



SPRING 2026

Safeguarding Matters

In this issue:

The role of governors in safeguarding

Artificial intelligence: risks and benefits

Young carers: identification and support



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Editorial



Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of *Safeguarding Matters*. Let me start by saying a big thank you for completing the annual 157/175 safeguarding audit. This provides Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP) and the Education and Inclusion Service with a wealth of information around areas of strength in Hampshire schools and those where you would welcome support or guidance. I have visited a number of schools this term to identify areas of good practice and will be visiting a few more over the coming weeks. Once these visits have taken place, I will publish a report outlining the findings.

The audit has also provided me with information about the areas that you are focussing on in your safeguarding action plans this year. I have therefore tailored some of the articles in this edition to those topics, signposting resources which will hopefully be helpful.

As we know, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is a topic that is exercising many education colleagues and has been identified by a significant number of schools as something you are currently working on.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) was referenced in *Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025* in terms of organisational response and, of course, we need to think about how we are educating children and young people about this ever evolving area of technology – the ethics of this, benefits and risks. Thinking about our response to this can feel a bit overwhelming, so the article talks about some of the risks and benefits, along with links to useful resources and websites. Phil Bagge (Inspector/Adviser for Computing) has also recently produced some very helpful guidance on this and this is linked in the article.

Not that I am obsessed by it – although you may think that from the number of times I have referenced it in updates – but I have also provided some information on site security and Martyn's Law. I hope many of you have been able to access the Home Office training on this, but if not, I have put together some guidance and key facts, along with links to resources to support.

Others articles in this edition include the role of governors in monitoring safeguarding, restrictive physical intervention, NSPCC resources and training and guidance on school response to parents on the sex offenders register.

As Sue Savory had done in previous editions of *Safeguarding Matters*, I have summarised the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership education sub group minutes so that you are informed of what safeguarding topics are being discussed at a local authority strategic and operational level.

Hopefully, you are all on the distribution list that provides you with regular updates around current safeguarding issues. If you do not receive these please contact me and I will add you to the list.

HIAS curriculum update

Finally, always remember that you do an incredible job for the children and young people of Hampshire and, from the phone calls and emails I receive, and the reviews and training I have done, it is always evident how much you care and the commitment you show to keeping our children safe.

Best wishes

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The role of governors in safeguarding

Safeguarding is a fundamental responsibility for all those involved in education, and school governors play a critical role in ensuring that children are safe and their welfare is promoted. The results from the safeguarding audit this year show that a lot of schools and settings have governor oversight as a focus for their action plan this year. The following article outlines governor responsibilities and some suggestions on how to support governors in fulfilling these.

Overview

As strategic leaders, governors must provide robust oversight and challenge to guarantee that safeguarding arrangements are effective, compliant, and embedded within the school's culture. This responsibility is underpinned by statutory guidance, including *Keeping children safe in education 2025*, the Department for Education's (DfE) governor guidance, and *Working together to safeguard children (2023)*, which collectively set out clear expectations for governance in safeguarding. By understanding these frameworks and applying them diligently, governors help create an environment where every child can learn and thrive securely.

Governor responsibilities

- **Statutory leadership and oversight.** Governors and trustees are collectively responsible for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, and must ensure school policies, procedures, and training are effective and compliant with the law. They must take a strategic leadership role, guiding the school's safeguarding culture and regularly reviewing performance data.
 - **Knowledge and familiarity with governing guidance.** Governors must thoroughly read and comprehend *KCSIE 2025*, especially part 2 (*Management of safeguarding*) and part 3 (Safer recruitment) – including its technical updates – for effective oversight.
- They must also be familiar with *Working together 2023*, understanding multi-agency expectations and their duty to cooperate with safeguarding.
 - **Strategic challenge through training and scrutiny.** All governors must receive appropriate safeguarding training at induction, refreshed regularly, to equip them to challenge and validate the school's procedures. They should be alert to the needs for specialist training (eg Prevent, safer recruitment) and appoint a governor to oversee filtering and monitoring systems.
 - **Link governor role and reporting.** The governing body should appoint a safeguarding or child protection link governor to liaise termly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), review safeguarding records (eg the single central record (SCR)), visit classrooms or review safeguarding initiatives, and feed back to the full board. Governors should ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item at governing board meetings and maintain an annual safeguarding report with measurable outcomes.
 - **Safer recruitment and pre-appointment checks.** Governors must ensure all governors, staff, and volunteers hold appropriate enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks and Section 128 checks for leadership roles. Boards must adopt and monitor safer recruitment procedures in line with *KCSIE* part 3, supported by updated resources.
 - **Managing key KCSIE updates.** Governors need to maintain awareness of changes in *KCSIE* and ensure the school or setting are taking actions to implement updates. For 2025 this includes:
 - online safety: understand risks – including misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories – and ensure proper digital filtering and monitoring

- attendance: recognise that non-attendance issues may be safeguarding concerns; liaise with children's services when needed
- alternative provision: confirm oversight and compliance in safeguarding arrangements and appropriate pre-placement checks.
- **Multi-agency safeguarding collaboration.** *Working together 2023* emphasises a child centred whole family approach – education settings must engage with statutory partners and respect local protocols. Governors should ensure the school supports timely referrals, early help, information sharing, and participation in local safeguarding forums.
- **Independent scrutiny and local accountability.** Governors should ensure independent scrutiny of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including education's role in local safeguarding partnerships, plus clarity over local roles, funding, and reporting. Help the school contribute to the annual safeguarding report required under *Working together* and ensure transparency for families and professionals.

By fulfilling these duties – rooted in *KCSIE 2025*, governor guidance, and *Working together 2023* – governors can uphold a robust safeguarding system. This ensures strong strategic leadership, informed scrutiny, continuous improvement, and ultimately, safer environments for every child.

How do governors monitor safeguarding activities in schools and settings? What do these activities look like?

Schools and settings, governors and trustees will monitor safeguarding differently in different contexts and this can also be dependent on the skill sets, knowledge and experience of governors. It is important that all governors have a handle on safeguarding, even if the link governor is the *expert* on this.

As safeguarding leads, we can support governors and trustees with this. The following outlines some questions that can be asked, and activities undertaken.

Firstly, guidance to give to governors is that their role can be extremely helpful in supporting the school's self-evaluation and testing policy in practice. If every visit and governing body meeting does this, it can provide a wealth of evidence to support the leadership team's evaluation of the strengths and areas for development for the organisation. It ensures the governors are fully informed about safeguarding and can feel confident in asserting that safeguarding in the school or setting is secure. This also provides an opportunity to show the impact governors have – they visit, observe something, put this in their monitoring report, and then ask about it in a full governing body meeting (FGB) to ascertain the actions taken by the school – providing triangulation and evidence of support and challenge.

The other point is that in the suggested questions and activities below, this will be dependent on school or setting systems and procedures. It is also worth emphasising that these suggested questions or activities would take place on a calendared basis – not everything needs to be checked all the time. It's about dip testing areas of safeguarding to ensure that what the DSL and team believe to be the case, is, in fact, the case.

Ethos

The governing body has a strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements, which implicitly includes establishing and embedding a strong safeguarding ethos or culture. Demonstrating a strong safeguarding ethos can be done through a whole range of different day to day aspects and so can be highlighted in any monitoring report.

Questions and easy observations

- Is the site secure (in line with school expectations and procedures)? Are external doors closed? Is entry into the school and onto the school site controlled (This will be

dependent on the school context, but the question is are the procedures and processes in line with school policy and expectation)?

