



Department
for Education

Statutory guidance: Keeping children safe in education 2026

Government consultation

Launch date 12 February 2026
Respond by 22 April 2026

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Introduction

Keeping children safe could not be more important to this government, and protection from abuse and neglect is a fundamental right for all children. We are already taking action through our landmark reforms to children's social care and the introduction of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill to address this. In addition, we have recently published 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive,' which outlines the government's commitment to keeping families together and children safe. We have reflected these changes in the statutory guidance, Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE), as well as strengthened and clarified content in relation to the use of reasonable force in schools.

We are exploring a move towards providing KCSIE in an HTML format, rather than PDF, to better align with [Publishing accessible documents – GOV.UK](#).

The purpose of this consultation is to gather views on other proposed changes to KCSIE.

KCSIE outlines the legal duties that schools and colleges must comply with, as well as recommended practices to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools and colleges must have regard to KCSIE when carrying out their safeguarding duties. The guidance is structured into five parts, each focusing on a key area of safeguarding practice:

- **Part one** - sets out what staff in schools and colleges should know and do. It explains their safeguarding responsibilities, what the various forms of abuse and neglect look like and what staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding matters.
- **Part two** - sets out the arrangements for the management of safeguarding, including the responsibility of governing bodies and proprietors, the role of designated safeguarding leads and the safeguarding policies and procedures that should be in place.

- **Part three** - sets out the safer recruitment arrangements schools and colleges should adopt and describes in detail the checks that are required for individuals working or visiting a school or college.
- **Part four** - sets out how schools and colleges should manage allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors.
- **Part five** - is about managing reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and sets out what governing bodies and proprietors should be doing to ensure reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment are managed appropriately.

Who this consultation is for

- School and college staff
- Designated safeguarding leads and their deputies
- Governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools)
- Proprietors of independent schools (including academies, free schools, and alternative provision academies) and non-maintained special schools
- Management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs)
- Post 16 providers as set out in the Education Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
- Local authority children's services
- Professionals working in social care
- Teaching unions
- Safeguarding practitioners, including training providers
- Supply agencies

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 12 February 2026.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Teacher Regulation, School Safeguarding and Safety Team at:

KCSIE2026.consultation@education.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: coordinator.consultations@education.gov.uk, telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) later in the year.

About this consultation

This consultation document outlines the DfE's proposed changes to the statutory guidance, Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

To reflect the structure of KCSIE, the consultation is divided into eight sections:

- **Section 1** - proposed changes to the 'about this guidance' section and general updates to KCSIE
- **Section 2** - proposed changes to Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff
- **Section 3** - proposed changes to Part two: The management of safeguarding
- **Section 4** - proposed changes to Part three: Safer recruitment
- **Section 5** - proposed changes to Part four: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors
- **Section 6** - proposed changes to Part five: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment
- **Section 7** – proposed changes to Annex B – further information
- **Section 8** - proposed changes to Annex C – the role of the designated safeguarding lead
- **Section 9** – expanding our evidence base

It is important to note, our aim in proposing these changes, is to help schools and colleges better understand both their legal obligations and what we strongly advise they should do to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The updates are intended to improve the clarity of the guidance and ensure consistency throughout.

A full list and explanation of the proposed substantive changes can be found in Annex D of the draft guidance.

This consultation asks for views on the substantial changes we are proposing. Your feedback will help shape the final version of KCSIE to ensure it continues to support effective safeguarding practice across all education sectors.

We welcome your views on our proposals.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](#) to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request an alternative format of the form.

By email

- KCSIE2026.consultation@education.gov.uk

By post

KCSIE 2026 Consultation response
FAO: Teacher Regulation, School Safeguarding and Safety Team
Department for Education
Floor 3 - Riverside
Bishopsgate House
Darlington
DL1 5QE

Deadline

The consultation closes on 22 April 2026.

Privacy notice

Please note: Information provided in response to consultations, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) that you provide in response to this consultation is processed by the Department for Education as a data controller in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and your personal information will only be used for the purposes of this consultation.

The Department for Education relies upon the lawful basis of article 6 (1) (e) of the UK GDPR which processes this personal data as part of its public task, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for conducting consultations as part of our function. Your information will not be shared with third parties unless the law allows or requires it.

You can read more about what the Department for Education does when we ask for and hold your personal information in our personal information charter, which can be found here: [Personal information charter - Department for Education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

We may also use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to conduct qualitative analysis on some of the responses submitted to this consultation.

About you

Question 1: What is your name?

Question 2: What is your email address?

Question 3: What is the name of your organisation?

