain a number of changes – some of which represent a change of emphasis and others that are more substantive.

The guidance itself makes clear in Annex H what the changes are and the NSPCC has a detailed briefing for education professionals, governing bodies and proprietors of schools. (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/briefing-updated-statutory-guidance-schools-england-keeping-children-safe-education-20162.pdf>)

This Policy Briefing is designed to make professionals who are not working in schools aware of the changes and requirements for school staff, governors and management bodies in order that they may respond to any changes in referrals or processes within or from schools.

The 2016 guidance makes explicit that: ‘Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility.’ It emphasises the importance of ‘working together’ and sharing information. All staff in schools are expected to have read at least part one of the guidance.

Key Changes to the Guidance

Part One

There is a new paragraph drawing attention to the importance of early help – i.e. providing support as soon as concerns arise. Ensuring that school staff are clear that they should discuss any arising concerns with the designated safeguarding lead and agree a process for monitoring or managing the situation.

There is updated advice about what to do if the member of staff fears a child may be in immediate danger. It emphasises that **anyone** can make a referral but the designated safeguarding lead must be informed if a referral has been made as soon as possible following the referral.

It is mandatory for teachers to report FGM. Para 27 states: “If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.”

There is a renewed emphasis on raising awareness of the complexity of abuse. Para 35 states: “All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label.”

Specific forms of abuse that are newly covered include ‘peer on peer’ abuse including bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. There should be clear school/college policies and procedures relating to these issues. The guidance contains links to further guidance relating to these and many other forms of abuse.

Part Two: Management of Safeguarding

There is more detailed information about children missing from education. The guidance draws attention to the Department for Education Guidance: Children Missing Education (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf).

It is emphasised that responsibility within schools and colleges for safeguarding ‘must remain’ with the designated safeguarding lead, although a deputy can be appointed (this is a matter for schools to decide).

There is greater emphasis on the importance of inter-agency working particularly in relation to sexual abuse (para 63).

Online safety has also been emphasised and schools ‘should ensure’ that online safety is taught in relevant lessons. It recognises that there is a balance to be struck between blocking material and ensuring that lessons are not restricted.

OFSTED have published a new inspection framework which sets out the approach inspectors should take to safeguarding.

Safeguarding policies must have regard to ‘sexting’ and there is a link to advice regarding this.

With regard to Looked After Children: schools must now appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked After.

For children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) the guidance emphasises the increased vulnerability of children with SEN and/or disabilities.

Part Three: Safer Recruitment

The emphasis in this section is on the processes and procedures schools and colleges must undertake to ensure the staff they recruit have been thoroughly vetted through Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Annex A: Further Information

This section has more detailed information regarding Children Missing from Education. It adds sexual exploitation and radicalisation as factors that may lead to a child going missing.

There is further information on Child Sexual Exploitation with a list of signs that may be indicators and further information on 'so-called 'honour based' violence' along with an emphasis on the **duty** placed upon teachers (as well as others i.e. health and social care professionals) to personally 'report to the police' where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

The Prevent Duty now applies to Colleges.

Related Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf

NSPCC Briefing on Key updates to Statutory Guidance for Schools in England – Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/briefing-updated-statutory-guidance-schools-england-keeping-children-safe-education-20162.pdf>

Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

OFSTED: Inspecting Safeguarding in Early years, Education and Skills updated August 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015>

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