- Are visitor checks carried out appropriately? Is ID checked? A lanyard provided? Sign in and out procedures in place?
- Is safeguarding information visible? Are there posters identifying who the DSL team are? Is there information on how to report a concern? Is this information in the staff room? On the sign in system? On toilet doors? Is it all up to date?
- Is key information displayed and up to date – for example, fire evacuation procedures?
- Is there information in the classrooms telling the pupils who the DSLs are and who to report concerns to? Are there different methods visible for pupils to report concerns – this may be via the DSLs, *worry boxes* (or a variant), an email address given on the DSL poster?
- Are other safeguarding organisations promoted through posters etc – for example Child Line and National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) so a range of disclosure methods are promoted?
- Are staff wearing lanyards?
- Are there any obvious hazards around the site – blocked fire exits? Cluttered stairways etc or is the environment clear and tidy?
- At start and end of day, is there appropriate staff presence? Is staff presence where leaders would expect it to be? Is entry to and exit from the school controlled and calm? Are staff on the doors (if that is expected) to welcome pupils in?
- Are there positive interactions with pupils on entry to school or class? Are pupils welcomed and greeted positively?
- What happens at the start of day if pupils are late? Are they signed in once the gates are closed? Does this reflect school policy? Are pupils still greeted positively and welcomed into school?

- At break or lunchtimes, is there appropriate staff presence? Can staff be identified easily if they are on duty (if this is school policy, eg hi vis)? Are staff where leaders expect them to be?
- When walking through the school, do pupils move about in an orderly way? Are corridors calm?
- If a pupil is dysregulated, are school staff managing this in a calm way? In line with the behaviour policy?
- If a pupil is out of class, does someone know where they are? If they are outside a room, how long is it before they are checked?
- At break and lunch, are pupils interacting positively? Is behaviour respectful in the lunch hall and on the playground? What happens if this is not the case?
- At break and lunch, are pupils engaged in activity? Is there enough for them to do?
- Is there anything that promotes attendance in displays? Are there references to anti-bullying? Is there reference to behaviour expectations? If there is an expectation that this is in every classroom, is it in the classrooms you have visited?

Policies, procedures and training

KCSIE states that governors must ensure policies, procedures and training in their setting are effective and comply with the law at all times. They should ensure the policies and procedures adopted by their governor bodies and proprietors are understood and followed by all staff.

Questions

- How do governors know that *KCSIE* is understood and being followed by all staff (beyond them signing to say they have read it)? How is this tested?
- Are all policies up to date? Are they *localised* to reflect the unique position within which the school sits?

HIAS curriculum update

- Who checks the website and ensures it is compliant? How often?
- How often is staff training completed and where is the evidence? For all staff? For DSLs?
- Are governor DBS, 128 checks and Prevent training up to date?
- Is there a calendar of staff training? Are inputs mapped and recorded?
- Are governors confident that staff who start mid year have had the same training as existing staff? How is the impact of training evaluated by the leadership team? How do governors know that staff have understood these updates?
- Are governors confident that the school or setting ensures that supply or agency staff, and volunteers, understand the organisation's expectations in relation to safeguarding including behaviour, physical intervention, and low level concerns?

Activities

- Attend the annual update training so that you have the same understanding as school staff.
- Check staff knowledge and understanding of their training. There are different ways to do this including on visits routinely asking staff questions or by (with SLT agreement) randomly selecting different staff members termly to email after each training input and asking them what they understood from the training and how it applies to their role. Ensure that 'testing' of this includes staff who are new starters as this evidences that induction processes, at whatever time of year, are robust.
- Review the training log to ensure all staff have had the appropriate training, including new starters. This includes DSL training, safer recruitment, Prevent, first aid training, physical intervention, female genital mutilation (FGM) as well as the annual update and calendared inputs. Checking the log shows that all staff have had the training appropriate to their role.

Best practice would also show the DSL accessing a range of training to support their role.

- Discuss with the DSL if the model policies for safeguarding and child protection have been localised including staff names and anything specific to the school context. Discuss how these policies interact with others that support with safeguarding such as behaviour, attendance, code of conduct, acceptable use policy, online safety, whistleblowing, low level concerns, physical intervention, exclusion, etc.
- Carry out an annual website compliance check. GOV.uk provides clear guidance on what should be on a school or setting website. There are also tick lists for this to ensure statutory compliance.
- Review the staff training calendar – what inputs have been covered and what is the frequency (the best safeguarding practice is like a dripping tap!)? Tie this in to the *testing* of staff knowledge – if the DSL has done an input on Prevent, for example, ask the staff in the next half term what they can tell you about Prevent and how it applies in the school's context.
- Or ask the DSL/leadership team how they *test* staff knowledge and impact of training. Quizzes and surveys can be really helpful, as can the use of case studies and asking verbally to really *test* depth of understanding.
- Ensure there is a record of governor training that is kept up to date to secure an appropriate level of expertise and understanding of safeguarding. Routinely review this.

Safer recruitment

KCSIE part three – page 56 paragraph 211: it is important that (governors or proprietors) adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in schools and colleges.

Questions

- Do recruitment processes make reference to safeguarding throughout including the advert, job description, person specification, interview process?
- Are online checks completed for successful candidates?
- Are job descriptions up to date and relevant?
- Are new employment checks completed appropriately?
- Who checks the SCR and with what frequency? Is this checked against the pay roll to ensure all staff in paid employment are on the SCR?
- Are there robust interview practices in place and does every interview panel include someone who is safer recruitment trained?
- Is the person managing the employment checks trained appropriately and do they have adequate time to complete the task?
- Is there a relevant and rigorous induction process in place which encompasses all safeguarding training that has been delivered during the year?
- Are appropriate checks carried out for volunteers?
- Are appropriate checks carried out for supply or agency staff who become permanent staff members?
- What about those staff who change job role – does their paperwork match their current job role?
- Do human resources (HR) files contain all appropriate safer recruitment documentation and does this cross reference to the SCR?
- Is appropriate paperwork in place for external providers, contractors, Hampshire County Council (HCC) employees, transport (including taxis)?

Activities

- Routinely check recruitment processes including advert, job description, person specification, interview process, interview questions (is there one on safeguarding) and ask if online checks have been carried out.

- Check the SCR and cross reference to HR files – choosing a new member of staff, someone who has changed job role or a long serving member of staff can be helpful in ensuring all checks have been carried out and that cross referencing can be carried out easily.
- Check that safeguarding records include confirmation of appropriate checks for HCC employees, contractors, external providers or premises users, or any regular users or visitors to the site.
- Review the induction process for new staff members – check with new staff members that they understand the school policies and procedures for safeguarding.

Strategic and operational aspects of safeguarding

Policy and procedure fall under strategic safeguarding, but there are other aspects of this that governors can question and support with. In reviewing the strategic, remember that these questions and activities are focused on school policy and procedure into practice rather than on the details or specifics of the cases (which would be operational).

Recording and reporting: strategic

Questions

- Does the DSL review the platform (child protection online management systems (CPOMs)/MyConcern) for which staff are or are not reporting? Does this fit with what would be expected?
- Does the DSL review the platform for themes and patterns? What response does the school or setting make when a theme or pattern is identified? For example, if it is noted that there has been an increase in prejudicial language, what is the school's response in terms of curriculum? How is the school using this data to review curriculum or approach?

- Does the DSL/Head review low level concerns for any training requirements?
- Does the DSL/headteacher review frequency and nature of inter-agency referral forms (IARFs) made and outcomes to ensure thresholds for referral are appropriate?
- Does analysis of concerns logged indicate any new themes emerging around contextual safeguarding?

Activities

- Ask the DSL to show you how they monitor staff usage of CPOMs/MyConcern – ask if all staff are logging incidents or if the patterns of logging fit with what they would expect. For example, it may be that a member of staff logs more as they have a class or tutor group with a higher level of need or safeguarding profile, where other staff may log less due to their role – but the interrogation of this is important to identify if there are any staff who may be underreporting concerns.
- Ask the DSL to show you evidence about any patterns or themes identified and actions taken. If the school is about to action something – for example, an assembly is going to be delivered on prejudice, can one of the governors attend as part of a monitoring visit? This then shows that data is being used/analysed.
- Ask about the number of low level concerns recorded termly and whether any themes have been identified in terms of staff training needs. Is there evidence of this in staff training? For example, it may be that two or three low level concerns (LLCs) have been recorded around physical intervention – does this raise a training need? Or a need for a more specific protocol around use of physical intervention?
- Ask about the number of IARFs or referrals to other agencies that have been made (likely to be reported on the Head's report to governors as well). What is this data telling us about referral thresholds? If referral numbers are low, are thresholds for the school taking action too high?