Question 4: What type of organisation is it? (Please select most applicable)

Nursery / Primary school / Secondary school / Multi Academy Trust / Sixth Form / FE / HE / Union / Charity / Training provider / ITT Training Provider / Consultancy / Other / Not applicable

If other, please state

Question 5: In what capacity are you responding? (Please select most applicable)

Teacher / Head Teacher or Principal / Other Senior Management / Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy DSL) / Trainee Teacher/Teaching Assistant / Parent or Carer / Trainer / Consultant / Official / Other

If other, please state

Question 6: In which local authority is your organisation based? (If not applicable go to Q7.)

Question 7: How many staff are employed at your organisation?

- 1–10
- 11–50
- 51–200
- 201–500
- 500+
- Not sure
- Prefer not to say

Question 8: How many learners does your organisation support?

- Fewer than 50
- 50–200
- 201–500
- 501–1000
- 1000+
- Not applicable
- Don't know

Question 9: How long have you worked in education or your current sector?

- Less than 1 year
- 1–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–20 years
- Over 20 years
- I've never worked in education or safeguarding

Question 10: Would you like us to keep your responses confidential? If yes, please provide a reason for confidentiality. Please see the privacy notice

Section 1 – Summary of the guidance

Background

This section of the consultation addresses the changes we propose to make to the Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) statutory guidance, which includes:

- status of the guidance
- about this guidance
- who is this guidance is for, and
- general questions relating to the guidance such as, length, format, language, etc.

Please note: paragraph references throughout refer to KCSIE 2026 unless otherwise stated

KCSIE structure

Proposal and rationale

Feedback from schools, colleges and safeguarding professionals continues to be very mixed in relation to the length of the current KCSIE document. We are keen to explore this further to see if we can better meet the needs of the sector.

Question 11: How do you typically access and refer to the KCSIE guidance?

- I print a copy to read and refer to
- I read and refer to it electronically (e.g., PDF, online link)
- I use both printed and electronic formats
- Other (please specify)
- No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 12: Do you think the current length of KCSIE is appropriate for its purpose?

- Too long
- About right
- Too short
- No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 13: Would you prefer:

- A shorter, more concise version (with links to detailed guidance)
- The current comprehensive format
- A modular approach (core guidance plus optional annexes)
- Another format/something else (please specify)

Please explain further (optional):

Question 14: What benefits or challenges do you foresee in moving from a PDF to HTML format?

Answer (Free text):

Question 15: We have produced a one-page summary of Part one of KCSIE. Would schools and colleges find this helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

EYFS framework

Proposal and rationale

Stakeholder feedback has highlighted that schools are sometimes unaware of the additional safeguarding requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, particularly for children in reception year. To address this, we have clarified that this statutory guidance applies to school-based nurseries and reception classes for children aged 0–5, by explicitly referencing the EYFS.

Question 16: Were you aware that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework sets out additional safeguarding requirements for children in school-based nurseries and reception classes?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

Proposal and rationale

KCSIE currently uses the terminology “*Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).*”

Following stakeholder feedback, we propose to change this language to “*consensual and non-consensual self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes.*” This change in language aims to improve clarity, consistency with current safeguarding terminology, and better reflect the seriousness of both consensual and non-consensual image sharing.

Question 17: Do you agree with this change?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 18: What other terms or language do you currently use (or hear used) to describe situations involving the creation and/or sharing of self-generated intimate images?

(Please include any words or phrases you use in professional, educational, or everyday contexts. This will help us understand current language use and identify where greater clarity or consistency may be needed).

Answer (Free text):

Misogyny

Proposal and rationale

The current KCSIE guidance already includes references to misogyny, however we propose to include further references throughout the guidance to explicitly address where misogyny intersects with harmful sexual behaviour (HSB).

Extreme misogyny is increasingly prevalent online and is often linked to harmful sexual behaviour amongst young people. Misogynistic ideologies can contribute to:

- The normalisation of sexual harassment and sexual violence
- Child-on-child exploitation and coercion
- The spread of harmful narratives

Question 19: Do you agree with the proposal to include further references to misogyny throughout KCSIE, specifically to highlight its intersection with harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 2 – Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

Background

Part one of KCSIE sets out what all staff need to know, what they need to look out for and where they should report their concerns.

Changes to Part one

Annex A

Proposal and rationale

Annex A was introduced into KCSIE in the September 2021 update. It was created as a condensed summary to Part one specifically for staff who do not work directly with children. Currently, schools and colleges can decide, based on their own assessment, whether such staff should read Part one or Annex A. We are proposing to remove Annex A as evidence suggests that it is Part one that is more commonly used, and we take the view that all staff need a broader safeguarding awareness which Part one provides.

Question 20: If Annex A were removed from KCSIE, how would this affect your ability to engage with safeguarding guidance?