Recording and reporting: operational

Questions

- Does the safeguarding team/DSL regularly review CPOMs/MyConcern (or safeguarding records in whatever format the school/setting uses) to ensure that staff are meeting expectations in terms of recording and reporting? (This may feel operational, but it is about school procedure and practice – are expectations upheld? Is staff training having impact?)
- If a staff member is not recording concerns as required, how is this addressed or supported?
- How are concerns triaged? Is this done by one person or a team? Is there a single point of failure – ie if the triaging is done by one person, do they have sufficient time during the day to do this? What happens if they are absent?
- If behaviour and safeguarding are recorded separately, what is the process to ensure interconnectedness of these? When does behaviour become a safeguarding concern both in terms of risk and in terms of thinking about behaviour as a communication and how does the process ensure this discussion takes place?
- Are physical intervention records kept appropriately – are they numbered and in a bound file or in some other way *tamper proof*? Are they scanned on to CPOMs/MyConcern so that there is a complete record of the incident? (see the new guidance on physical intervention to ensure records are fully complete).
- If a CPOMs/MyConcern record is altered, what might be the reasons for this? Is there evidence to show this is done with a clear rationale?
- Is there evidence of DSL actions being recorded for each concern? Has the rationale for action or inaction been recorded? For example, the rationale for not making an interagency referral?

- What are the systems for staff to receive feedback on their concerns? Do staff understand how to escalate their concerns if they feel that the response has not been sufficient or they are worried about safeguarding practice?

Activities

- Review CPOMs or MyConcern. This can raise a question about confidentiality; however, information can be anonymised. It is also worth noting that governors have a code of conduct and all information discussed is confidential, so it is appropriate to review information to evaluate and monitor the school's recording processes. Check records are factual – is factual, non-emotive language used? Check they are sufficiently detailed – if someone else were reading it, would they have a clear picture of what has happened? Check that an action has been recorded for the concern. Safeguarding is not just the DSL's responsibility and staff should understand where their responsibilities lie in terms of actioning concerns. Check this with the DSL – are staff clear? Ask the DSL if concerns are recorded in the way the school expects.
- Review CPOMs or MyConcern to ensure the rationale for action or not is recorded. If the team have decided not to make a referral, is this recorded with a clear reason given as to why? Again, this information can be anonymised
- Randomly select a RPI form and cross reference this to CPOMs/MyConcern – is it on the platform – can the DSL show you this?
- Check the school/setting approach to DSL meetings – what frequency are these and do they always happen? It may be appropriate to attend a DSL meeting to listen to how strategic elements are discussed and actioned. Does this reflect policy into practice?

Attendance

Working together to improve school attendance (2024) makes it clear that all academy trust boards, and governing bodies of maintained schools should take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school attendance cultures. *KCSIE 2025* also identifies attendance as a critical safeguarding concern.

Questions

- What are the procedures for monitoring attendance? What is the frequency of data analysis? Are there any particular trends with different cohorts especially vulnerable pupils or those who have/have had a social worker or involvement of Children's Services? Are there patterns related to days of the week? Times during the half term/term? Reasons for absence? What is the data telling leaders and what is the response?
- What proportion of pupils are persistently absent or severely absent? What is the response to this – what strategies are deployed? Is the school routinely referring to external agencies for these pupils demonstrating the multi-agency approach referenced in *KCSIE*?
- How early are potential attendance issues being identified and addressed? How improvement or decline in attendance are tracked? Is there a higher level response for pupils who are persistently absent?
- What is the procedure for first day response? How long does the school wait to have eyes *on* a pupil where no reason has been given for absence? Or when the pupil is known to or open to Children's Services?
- Are there pupils who are on reduced hours provision? What is the reason for this and has all appropriate paperwork been completed? Is there external agency support for these pupils and has the school taken all reasonable steps and made adaptations to secure improved attendance? Is there intentionality in terms of increasing the pupil's attendance?

- Are there pupils who have alternative provision? Have all due diligence checks been completed? What is the frequency of visits for these pupils? How often is provision reviewed? Does this fit with *KCSIE* expectations?
- Is there regular communication with parents and pupils about the importance of attendance?
- Have any pupils been withdrawn from the school to be electively home educated? If so, what was the school's response and was this robust in endeavouring to keep the pupil in school?
- How are penalty notices used as part of the school's response to attendance concerns? What other interventions are there, and which have been most successful? What hasn't worked and how has the approach changed?
- What training have staff had about their role in promoting attendance? What are the expectations for different staff members?

Activities

- Review the school's attendance tracking – how often is data collected and analysed. Ask what then happens – what is the system for sending letters, calling meetings, external agency referral and how is this evidenced?
- Review alternative provision documentation to ensure all due diligence checks are completed (there is guidance on what checks schools, as commissioning body, have to complete on AP providers).
- Review RHP to check appropriate paperwork has been completed and that attendance registers match the agreed timetable for attendance.
- Discuss with the attendance lead what the patterns of data tell the school and look at evidence of actions taken at a school level – for example, around promoting attendance, cohort inputs, incentives, adaptations to support attendance, any curriculum adaptations or change of approach linked to attendance.

Health and safety, including site security

School governors' responsibilities for site security and health and safety are strategic, focusing on **oversight, policy, risk management, and accountability**, ensuring compliance with laws and promoting a safe culture, rather than daily management. They must ensure robust systems are in place for risk assessments, training, incident reporting, and maintaining safe premises, holding leaders accountable for implementing these effectively to protect staff, students, and visitors.

Questions

- Is the site secure (in line with school context)? Are fences and entrances secure? Is entrance to the building controlled?
- Have fire drills taken place termly? Have drills identified any lessons learnt and led to adaptations in procedure? Have fire drills across the year taken place at different times of the day and included variation (eg blocking an exit)? Are up to date personal evacuation plans in place to ensure safe evacuation for pupils with identified needs? Has thought been given to supporting pupils with additional needs?
- Is there a lockdown procedure and has this been practiced? Have practices identified any lessons learnt and led to adaptations in procedure? Has thought been given to supporting pupils with additional needs during lockdown?
- Are health and safety requirements met externally and internally? What is the plan to address any concerns or for improvements?
- Are clear first aid and accident records kept? Are these analysed for patterns and actions taken to address concerns?

Activities

- External site walk with the site manager. Pupil or student representatives could also be included for a pupil perspective.
- Internal site walk with the site manager. Pupil or student representatives could also be included.
- Review of fire drill documentation and lessons learnt and acted upon.
- Review of lockdown documentation and lesson learnt and acted upon.
- Attendance at a fire drill or lockdown to see the process in action.
- Review of first aid documentation and analysis.

Filtering and monitoring

Governing bodies and proprietors should make sure their school or college has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, as detailed in the statutory guidance, *KCSIE 2025*.

Questions

- How do leaders in the school know that filtering and monitoring standards are being met? How do the DSL and IT provider work together and how is this overseen?
- When was filtering and monitoring last reviewed and what changed as a result?
- How do leaders ensure filtering and monitoring arrangements meet our Prevent duty?
- What types of content are blocked and why? How do leaders ensure filtering does not over block and restrict teaching and learning? How are filtering settings adapted for age, phase and pupil vulnerability?
- What monitoring systems are in place and what alerts or reports do they generate?

- Who reviews monitoring reports, how often and what actions are taken? Who receives alerts? Are there arrangements in place for alerts that arise out of school hours – weekends and holidays?
- How quickly are concerns escalated to the DSL? How quick is the response to concerns that indicate a high level of risk?
- How does the school review monitoring reports to identify emerging themes and trends in what pupils are searching for?. How has the school responded to this?
- How are staff trained to understand filtering and monitoring and their safeguarding responsibilities?
- How is a culture of vigilance promoted without creating fear or over surveillance?
- Which devices and networks are covered? How are risks managed when pupils access systems off site or at home?
- Are staff devices subject to appropriate filtering and monitoring?
- Where is filtering and monitoring explained in school policies? How are parents and pupils informed about monitoring in an age appropriate and transparent way?
- How are concerns or requests for review handled?
- How do leaders test whether systems are working? What external assurance or benchmarking is used? How are emerging risks (AI, misinformation, online harm trends) reflected in our approach?