- It would significantly reduce accessibility for non-teaching staff
- It would have little to no impact
- It would improve consistency by requiring all staff to read Part one
- I'm not sure

Please explain further (optional):

What school and college staff need to know

Proposal and rationale

To align with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (WT), we have made changes to paragraphs 13-14 and paragraph 65. Aligning KCSIE with WT promotes consistency across the safeguarding system and clarifies schools' roles within multi-agency arrangements.

Question 21: Do you agree with the proposed changes to paragraphs 13–14 and paragraph 65 of KCSIE to align with Working Together to Safeguard Children (WT), promoting consistency across the safeguarding system and clarifying the role of schools and colleges within multi-agency arrangements?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Early help

Proposal and rationale

Following stakeholder feedback, we have suggested amendments to paragraph 17 to include “...*has been repeatedly removed from the classroom...*” to reflect the [Behaviour in Schools](#) guidance around causes and responses to misbehaviour. And also “...*is on a part-time timetable...*,” which can be a contributing factor towards child criminal exploitation.

Question 22: Do you agree with the proposed amendments to paragraph 17 of KCSIE, including the references to pupils who have been “*repeatedly removed from the classroom*” and those “*on a part-time timetable*”, to better reflect the guidance and highlight potential safeguarding risks such as child criminal exploitation?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Child Sexual Exploitation

Proposal and rationale

The current wording of paragraphs 26 and 39 of KCSIE risks creating confusion about the legal definition of rape. Under UK law, rape occurs when a person uses their penis without consent to penetrate the vagina, anus, or mouth of another person. Phrases such as “rape or oral sex” may imply that non-consensual oral penetration by a penis is not rape, which is incorrect. To improve clarity, we propose removing this phrasing and adding an example of penetration with an object, which is legally recognised as a distinct form of sexual assault.

Question 23: Do you agree that the proposed changes to paragraphs 26 and 39 improve clarity around the legal definition of rape and sexual assault?

- Yes
- No
- Partially

Please explain further (*including any suggestions for alternative wording or additional examples*):

Evidence from the [Casey Review](#) and other research highlights that, as with child criminal exploitation (CCE), some victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE) have been, and can still be, criminalised for actions they take under coercion. It is important that education professionals understand this dynamic so they can respond appropriately and remain curious when a child is involved in the criminal justice system. We have updated paragraph 41 to reflect this.

Question 24: Do you agree that the revised wording in paragraph 41 helps education professionals better understand the risk of victims of child sexual exploitation being criminalised for actions taken under coercion?

- Yes
- No
- Partially

Please explain further (*including any suggestions for improving the guidance*) (optional):

Serious violence

Proposal and rationale

We have clarified that violence between children may, in some instances, constitute a safeguarding issue, particularly where there is a risk of harm, exploitation, or vulnerability. The guidance now includes:

- explicit references to physical assault and threats with weapons.
- recognition that children who display violent behaviour may themselves be at risk or in need of support.
- a strengthened message that safeguarding responses should consider both the child who has been harmed and the child who has caused harm.

This change reflects stakeholder feedback and aligns with a more trauma-informed approach to safeguarding.

Question 25: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

“The revised guidance makes it clear that serious violence, including when children are perpetrators, is a safeguarding issue.”

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Question 26: How confident are you that you understand your setting’s responsibilities in identifying and responding to serious violence as a safeguarding issue?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Slightly confident
- Not confident
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Question 27: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

“The guidance supports early identification of risk and outlines appropriate early help or preventative responses.”

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Question 28: To what extent do you agree that the revised Part one better equips schools and colleges to identify and prevent abuse and violence between children?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Question 29: If KCSIE were to include more guidance on recognising and preventing child-on-child violence, what would be most helpful?

- Case studies
- Checklists
- Training resources
- Clearer definitions
- Partner roles
- Other, please specify

What school and college staff should do if they have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff

Proposal and rationale

Following stakeholder feedback, we have added wording to paragraph 75 to highlight earlier in the guidance that the headteacher or principal will consider whether a LADO referral is appropriate. This should help staff to understand that this is an expectation.

Question 30: Do you agree with the proposed addition to paragraph 75 of KCSIE, which highlights earlier in the guidance that a headteacher or principal should consider whether a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is appropriate? This aims to clarify expectations for staff.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 3 – Part two: The management of safeguarding

Background

Part two of KCSIE sets out the responsibilities of governing bodies and proprietors to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and includes guidance on the safeguarding policies and procedures they should have in place.

Mental Health

Proposal and rationale

In response to stakeholder feedback, we have revised the section on “**children requiring mental health support**” in Part two of KCSIE. The updated text aims to provide a clearer high-level overview of how mental health concerns may intersect with safeguarding duties - particularly in cases involving serious risks such as self-harm, eating disorders, or suicidal ideation.

While KCSIE is not intended to be the primary source of detailed advice on mental health, it now more explicitly acknowledges that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. The guidance signposts to specialist resources and supports schools in recognising when safeguarding action may be appropriate.

We welcome views on whether the revised section strikes the right balance between providing a high-level safeguarding overview and directing schools and colleges to more detailed mental health guidance. We are particularly interested in whether the changes help settings feel confident in identifying and responding to serious mental health-related safeguarding risks.

We have made a substantial redraft of the section on children requiring mental health support, clarifying:

- The role of education staff in identifying early signs of mental health issues.
- The importance of whole-school approaches to wellbeing.
- The need for appropriate referral pathways and targeted support.

This update reflects growing awareness of the link between mental health and safeguarding and aims to support schools in responding confidently and compassionately.

Question 31: To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

“The revised section on ‘children requiring mental health support’ clearly explains the role of schools and colleges in identifying and responding to mental health needs.”?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Question 32: To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

“The revised section on ‘children requiring mental health support’ provides a clear and useful high-level summary and appropriately signposts to more detailed guidance.”?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Guidance relating to children who are questioning their gender

Background

We have updated the section on children questioning their gender which focuses on issues that might arise in relation to children who are questioning their gender. We have also proposed separate new sections on single-sex spaces (paragraphs 104-115) and single-sex sports (paragraphs 94-97). These sections are informed by the public consultation on the draft non-statutory *Gender Questioning Children: Guidance for Schools and Colleges*. We will not be publishing standalone guidance for schools and colleges on gender questioning children but propose instead to include this content in KCSIE so that children's wellbeing and safeguarding are considered in the round, and so that schools and colleges can easily access this information in one place.

Proposal and rationale

Overall, the consultation demonstrated that this is a highly contested policy area, with no clear consensus on the appropriate approach, but more respondents expressed negative than positive views about the useability of the draft guidance published for consultation. [The Cass Review](#) – an independent review of gender identity services for children and young people – published its final report on 10 April 2024, after this consultation had closed.

By including advice in KCSIE, our intention is to reflect the importance for schools of making careful decisions about what is in the best interests of children, including children who are questioning their gender. Schools and colleges have obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their care, and children who are questioning their gender are no exception. Children who are questioning their gender may need sensitive and thoughtful involvement from their school or college. When handled well, with appropriate parental involvement and attention to any clinical input, the school or college's involvement can help to avoid safeguarding issues arising.

Guidance in this area must be focused on the best interests of children as well as the legal duties of schools and colleges. Our intention is to provide a framework for schools and colleges as they consider these issues. By including this in KCSIE, the advice and framework we are offering will be on a statutory footing.

Paragraphs 104-115 and paragraphs 191-196 in KCSIE clarify a school or college's legal obligations in relation to single-sex spaces, including toilets, changing rooms and boarding / residential accommodation.

The guidance is clear about the law, that schools and colleges should not make exceptions to single-sex policies that are required to comply with statutory requirements

and based on safety, but the guidance stresses that where it is both possible and in the interests of the child, schools and colleges should do their best to accommodate the needs of children who are experiencing distress using facilities designated for their biological sex by providing alternative arrangements.

Paragraphs 94-97 clarify the legal issues relating to provision of single-sex sports. Again, where there are safety concerns about mixed-sex provision, we have been clear that sports should be provided in single-sex groups. However, we recognise how important it is that all children can participate in sports and PE, and the draft reflects the importance of considering fairness and safety for all children.

Question 33: Does the updated section of the guidance on children who are questioning their gender provide clarity about the considerations schools and colleges will need to take into account?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 34: Do paragraphs 104-115 provide clarity for schools and colleges about their legal obligations relating to toilets, changing rooms, and boarding and residential accommodation?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 35: Do paragraphs 94-97 provide clarity for schools and colleges about the circumstances in which the school is justified in having a policy of single-sex sports?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Additional technical updates - other changes to Part two include:

- ‘Opportunities to teach safeguarding,’ included references to ‘racism’ and ‘derogatory behaviour’ and included links to RSHE resources.
- ‘Artificial intelligence,’ proposed the addition of paragraphs focusing on the use of generative artificial intelligence in education.
- ‘Filtering and monitoring’, updates to include an annual review atleast every academic year.
- ‘Information security and access management,’ proposed a change of wording with additional information on cyber security.
- ‘Alternative provision,’ additional detail included.
- ‘Medical conditions,’ clarification of safeguarding responsibilities for children with medical conditions, children absent from education, and those in alternative provision.
- ‘Information sharing,’ strengthened guidance on the transfer of child protection files.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding

Proposal and rationale

Paragraph 153 in KCSIE 2026 describes the importance of preventative education and zero tolerance for sexism and other forms of prejudice or harmful behaviour. Including references to “racism” and “derogatory behaviour” in this paragraph aligns the guidance with existing expectations set out in Ofsted’s [school inspection framework](#) and the DfE guidance on promoting fundamental British values. This addition reinforces the importance of addressing discriminatory behaviour as part of a whole-school safeguarding approach and supports schools in creating inclusive, respectful environments.