Activities

- Review of policies to ensure filtering and monitoring are appropriately covered – online safety, safeguarding, child protection, acceptable use.
- Review of documentation regarding filtering and monitoring and how decisions are made about what is blocked or monitored, any themes emerging from reports and the school's response.

- Test that the filtering and monitoring is working appropriately on school devices using South West Grid for Learning's (SWGfL) tool for example: <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/filtering-and-monitoring/>.
- Review staff training records to see where online safety, AI and filtering and monitoring are addressed.

Pupil conferencing and curriculum

Speaking to pupils about their experience in school is one of the most helpful evidence gathering exercises that governors and leaders can do as this provides key insights into their experience and tests their understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Questions

- Where is safeguarding covered in the school's curriculum? Is the safeguarding curriculum in its broadest form mapped to show coverage in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), computing, online safety, and in other curriculum areas as appropriate – for example, science, English, PE?
- Can pupils speak confidently and knowledgably about what they have been taught in the curriculum about keeping themselves safe? Respectful relationships? Consent (both in relationships and in its broadest sense)? Online safety?

Their digital footprint? How to keep themselves safe in the community? Drugs? Alcohol? etc.
- Are there regular inputs with the pupils about how they keep themselves safe? Are there visible reminders for pupils about who the DSL and safeguarding team are and how they can report concerns?

- Do pupils know who trusted adults are and are they confident about how to report their concerns? Do they report concerns?
- Do pupils feel safe in school? Is there anywhere on school grounds they don't feel safe or they feel less safe? What would they say about behaviour, bullying, racism, discrimination? Do they enjoy school?
- How does the school gather pupil voice? Does this go beyond a general questionnaire or survey and ensure that all pupil voices are captured? Are there a range of methods to do so – do these methods cover vulnerable groups and give the chance for pupils to talk about their experiences?
- Are pupils involved in risk assessments for trips? Could they be?

Activities

- Review the school's safeguarding curriculum mapping to see where pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe and what do if they have concerns.
- Review the school's use of extra curricular inputs such as workshops, visits, trips and how this may enhance pupil understanding of 'keep safe' work.
- Pupil conference to *test* pupil knowledge and understanding about what they have been taught about how to keep themselves safe. The focus is specifically on curriculum input.
- Pupil conference to get their views specifically about the school (not curriculum). This is a chance to focus on their lived experience of school – do they feel safe? Bullying? Racism? Sexism? Behaviour? Attendance? Support from adults? Whether they would report concerns. Questions can be agreed with the DSL so that those asked are different from questions the school asks – which will provide wider coverage. Randomly choose pupils each time so that there is a good representation of views.

Full governing body meetings and monitoring visits

It is often the case that safeguarding is discussed at every governing body meeting and elements around safeguarding are reported in Headteacher reports. It is important that questions are asked about the information presented and that governors know how to ask these questions and what may or may not be appropriate as a response. Leadership teams can also support with themes for monitoring visits and ask specific questions to provide a focus.

Questions

- Exclusions and suspensions data: are suspensions going up or down? Are there any patterns in cohorts or year groups? If so, what has the school done to address this? (This is not about individual cases, but clusters or patterns). Has the school put in place all reasonable adaptations to support pupils? Are suspension and exclusion the last resort? Is the school acting legally in suspending a pupil. (by following their exclusions policy and guidance).
 - Attendance data: what patterns have been observed in relation to attendance overall and of groups? What has been the school's response? How is the school communicating to parents and pupils about attendance? What concerns does the attendance lead have? What are next steps? Are appropriate external agency referrals being made, including working with ISS and the SEND team?
 - CPOMs or MyConcern data: what is the data telling school leaders? If there has been an increase or pattern in incidents, how is the school addressing this at a school or cohort level? (Again, this is not about specific individuals). Has there been any additional inputs? Curriculum adaptations? Communication with parents at a school or cohort level? Reactive and proactive change? If the pattern emerges in a cohort each year, have adaptations been made to proactively address this?
- Inter-agency referral data: are referrals going up, down, stable? How many of these have led to families being supported at different levels (early help, child in need (CIN), child protection (CP)) and does this tell us anything about referral thresholds? Where families have been closed or there has been no further action, has the school had to use the escalation process at all? Has the school referred to other agencies if social care has closed? Have all options been explored for families where there has been no further involvement for social care? Again, this is testing the school's multi-agency response, not evaluating individual cases.
 - Has the school responded to any actions raised on monitoring reports? What has happened as a result? This demonstrates triangulation.

The questions and activities detailed above are suggestions and may not be appropriate in all contexts or settings. Use of these may also be dependent on the experience, availability and skill sets of governors and the amount of time that can be dedicated to monitoring at this level.

It is also important to signpost to the Governance Team who offer amazing support and training for governing bodies. There are a range of training opportunities available and a wealth of resources that can be used, and of course the GOV.UK website also provides clear guidance for governing bodies and trustees.

Cindy Pritchard

Inspector/Adviser for Safeguarding, HIAS

Useful links

- Hampshire Governor Services:
www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/governors
- National Governance Association: <https://www.nga.org.uk/>
- Governors for Schools: <https://governorsforschools.org.uk/>
- *School food: guidance for governors:*
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-guidance-for-governors
- Safeguarding training for school governors, NSPCC Learning: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/child-protection-school-governors>
- *Keeping children safe in education, 2025:*
www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

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HSCP education sub group meeting notes – December 2025

Each half term, the HSCP education sub group meets to discuss safeguarding matters pertaining to schools and settings from early years to colleges. The panel is chaired by Mark Kingswood (County Education Manager – Early Intervention and Vulnerable Children) and consists of representatives from education, health, HSCP, Children’s Services, the Learning and Development team, and the Education and Inclusion Team. At each meeting, a range of speakers attend to provide updates on their particular areas and various aspects are discussed. This article summarises the areas discussed in the December 2025 meeting.

Young carers and the annual census

Presented by Corniche Plumridge (Hampshire Young Carers Alliance).

**Note – there is an additional article on Young Carers (YC) in this edition of Safeguarding Matters which explores this area in more detail.*

- **School Census:** since 2023, young carers have been included in the school census data.
- **Definition:** a young carer is someone aged under 18 who cares for someone within their household, most likely a **parent or sibling**, due to illness, disability, a mental health diagnosis or addiction
- **Inequalities:** data demonstrates that young carers face many inequalities in education with fewer than half (45%) of young carers leaving secondary school with 5 GCSE passes (including English and Maths).
- **National statistics:** in January 2025 national statistics showed there were 64,500 identified young carers (2024-2025). However, 69% of schools and settings recorded that they had no young carers.
- **Lack of identification:** there is under reporting and lack of identification of young carers. Estimates say there could be as many as one in 5 in every classroom.
- **Hampshire:** 2527 young carers in Hampshire, 1632 identified in Hampshire schools and settings. Mirroring the national statistics, a number of schools record that they have no young carers. Hampshire is the third highest county in reporting young carers and there is a well established YC project.
- **Hampshire Young Carers Alliance (HYCA)** is aware of 3360 young carers and actively supporting 1741. This is an alliance of 10 Young Carer projects who are all independent charities. A range of support is provided through this alliance – most services will do one-to-one in times of crisis. The website has a *contact* tab through which schools and settings can contact the project in their area.
- **Financial support:** some universities provide bursaries and grants for young carers. There is also discussion going on nationally about how to support schools and settings with funding to support with activities such as train fares/support to visit colleges and universities – to participate in activities that may otherwise be unavailable to them.
- **Services provided by HYCA:** deliver assemblies in schools, individual sessions, weekly or bi-weekly group activities. During school holidays activities may include those which other children and young people may experience but young carers may not eg cinema, theme parks.
- **Contact:** the Hampshire Young Carers Alliance website is www.hyca.org.uk and you can also contact Corniche on corniche.plumridge@otr-south.or.uk.

Physical intervention report

Presented by Elissa Whitby, Primary Behaviour Service and Mark Kingswood, County Education Manager Vulnerable Children's Services.

**Note: there is an additional article on Restrictive physical intervention (RPI) in this edition of Safeguarding Matters which explores this area in more detail.*

Overview

The presentation was in two parts – the first part reviewing the report from 2024/25 and the second reflecting on work in 2025/26 so far.

Report from 2024/25

- **The Primary Behaviour Service (PBS):** PBS took over the oversight of physical intervention from the Hampshire Educational Psychology Service (HEP) in April 2025.
- **New DfE guidance consultation:** PBS, HEP and key local authority officers contributed to a shared response to the consultation on the 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance and the updated version of this guidance from the DfE is awaited.
- **Team Teach:** HCC licensed to provide Team Teach (TT) training to Hampshire employees and with the agreement from TT, there is also an extension to this licence to include academies and Isle of Wight schools.
- **Focus areas of 2024/25 report:** continuing to meet with the TT management team, implementing changes, and ensuring communications with schools were up to date, improving communication around accessing training and advice, continued evaluation and updating of training, updating the recording form for incidents of PI in schools, update of the *Planning and Recording PI in Schools* document, planning the handover of PI for Hampshire from HEP to PBS.

- **Training offer in 2024/25:** often driven by schools and settings. Has included understanding where behaviour comes from, the legal framework including recording, monitoring and reporting duties, de-escalation training, Team Teach and PI training. The training is made specific to mainstream schools, special schools and education centres, PBS and resourced provisions.
- **Training numbers for 2024/25:** numbers broadly in line with the previous year.
- **Safeguarding audit:** questions regarding schools' use of physical intervention were included in schools' annual safeguarding self assessment in 2024/25.

Key updates for 2025/26 (so far)

- **DfE consultation:** five key strands were consulted on
- **Useful link:** an article from Schools Week outlining what schools need to know: New reasonable force guidance: What schools need to know: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/reasonable-force-reporting-requirement-what-schools-need-to-know/>
- **PBS work:** a key task has been to review the existing model policy which is available on the HCC Primary Behaviour Service website: <https://pbs.hants.gov.uk/team-teach>. This work remains ongoing, and the updated policy will reflect the likely content of the new DfE guidance
- **Training offer:** streamlining the training process with a dedicated email address (pbs.teamteach@hants.gov.uk) to enable prompt responses. From 82 schools there have been 222 initial training places and 61 refresher places booked. Feedback from the courses is positive, in particular around dignity and de-escalation
- **Physical intervention steering group:** meet twice a year with a wide range of responsibilities. The headteacher representatives have shared positive feedback regarding the training and have flagged that systemic issues have the

potential to impact upon levels of physical intervention in school settings and noted that a focus is about how the need for physical intervention can be reduced

- **Social care:** social care colleagues are launching a tendering process to secure future physical intervention training and support in care homes and secure settings
- **Next steps:**
 - to review the current LA model policy for schools and settings in line with anticipated new DfE guidance
 - communicate revised guidance and model policy to settings
 - ensure training materials and course content reflect the new guidance
 - establish centralised way of collecting data and identifying trends
 - succession planning for team teach trainers
 - review of admin support
 - ongoing physical intervention steering group (PISG).

Families first partnership programme

Presented by Hannah Leat, District Manager, HCC Children's Services and Mark Kingswood, County Education Manager Vulnerable Children's Services.

- **What is it:** national programme led by the DfE to reform children's social care and create a joined up, family focused system to address long standing challenges in children's social care.
- **Main changes:**
 - family help: combines early help and child in need services, multi-disciplinary teams and one lead practitioner/plan for families

- multi-agency safeguarding: faster, coordinated response to significant harm with shared responsibility and better information sharing
- family group decision making which empowers families to create their own solutions before formal proceedings.
- **Education's role:**
 - early identification: schools help identify children and families needing support
 - participation in multi-agency teams: education professionals contribute to multi-agency safeguarding and family help teams
 - attendance and inclusion: schools are key partners in improving attendance and reducing exclusion
 - co-design and local implementation: education services help shape local delivery models based on community needs.
- **Single family help assessment (SFHA):** the family help assessment and plan creates a single, consistent approach for identifying and meeting needs at targeted early help and CIN. This promotes early intervention and ensures families receive joined up support throughout their journey with one assessment and plan that evolves with the family and stays accessible to all lead practitioners. The ambition is to co-design this approach with partner agencies ensuring it meets the needs of families and professionals alike.
- **Next steps:** SFHA will lead a series of co-design workshops, bringing together practitioners and partners from across services to develop a flexible, practical approach. A kick off workshop on 7 January will discuss co-design principles, identify enablers and barriers and agree the approach. Other co-design workshops will take place in February and March.

Local offer live

Presented by Mark Kingswood, County Education Manager Vulnerable Children's Services

Overview

The local offer is a comprehensive online resource published by local authorities that details all services and support available for children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND in their area.

- **Changes:** the Hampshire Local Offer is currently being moved to a new, more user friendly platform. Additionally, the SEN team are going to take it on the road (Local Offer Live) in the form of district based live events.
- **Objectives of the local offer live events:**
 - raise awareness of local SEND, family services and support
 - empower families and young people with information
 - facilitate networking and collaboration between education and multi-agency partners
 - gather feedback to enhance the local offer website and services
 - support the development of a parenting offer, to include *train the trainer* events to schools at key points of transition.
- **Target audience of the events:** parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, young people with SEND, education, health and social care professionals, voluntary and community sector organisations, councillors and other local representatives with a family facing role.
- **Event format:**
 - marketplace style stalls from local services and organisations
 - short workshops and talks on key topics – information giving and *myth-busting*
 - quiet and sensory friendly spaces available

- accessibility features including inclusive communication and accessible venues
- establish appropriate venues for parenting courses (schools and/or community hubs).

- **Key stakeholders:** Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN), young people with SEND, Hampshire SEND Youth Forum, LA Education and Inclusion Teams, Early Help teams and hubs, Local Children's Partnerships (LCPs), health services (eg Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)), social care teams (including children and adult/transition services), education providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), county and borough councils and councillors.
- **Scope:** education and childcare, preparation for adulthood, respite and support, health, equipment and therapies, leisure and play (Hampshire Gateway).
- **Delivery:** one event in each district which will be timed for optimum attendance, support is being considered in rural areas in relation to transport implications. The final preparations will take place in January.

Parenting support offer

Update presented by Mark Kingswood, County Education Manager Vulnerable Children's Services

- **Aim:** to offer parenting support events and courses at critical stages of transition potentially school starters to Early Years, transition from primary to secondary school. Offer would be open to all, but schools' existing connections would be used to provide targeted support to families who would be willing to engage.
- **Where:** in schools, Best Start Hubs or similarly welcoming venues.
- **Train the trainer:** intention to provide a 'train the trainer' offer to build capacity within schools and within Community Hubs to provide ongoing support.

Education Personnel Services

Presented by Amanda Stevens, Hampshire County Council Education Personnel Services – summarised safeguarding statistics report.

Overview

This report provides insight into child safeguarding cases managed by Education Personnel Services (EPS) during the 2023-2024 academic year. It focuses on cases involving specific employees and highlights emergent trends to guide future practices.

Key highlights

- **Increase in new cases:** 199 cases opened which was a growth of 39% from the previous year.
- **Nature of cases:** most new cases involved physical contact or use of force, behavioural concerns or failure to follow policy or procedure.
- **Managerial advice:** the majority of cases (63%) had no formal action. 16% of cases had no further action and 47% had informal action or advice.
- **Formal outcomes:** an increase to 28% of all cases resulted in formal action with first or final warnings (13%), dismissal with notice or summary dismissal (15%).
- **Referrals and police involvement:** police involved in a significant proportion of the cases (86). 37 led to referral to Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), 20 to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and a small number were referred to both TRA and DBS.

Other points

- The growth in cases is reflective of some of the pressures that were starting to become overt in the system in relation to recruitment, retention, staff absence and the emerging context of increasing demands in relation to pupil needs.