Following stakeholder feedback, we have also updated the wording in paragraph 155 to include new links to RSHE resources: [Free, time-saving teacher resources | Oak National Academy](#)

Question 36: Do you agree that including references to “racism” and “derogatory behaviour” in paragraph 153 of the KCSIE guidance is helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Question 37: Are the new links to RSHE resources helpful for schools and colleges?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Artificial intelligence (AI)

Proposal and rationale

We are proposing the addition of two new paragraphs after paragraph 159 focusing on AI. The department updated its policy paper on the use of generative artificial intelligence in education. The paper outlines key safety considerations and legal responsibilities for schools and colleges when using generative AI in both teacher-facing and pupil-facing contexts.

To support implementation, the department, working in partnership with the Chiltern Learning Trust and the Chartered College of Teaching, has published online resources for all school and college staff. These resources emphasise safe and effective use of AI, with a strong focus on safeguarding.

Question 38: Do you support the inclusion of references to the DfE's generative artificial intelligence policy and resources within KCSIE, to help schools and colleges understand their safeguarding responsibilities when using AI tools?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Question 39: In your view, does this addition provide sufficient clarity and support for managing risks related to ethics, data protection, and safeguarding in AI use?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Free text (optional)

Filtering and monitoring

Proposal and rationale

KCSIE currently states that “*...governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.*” paragraph 166.

Following recent ministerial commitments and cross government work to strengthen school and college online safety, we propose adding that governing bodies and proprietors should '*carry out a review of their effectiveness atleast once every academic year*', and that '*Reviews should include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations, and a record should be kept of these checks.*'

This wording is already used in the filtering and monitoring standards and reflects expectations that schools and colleges proactively assure the effectiveness of their systems.

Annual, documented reviews are essential to demonstrate that schools and colleges are taking timely and effective action to keep children safe online, particularly given the increasing risks from harmful digital content, AI generated material, and rapid changes in online behaviour.

Question 40: Do you agree with this change?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Information security and access management

Proposal and rationale

We propose to change the wording in paragraph 170 and also add an additional paragraph on cyber security.

Cyber security is now recognised as a safeguarding concern, not just an IT concern. Schools and colleges hold sensitive personal data about children, including safeguarding records and health information. If this data is compromised through a cyber-attack, this can pose immediate risks to a child's safety and wellbeing.

Question 41: Does the revised wording in paragraph 170 and additional paragraph effectively communicate that cyber security is an integral part of safeguarding practice?

Please share your views on whether this change helps reinforce the importance of protecting sensitive data and maintaining secure digital safeguarding systems in schools and colleges.

- Yes
- No

- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional)

Alternative provision (AP)

Proposal and rationale

We propose adding a paragraph between paragraphs 203 and 205, which sets out the department's voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision, along with guidance to support schools and local authorities in quality assuring providers.

Including reference to the voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision in KCSIE helps strengthen safeguarding oversight for children educated outside traditional school settings. These standards provide a clear framework for quality assurance, supporting schools and local authorities in selecting safe and appropriate providers.

Question 42: Do you agree that referencing the voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision in KCSIE helps reinforce the responsibility of schools to carry out safeguarding checks and ensure the suitability of commissioned provision?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional)

Question 43: Does this inclusion support schools and local authorities in maintaining high standards of care for children educated outside mainstream settings?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional)

Medical conditions

Proposal and rationale

We have added a new paragraph (paragraph 243) which sets out guidance on 'safeguarding children with medical conditions.'

Question 44: Do you agree with the addition of guidance on safeguarding children with medical conditions, and does it help clarify when a medical condition may become a safeguarding issue?

- Yes, agree with both
- Yes, agree with addition only
- Yes, agree with clarification only
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Proposal and rationale

We have listened to previous stakeholder engagement which indicated that more was needed on additional barriers.