- There were no significant conclusions regarding the breakdown of phase or type of school.
- Many staff involved in safeguarding cases leave employment – this increased to 46% of all cases.
- Ongoing work is taking place to identify any ongoing trends.

Bee Well Survey

Presented by Rebecca Perrin, Consultant in Public Health (HCC)

Overview

BeeWell is an annual survey undertaken in schools to gather the voice of as many secondary aged pupils as possible. The data is used as part of research by the University of Manchester to provide briefing reports. The other importance of this is to support schools and community organisations to use local data to support young people.

- **Focus of the survey this year:** this year the survey focussed on Year 10 and Year 7. Year 10 because this cohort has been surveyed every year since the survey began when they were in Year 8. Surveying Year 7 has been helpful due to the difficulty with transition for some young people.
- **Spotlight:** there was a spotlight on belonging. Out of everything that was asked in the survey about school, belonging is the strongest predictor of later wellbeing. Relationships with staff and bullying influence the sense of belonging. Older students and students with SEND reported a significantly lower sense of school belonging.
- **Youth involvement:** BeeWell's Youth Matters Steering Group has supported the youth led response to the findings, along with young people from LifeLab and Hampshire Youth Parliament.
- **Six priorities:** the group identified 6 priorities they would like to be focussed on to improve wellbeing (a) promoting wellbeing

through arts and culture (b) vaping (c) feeling safe (d) relationships (where to access support) (e) discrimination (f) loneliness

- **Local project:** a local project was highlighted called Empowering Young Voices to Make Spaces More Inclusive. This is a collaboration between BeeWell and Hampshire SEND Youth Forum. As part of this project, young people attend venues across Hampshire and assess them for accessibility.
- **Grants for projects:** as part of the survey, over 1000 young people voted for projects to receive small grants. Those awarded include: forest school with wellbeing support, redecoration of the youth cell at Newport Court, reduced gym membership for young people to try new physical activity, UV volleyball and trips for rural young people to reduce isolation, creative theatre workshops for young people with SEND, sport with support, music sessions with support from MIND.
- **BeeWell surveys:** these are also undertaken in primary and post 16 settings. Currently a survey out for staff from Early Years (EY) to post 16. Surveys undertaken every two years to give a full picture of children and young people of all ages and to obtain staff feedback.
- **Link shared:** What does the #BeeWell data tell us about school belonging? #BeeWell: <https://beewellprogramme.org/what-does-the-beewell-data-tell-us-about-school-belonging/>.

HSCP update

Presented by Ellie Graham and Debbie Key.

Thematic audit

In the spring term HSCP will be undertaking a thematic audit in relation to the Multi-Agency Response to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children in their Early Years. This is part of the educational engagement priority and HSCP have been working with HCC Services for Young Children in relation to this. This thematic audit will include a case-file audit of 12 children and will also include a practitioner's survey.

HSCP joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) dry run on child sexual abuse in the family environment

The findings of the HSCP JTAI dry run were shared. This was conducted in October 2025 at the request of the safeguarding partners. The audit was run to JTAI timescales and HSCP thank all colleagues who responded to requests for information and involvement.

- **Areas of strength:** reference to the use of the Brook Traffic Light Tool within half of the case file audits was positive to see. There were good risk assessments in schools to keep children in education safely and evidence of education colleagues working closely as a multi-agency group. Schools are identifying concerns relating to sexualised behaviour at an early stage and there was evidence of good multi-agency working following the referral, with effective information sharing in particular between schools and social care. Timely referrals were made and there was evidence of child centred practice.
- **Challenges:** these include children not being offered the opportunity to see a doctor (Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) medical assessment), some challenges in relation to young people displaying harmful sexual behaviour accessing therapeutic support, the

waiting time for specialist services such as CAMHS, and the challenges for medical professionals attending multi-agency meetings.

- **Areas of interest:** thinking about *keep safe* work that is completed with young people and children and ensuring this is age appropriate, partners not fully leaning in during periods of child protection and the challenge of attendance at some child protection conferences and core group meetings.
- **Recommendations:**
 - all partners to be reminded of the importance of assuring staff have the right training in relation to CSA and single agencies to consider whether training pathways for different groups of staff should be mandated
 - development of a community of practice to support multi-agency *champions* for the prevention of CSA
 - all partners to promote the HSCP Child Sexual Abuse STOP pack to their staff
 - HSCP executive to agree the development of evidence-based resources to support *keeping safe* work and protective parenting education.
- **Useful resources (links shared)**
 - Child Sexual Abuse STOP pack: www.hampshirescp.org.uk/documents/child-sexual-abuse-stop-pack/
 - Response pathway: www.hampshirescp.org.uk/professionals/toolkits/child-sexual-abuse/identification-reporting-assessment/response-pathway/
 - Communicating with children, CSA Centre: www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/communicating-with-children/
 - Signs and indicators of child sexual abuse, CSA Centre: www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/signs-and-indicators/

HSCP training

- **Training brochure:** The HSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Practice Development Brochure for 2026 – 2027 (www.hampshirescp.org.uk/documents/multi-agency-safe-guarding-practice-development-brochure-2026-27/) has been published and is available on HSCP website. This contains not just the courses available but is a holistic approach to safeguarding practice development and contains links to all toolkits, policies and procedures for each safeguarding theme.
- **New training opportunities** for professionals to book on to which have a focus on domestic abuse.
- **From Concern to Action:** responding to Abusive or Unhealthy Behaviours in Young People's Intimate Relationships: <https://hampshirescp.event-booking.org.uk/events-list?e=%3DcDMwETM>.
- **Untangling the Web:** Power, Control, and Counter-Allegations in Domestic Abuse: <https://hampshirescp.event-booking.org.uk/events-list?e=%3DgDMwETM>.
- **Safeguarding children practice week:** in relation to child exploitation took place in October. There are a range of resources still available within this section of the HSCP website: www.hampshirescp.org.uk/professionals/toolkits/child-exploitation/child-exploitation-safeguarding-practice-week/.
- **DSL conference:** save the date: **18 June 2026**. This will be a virtual conference as given the attendance of over 600 people; this is not achievable face to face.
- **Online blackmail:** resources were shared for use with 15–18 year olds. These can be access on this link: Online blackmail education resource for 15-18 year olds: www.ceopeducation.co.uk/professionals/resources/online-blackmail/.

Cindy Pritchard

Inspector/Adviser for Safeguarding, HIAS

HSCP launches 2026/27 multi-agency safeguarding practice development brochure

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) is pleased to announce the launch of the HSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Practice Development Brochure for 2026 to 2027: www.hampshirescp.org.uk/documents/multi-agency-safeguarding-practice-development-brochure-2026-27/.

This comprehensive brochure offers a holistic approach to safeguarding practice development, providing access to our full range of learning and development resources. It includes training opportunities, practical toolkits and up to date policies and procedures aligned to specific safeguarding themes.

Training opportunities

The brochure details a wide variety of fully funded multi-agency learning available from April 2026 to March 2027, including virtual courses, face to face courses, webinars and eLearning materials.

These sessions are free of charge for all professionals working with children and families living within the Hampshire Local Authority area.



Hampshire
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership

Booking information

Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis so we encourage you to plan ahead and secure your training early. Use the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Practice Development Brochure (www.hampshirescp.org.uk/documents/multi-agency-safeguarding-practice-development-brochure-2026-27/) to explore and book courses or view all the upcoming training on the Virtual Multi-Agency Learning Platform: <https://hampshirescp.event-booking.org.uk/events-list>.

Cindy Pritchard

Inspector/Adviser for Safeguarding, HIAS

Update from the NSPCC Schools Service



In the academic year 2024/25 we reached over 1.5 million children in over 6,300 schools across the UK with our flagship - Speak out Stay safe programme.

In 2025/26 we aim to increase our reach and have launched several **new resources to support you**.

The NSPCC Schools Service is available to **all primary, secondary and specialist education providers** across Hampshire. We have a collection of **free programmes** to support your **Safeguarding and PSHE work**, easy to use and simple to fit into your schedule.