Question 45: Do you think the expansion of the list of additional barriers children with SEND can face is helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain your answer (optional):

Information Sharing

Proposal and rationale

We have strengthened guidance on the transfer of child protection files when a pupil moves to a new school or college. The update clarifies that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy should share any information indicating that a pupil may pose a risk to themselves or others, such as concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours, with the receiving setting. In addition, we recommend that DSLs or a deputy from both settings have a direct conversation where there are significant issues or concerns, as good practice, to ensure continuity of safeguarding support.

Question 46: Do you support the proposed clarification that, when a pupil transfers to a new school or college, the DSL or a deputy should share any information indicating potential risk to self or others (e.g. serious violence or harmful behaviours)?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 47: Do you support the addition that it is considered good practice for DSLs at both settings to have a direct discussion where concerns exist?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 4 - Part three: Safer recruitment

Background

Part three of KCSIE provides schools and colleges with guidance on the statutory requirements and important information about safeguarding and recruitment.

Changes to Part three

In response to feedback from key stakeholders, schools and colleges we have inserted a single central record template that meets the statutory requirements of KCSIE. Other revisions, address concerns from the sector that schools are requesting unnecessary DBS checks for those on work experience. Minor revisions have also been made to improve clarity throughout the text.

Adults who supervise children on work experience

Proposal and rationale

We have suggested amendments to the current work experience section, in response to feedback from the sector that schools are requesting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks from employers where they are deemed unnecessary, i.e. where the workplace experience does not meet the definition of regulated activity.

Rationale for specific changes are listed below:

- Paragraph 398 – we have updated language to reflect policy changes on work experience and also plan to suggest an amendment to the 16-19 study programmes reference in early 2026, following planned publication of new best practice on work experience.
- Paragraph 399 – We have amended language to respond to concerns from employers that schools are requesting DBS checks from employers where they are not necessary. E.g. for Key Stage 3 workplace group visits.
- Paragraph 400 – We have included the word ‘both’, as our reading of the two bullets in paragraph 399 is both are required to be true to be deemed regulated activity.
- Paragraph 402 – We have updated language to reflect policy changes on work experience.

Question 48: Are there any aspects of the work experience section in KCSIE that are unclear and deter, schools, colleges, or employers from enabling young people to undertake work experience?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

If yes, please explain (optional):

Single Central Record

Proposal and rationale

In response to feedback from key stakeholders, we have included an example Single Central Record (SCR) template that meets the statutory requirements of KCSIE.

Question 49: Do you think this is helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 5 - Part four: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

Background

Part four of Keeping children safe in education is about managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person poses a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. This part of the guidance should be followed when dealing with allegations against anyone in the school or college, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors.

Changes to Part four

Proposal and rationale

We have suggested amendments to Part four to clarify that when an allegation is made against a trainee teacher schools and colleges should follow the same procedures as set out for supply teachers and contracted staff.

Rationale for change:

- Include the words 'trainee teachers' throughout, and
- Insert new paragraph which explains that schools and colleges should follow the same procedures as set out for supply agencies.

Question 50: How confident are you in responding to allegations about trainee teachers and understanding their respective roles?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Slightly confident
- Not confident
- Don't know / Not applicable

Please explain further (optional):

Question 51: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about a school's safeguarding responsibilities for individuals who are not directly employed by the school (e.g., volunteers, contractors, trainee teachers, or staff from third-party organisations)? (Note: This relates to safeguarding responsibilities, not safer recruitment.)

Schools have full safeguarding responsibility for all individuals working on their site or with their pupils, regardless of employment status.

- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*
- *Not sure*

Question 52: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about a school's safeguarding responsibilities for individuals who are not directly employed by the school (e.g., volunteers, contractors, trainee teachers, or staff from third-party organisations)? (Note: This relates to safeguarding responsibilities, not safer recruitment.)

Schools share safeguarding responsibility with third parties but must ensure appropriate checks, supervision, and policies are in place.

- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*
- *Not sure*

Question 53: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about a school's safeguarding responsibilities for individuals who are not directly employed by the school (e.g., volunteers, contractors, trainee teachers, or staff from third-party organisations)? (Note: This relates to safeguarding responsibilities, not safer recruitment.)

Schools can delegate safeguarding responsibility to external providers but must retain oversight and assurance that appropriate standards are met.

- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*
- *Not sure*

Section 6 - Part five: Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence

Background

Part five of KCSIE is about managing reports of child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. It sets out what governing bodies and proprietors should be doing to ensure reports of child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence are managed appropriately.

Changes to Part five

Proposal and rationale

We have restructured Part five of KCSIE to present a clearer and more progressive continuum of sexual behaviours. The revised structure begins with early indicators of harmful sexual behaviour, progressing through to sexual harassment and culminating in sexual violence. This sequential approach enhances clarity, improves the logical flow, and supports ease of reference for professionals addressing safeguarding concerns.

This approach also aligns with evidence-based frameworks such as the Hackett Continuum, which distinguishes between developmentally inappropriate, problematic, and abusive behaviours.

Question 54: Do you agree that the revised structure of Part five of KCSIE, presenting a clearer continuum of sexual behaviours from early indicators of harmful sexual behaviour through to sexual harassment and sexual violence, improves clarity and supports professionals in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 55: Does this approach, aligned with evidence-based frameworks such as the Hackett Continuum, help schools and colleges better distinguish between developmentally inappropriate, problematic, and abusive behaviours?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 7 - Annex B (to become Annex A): Further information

Background

Following the proposed removal of Annex A, Annex B of KCSIE will become Annex A. It provides detailed guidance on a wide range of safeguarding issues that schools and colleges may encounter. Annex B serves as a reference point for staff to understand specific safeguarding concerns and how to respond appropriately, including when to refer to external agencies such as children's social care or the police.

Changes to Annex B (to become Annex A)

Proposal and rationale

We have added in links to [Understanding and responding to AI-generated child sexual abuse material](#) guidance from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education programme in collaboration with the Internet Watch Foundation, and [Financially motivated sexual extortion \(FMSE\)](#) guidance for education settings on FMSE from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education programme.

Question 56: Are these new links helpful for schools and colleges?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 8 - Annex C (to become Annex B): The role of the designated safeguarding lead

Background

Following the proposed removal of Annex A, Annex C of KCSIE will become Annex B. It sets out the role of the DSL including their responsibilities, status, and the required skills of the role as key point of contact for safeguarding and child protection in schools and colleges.

Changes to Annex C (to become Annex B)

Proposal and rationale

We have added further detail regarding the importance of schools having robust cover arrangements. We recognise there may be times when the DSL may not be available, for example because of an illness. We aim to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are acted upon without delay. We have added “*skills and experience*” to paragraph 125, this aims to reinforce the expectation that designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) should not only hold appropriate status and authority but also possess the practical capability to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This has also been reflected in Part two.

Question 57: Do you support the inclusion of a requirement for schools to implement robust cover arrangements to ensure safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Question 58: Do you agree with the proposed addition of “*skills and experience*”, to reinforce the expectation that designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) should have the practical capability, background, and expertise to carry out their responsibilities effectively?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Section 9 – Expanding our evidence base

Background

In this section of the consultation, we are seeking to expand our evidence base in areas where we have routinely been asked to consider changes to KCSIE, but where our knowledge is currently limited.

General feedback on KCSIE

Question 59: What aspects of KCSIE do you find most helpful in supporting safeguarding practice?

Answer (free text):

Question 60: What aspects of KCSIE do you find least helpful or most challenging?

Answer (free text):

Question 61: Is there anything missing from KCSIE that would help you safeguard children more effectively?

Answer (free text):

Affluent neglect

“Affluent neglect” refers to situations whereby children from wealthy or privileged backgrounds experience neglect (particularly emotional or supervisory) despite having their material needs met.

Question 62: Are you familiar with the term “affluent neglect”?

- Yes
- No

Question 63: If yes, do you believe “affluent neglect” is becoming a growing safeguarding concern and warrants explicit reference and guidance within KCSIE?’

Answer (free text):

Artificial intelligence (AI)

We welcome your views on how KCSIE can best support staff in understanding and responding to the evolving risks posed by AI technologies.

Technology continues to play a significant role in both safeguarding risks and opportunities. As AI tools become more widely used, particularly AI-powered chatbots, there is growing concern about their potential misuse in ways that could harm children and young people. These risks are evolving rapidly and may not yet be fully understood by all staff working in education settings.

Question 64: Should KCSIE include specific reference to the emerging safeguarding risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

British Sign Language (BSL)

Currently KCSIE is not available in British Sign Language (BSL), we're seeking views on whether there is a need for a BSL version to improve accessibility and equity in education settings.

Question 65: Do you feel there is a need for a British Sign Language (BSL) version of the KCSIE guidance?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure/ No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Domestic abuse

Feedback from the wider sector has highlighted the need for clearer advice and strengthened language around Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA).

Question 66: To what extent do you agree that KCSIE should include more detailed information on Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA), including clearer signposting to support services?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain further (optional):

Grooming gangs

Question 67: Should KCSIE include clearer guidance on safeguarding risks associated with organised networks or grooming gangs, including links to relevant statutory guidance?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Gaming platforms

As children and young people increasingly engage with online platforms, the risks they face continue to evolve. While social media has long been recognised as a space where children may be targeted by offenders, there is growing concern about the use of gaming platforms as environments where grooming, exploitation, and contact by organised networks can occur.