Here for all your pupils

- We know it is essential that all pupils receive vital safeguarding messages.
- We know schools continue to see a rise in pupils who have additional support needs.

- We know pupils who have additional needs and disabilities are three to four times more vulnerable to abuse.

Our programmes provide a collection of specially designed resources which include teacher guidance, lesson plans, printable props, toolkits and the flexibility to differentiate for individual

HIAS curriculum update

needs. I am pleased to announce that we have just launched some **New supplementary lessons, Widgit materials** and a **practitioner toolkit** for alternative provision.

To find out more contact: Emma Aked

Hampshire Schools Co-ordinator, Inclusion Lead
London and South East.

Email: emma.aked2@nspcc.org.uk



How **Speak out. Stay safe** enhances your school's safeguarding approach:

- **supports statutory safeguarding requirements** – ensures children learn about abuse or forms of hurt in an age appropriate way that aligns with school curriculums
- **engages pupils effectively** – interactive virtual assemblies, follow-up resources and, in person workshops delivered by the NSPCC
- **inclusive for all learners** – BSL assembly videos and specialist resources for children who have SEND
- **straightforward to deliver** – high-quality resources that are easy to implement.

In Hampshire we have **reached 95%** of schools.

Sign up now to find out more or to book a repeat delivery: nspcc.org.uk/speakout.



Speak out. Stay safe



Did you know that in an average primary school class, two children have experienced abuse or neglect?

You can empower your students with our free **Speak out. Stay safe** programme for primary schools. There are virtual assemblies, lesson plans, and face-to-face workshops delivered by NSPCC volunteers.



There's a lot we need to talk about. To make it easier, we created **Talk Relationships**.



NSPCC
Learning

Talk Relationships – secondary schools

Talk relationships is the UK's free secondary education service for school leaders and teachers.; we provide schools with the resources and tools needed to adopt a whole-school approach to sex and relationships (SRE).

What is included?

- A WSA framework including a self-assessment tool and editable action plan (made in partnership with Life Lessons).
- Case studies showcasing best practice.
- eLearning for teachers and school leaders (CPD Certified).
- 15 editable lesson plans with supporting slides and teaching notes. Including a new lesson for 12-14 year olds *Preventing Gender Based Violence* (made in partnership with the PSHE Association).
- Six SEND-specific lesson plans (made in partnership with the PSHE Association).
- A youth voice toolkit providing creative tools and techniques to encourage pupil participation.
- A dedicated helpline for advice and guidance on teaching RSE.

[Visit NSPCC Learning: Talk Relationships](#): resources to deliver sex and relationships education



We are holding 30 minute briefings via Microsoft Teams.

To book a space and find out more please contact Michelle Barry or Jan McDonald

Hampshire Talk Relationship Leads.

Email: michelle.barry@nspcc.org.uk.

Email: janine.mcdonald@nspcc.org.uk

Find out more about what the Schools Service has to offer:



<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools>

NSPCC

For any concerns about a child

help@nspcc.org.uk | 0808 800 5000

Helpline



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Professional learning

- **Free newsletters and email alerts**: our emails keep you up-to-date with the latest safeguarding news.
- **Briefings and practical guidance**: up-to-date summaries of key safeguarding legislation and practice guidance.
- **Research finding**: all the latest NSPCC insights about children, young people and their families.
- **Self-assessment tool**: audit your organisation's safeguarding and child protection policies with our free online checklist.
- **Online and in-person training courses**: we offer a range of courses for schools, voluntary and community groups, and anyone working or volunteering with children.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing how we can support your school or education provision.

With best wishes.

Emma Aked

Hampshire School Service Co-ordinator

Jan McDonald

Hampshire School Service Co-ordinator

Michelle Barry

Hampshire School Service Co-ordinator

Parent on a sex offender register?

In the spring edition of *Safeguarding Matters* last year, Sue Savory included guidance for schools and settings on how to respond if a parent is on the sex offender register. I have had a number of queries about this and so thought it would be helpful to include this in this edition and some feedback I have had from police colleagues regarding when schools will be informed of this information or not.

In terms of response from the Police, I asked a series of questions that had arisen from queries from headteachers and DSLs and a colleague from the Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) team responded with a brief overview in the questions and answers below.

The Police MOSOVO team is a specialised UK police unit focused on managing registered sex offenders (RSO) and high risk violent offenders in the community, conducting risk assessments, managing offender notifications, and working with other agencies (like probation) through Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to prevent reoffending and protect the public. They perform home visits, gather intelligence, and handle breaches of orders, using systems like Active Risk Management System (ARMS) for risk management.

Questions and responses

Would schools routinely be informed that a parent of a child at the school had been placed on the sex offenders register?

In short, no, unless there was a perceived risk or a court order, such as a sexual harm prevention order, in place which prohibited or limited direct contact with children.

Who would disclose this information?

The police would be responsible for any disclosure based on MAPPA guidance. Information used to be given to the local authority designated officer (LADO), but this role has changed over time and it would now be police informing schools and settings directly.

Are there restrictions around what the police are able to share?

In terms of how much police might disclose, this should be limited to what is necessary to outline the risks and how those risks can be managed within the school environment. However, as the local authority, including state education, is classed as a duty to cooperate agency then open sharing of information can effectively happen.

Is there a legal framework around this?

MAPPA is a set of guidelines and policies around agencies working together to manage risk rather than a legal framework. However, the legislation that would cover most of this falls under the Child Protection Act, Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (commonly known as Sarah's Law), Freedom of Information Act and Common Law (to prevent crime).

Put simply ...

It is lawful and necessary for police and the local authority to share relevant information about persons who may pose a risk of harm.

Assessing risk

If the parent/RSO does not attend the school in any capacity, it is likely that police would not look to disclose.

If a parent has disclosed

Where the parent/RSO has self disclosed information, the Police MOSOVO Team could verify that disclosure with the school and discuss any safeguarding measures.

It is worth noting that the above is a very simplified whistlestop tour and each case is very much managed on an individual basis.

Risk assessments

The following outlines what needs to be considered in a risk assessment for a parent on the sex offenders register.

Identify risks

- Presence on school grounds.
- Interactions with children.
- Communication.
- Management of the school community.

Assess the risk of the parent being on school premises. Think about day to day pick up and drop off and arrangements around this. Think also about school events – consideration should be given to different types of event as there will be those where entry and movement are more controlled (for example for a school production) and those which are more *free flow* such as sports day or a Christmas or summer fayre.

Within the risk assessment, evaluate the potential risk of interactions between the parent and pupils. Also, consider the risk of the parent communicating with children or staff.

Share the risk assessment, if possible, with the parent as, if they are under an order or have to meet certain conditions, this agreement ensures that risk is managed for the school community and for the individual parent as well.

Having the risk assessment in place also ensures that the school/setting can manage any community concern or questions. As with any safeguarding concern, we would not discuss individual details or any confidential information, but parents can be reassured that the school has its safeguarding policies, protocols and procedures and these are all securely in place.

Legal and policy compliance

Review legal guidelines

Ensure compliance with UK laws and regulations regarding sex offenders. The UK has specific guidelines under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (Sarah's Law).

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Notification requirements

Individuals convicted of sexual offences must notify the police of their personal details, including their address and any changes to their circumstances.

Prohibited activities

The Act may impose restrictions on the activities of registered sex offenders, including prohibiting them from entering certain areas or engaging in specific activities.

Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (Sarah's Law)

Disclosure requests

Parents, carers, and guardians can request information from the police about whether a person with access to a child has a record for child sexual offences.

Police assessment

The police assess the risk posed by the individual and decide whether disclosure is necessary to protect the child.

Other actions and consideration

School policies

Schools must have safeguarding policies in place that outline procedures for managing risks associated with sex offenders. This includes visitor policies, supervision requirements, and staff training.

Incident reporting

Schools must report any suspicious behaviour or violations of access restrictions to the police and relevant authorities.

Co-ordination with authorities

Schools work closely with local authorities and law enforcement to ensure compliance with legal guidelines and to manage risks effectively.