In parallel, there is a rising trend in sextortion, particularly financially motivated sexual extortion, which disproportionately affects young males. Offenders often coerce victims into sharing explicit images and then demand money under threat of exposure. This form of abuse can have devastating emotional and psychological consequences.

Question 68: Given these emerging threats, do you think that there is a need to consider explicit reference to a) the risks associated with gaming platforms as potential sites of harm and/or b) the growing prevalence of sextortion, especially targeting young males, and the need for schools and colleges to be aware of and respond to this form of abuse?

- Yes, both should be included
- Only (a) should be included
- Only (b) should be included
- No, neither should be included
- Not sure

Please explain further (*your feedback will help ensure KCSIE reflects the current digital risks facing children and young people*):

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

Currently, KCSIE focuses on child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). However, school staff may encounter situations involving HSB that is not criminal in nature and may not always harm another child e.g. a child watching pornography. These behaviours may not always result in direct harm but can still indicate underlying vulnerabilities or risks.

This consultation aims to ensure that school staff are equipped with the right knowledge and tools to respond confidently and appropriately to all forms of HSB, in line with best practice and evolving safeguarding needs.

Question 69: Would you welcome more specialist advice in KCSIE on harmful sexual behaviour including behaviours that are not criminal and may not always harm another child e.g. a child watching pornography, or would you prefer to be signposted to other sources of help?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable / No opinion

Please explain further (optional):

Self-Referral – harm towards a child

It is our expectation that schools' safeguarding policies and procedures would require individuals to disclose relevant information, including self-referral where they have harmed a child or are subject to safeguarding measures.

We are seeking views on whether KCSIE should provide clearer expectations around self-referral by staff. The current guidance requires staff to refer concerns about colleagues who may have harmed a child, but it is less explicit about situations where staff themselves may have harmed a child or are subject to safeguarding measures, such as a child protection plan.

We want to understand whether stakeholders believe KCSIE should make this expectation clearer.

Question 70: Should KCSIE include clearer guidance requiring staff to refer themselves to the headteacher or principal if they have harmed a child or are subject to a child protection plan, even where this has not resulted in criminal charges?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/ No opinion

Please explain further, including any examples or considerations (optional):

Teenage relationship abuse

Currently, KCSIE includes limited wording on teenage relationship abuse, despite growing evidence of its prevalence among young people. With high and increasing rates of abuse in teenage relationships, especially online and through technology, teachers and school staff may require clearer guidance on how teenage relationship abuse may present, how children may be abused or controlled by their partners, and what interventions are appropriate.

While KCSIE outlines signs of harm in the context of intra-familial domestic abuse, it does not currently support school staff in recognising or responding to abuse within teenage relationships.

Question 71: Do you agree that KCSIE should include more detailed guidance on Teenage Relationship Abuse (TRA), including how it may present in online and digital contexts, and how school staff can identify and respond to abuse and coercive control within teenage relationships?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain further (optional):

Verbal abuse

KCSIE sets out different forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect. While verbal abuse is referenced within emotional abuse, we are interested in whether KCSIE should say more about verbal abuse as a distinct safeguarding concern. This could include clearer examples of harmful language, persistent derogatory remarks, or threats, and how these can impact a child's wellbeing and safety.

Question 72: Do you think KCSIE should provide more explicit guidance on verbal abuse?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/ No opinion

Question 73: If yes, what additional content or examples would help schools and colleges identify and respond to verbal abuse effectively?

Please explain further (optional):

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

This section is primarily aimed at DSLs and deputies, (*If you are not a DSL/Deputy please skip this section.*)

Previous engagement, including a 2024 call for evidence and recent stakeholder feedback, highlighted concerns around workload, emotional burden, recognition, and training. We are seeking views to help identify practical steps to better support designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and their deputies in schools and colleges.

Question 74: How were you recruited into the role of a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL (DDSL)? (select the option that best describes your experience):

- I volunteered for the role
- I was asked to take on the role
- It was part of my job description when I was hired
- I applied for a promoted post that included the DSL role
- Other
- I'm not a DSL or deputy

If 'other,' please specify:

Question 75: How long have you been in the DSL/DDSL role?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- More than 5 years

Question 76: What is the most rewarding part of your role as a DSL/DDSL?

Answer (free text):

Question 77: What would make your role even better?

Answer (free text):

Question 78: If you could change one thing to improve support for DSL/DDSLs, what would it be?

Answer (free text):

Question 79: How confident do you feel in your role as a DSL/DDSL?

- Very confident
- Mostly confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not confident
- Not applicable

Please explain further (optional):



Department for Education

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