Privacy and confidentiality

Schools must handle information about sex offenders with confidentiality, sharing it only with relevant authorities and staff on a need to know basis.

Develop mitigation strategies

Limit the parent's access to school grounds and events. This might include specific times or areas where the parent is allowed.

Supervised visits

Implement supervised visits if necessary, ensuring the parent is always accompanied by a staff member.

Communication protocols

Establish clear communication protocols for interactions with the parent, ensuring all staff are aware of the procedures.

Training and awareness

Train staff on how to handle situations involving the parent, including recognising and reporting suspicious behaviour.

Awareness programmes

Inform parents and pupils about safety measures without disclosing sensitive information.

Monitoring and review

Continuously monitor the situation and adjust strategies as needed. This might involve regular check ins with local authorities.

Review meetings

Hold regular meetings to review the effectiveness of the risk assessment and make necessary changes.

Support and counselling

Provide support and counselling for pupils and staff who may be affected by the situation.

Open communication

Maintain open lines of communication with all stakeholders, ensuring transparency while respecting privacy.

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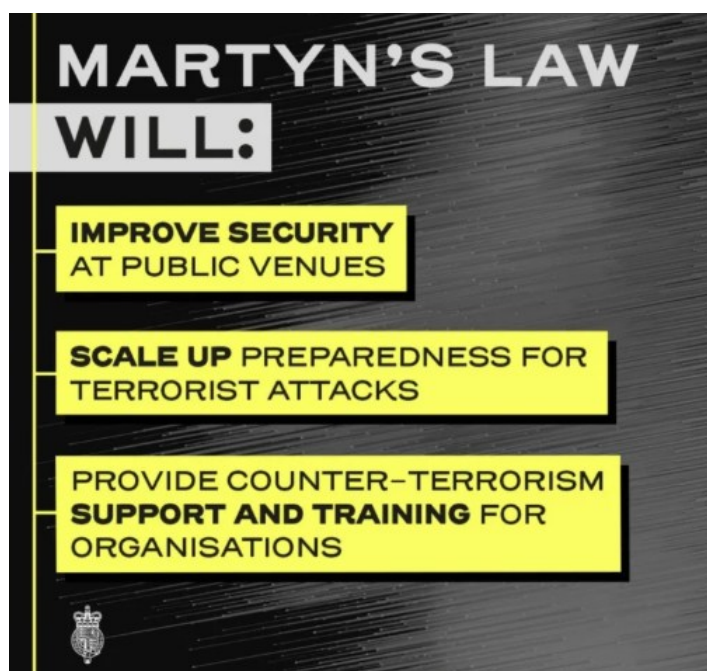
Site security and Martyn's Law

Hopefully, quite a number of you will have been able to access the Home Office training on protective security and organisational preparedness (also known as Martyn's Law). However, if you have not been able to, this article provides you with the basics and links to the various websites that can support you with this. The key advice given is that any measures put in place should be appropriate and practicable for the individual premises or event. The training emphasised that these are simple, not costly and the important thing is to have a plan and practice it.

What is Martyn's Law?

The UK Government has introduced the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act, following the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing. This legislation requires organisations and publicly accessible locations to bring in security measures in order to reduce the risk of a terrorist attack.

The Act applies to certain activities and events with a size capacity. However, the advice and guidance can also be used by all, to protect staff and the public from any major incident.



There will be a period of time before the legislation commences – likely to be statutory from summer 2027 – which should ensure that businesses and organisations can prepare for the duty.

What does this mean for schools and colleges?

The duty divides locations and venues according to their capacity; enhanced tier, standard tier and those premises that fall outside of the statutory duty. However, regardless of capacity, all schools and further education colleges have been classified as standard tier as these premises are generally not open to the public.

Enhanced tier applies to a capacity of 800 plus people. Universities will generally fall within this tier. Colleges do not fall in this tier due to not being 'open' to the public.

Standard tier applies to a capacity of 200 to 799 people. All schools and colleges will fall within this tier if they have more than 200+ people on site or using the site for an event.

Outside of the scope of the statutory duty: schools and early years settings with a capacity of less than 200 fall into this category. **However**, it is highly recommended that schools and settings of this size should be aware of the duty and follow the guidance as good practice – especially given that there have been incidents at smaller venues.

What do you have to do?

Schools and settings that fall within the *standard tier* have to have a named responsible person. The *responsible person* will be required to:

- notify the regulator, the Security Industry Authority (SIA), that they are responsible for their premises

- have in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, appropriate public protection procedures that could be reasonably expected to reduce the risk of physical harm being caused to individuals if an attack was to occur there or nearby.

What is *reasonably practicable* will be dependent on your school or setting context and the resources available – as we know, what works in one setting may not work elsewhere. Each school or setting needs to do its own risk assessments for this and put in place what is appropriate.

The guidance on the GOV.UK website and through the training makes it clear that the requirements in this tier are centred on simple, low cost activities designed to ensure those working on the premises or at the event are better able to reduce harm, and save lives, in the event of an attack. These activities could be as simple as those schools and settings already have in place for lockdown processes and usual safeguarding procedure, including locking doors, closing blinds, identifying safe routes to cover and, very importantly, practicing these procedures to ensure familiarity for all staff and learners.

What can you do now?

Schools and settings need to ensure they have procedures and processes in place for the four following areas:

Evacuation is the orderly removal of pupils, staff members and visitors from the school building; this can result from a fire or other incident within the building. Every school and college should have a clear evacuation procedure which is practised regularly.

Invacuation is the opposite to evacuation. You find refuge inside a building during an emergency. Invacuation may be required when there is an environmental hazard (such as a smoke cloud or suspected chemical leak), or a security related incident outside the building.

Lockdown: is a situation which requires securing the site, restricting staff and pupils to designated areas and people remaining in one place. Hampshire has guidance on this which is linked at the end of this article.

Communication: how will you let various people know what is happening? Emergency services? Staff? Learners? Parents? Visitors? How do you get help? How do you get emergency services onto your site?

It is appropriate to have one plan with the different *tactical* options included within it.

The guidance is to rehearse how you will actually respond in a crisis though the following:

- socialise your plan through training
- practice how you communicate internally and externally in a crisis
- ensure you understand how to work with the emergency services
- understand your local context in terms of any threats or risks, eg factories producing chemicals, etc.

When you practice lockdown, walk the site and see what you can see. If teachers are in classrooms with the learners, ask them to step out to see where people can be seen and not seen. Think about what happens if pupils or students are outside? In the toilet? In communal spaces like the hall, library, canteen, dining room?

It is also important not to frighten or heighten our learners. If you have not practised lockdown before, think about the *story* that you will use, especially with primary aged children to ensure that this is done sensibly, but also without frightening them. The other consideration is to think through plans for learners with additional needs, especially those who may find adult direction difficult at these times. What will the plan be for these learners? How will you manage risk for them?

There is a lot of really useful information provided on this by the GOV.UK website and Protect UK. I have outlined below what is on each of the links and these should be able to provide all you need.

Martyn's Law Factsheet – Home Office in the media

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2025/04/03/martyns-law-factsheet/>

As it says, this is a factsheet of the main details you need to know about Martyn's Law.

Martyn's Law: the SIA's new regulatory role

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2025/04/03/martyns-law-factsheet/>

This provides further information on Martyn's Law and the role of the regulatory body – the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

Potential security threats and preventative measures

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security/potential-security-threats-and-preventative-measures

Provides information about the different types of incidents/threats.

Site security guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security/site-security-guidance

Specific site security guidance.

Protective security and preparedness for education settings

www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-security-and-preparedness-for-education-settings

This provides information on protective security, including self-assessment templates and a link to Actions Counters Terrorism (ACT) eLearning for Education.

Martyn's Law

www.protectuk.police.uk/martyns-law

This takes you to Protect UK webpages which provide lots of guidance on threats, risk management, Martyn's Law, and links through to ACT training.

School and college security

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security

Lots of information regarding security on site.

ACT for Education. Act for Youth: RUN HIDE TELL. ACT in a BOX Exercises

www.protectuk.police.uk/group/99?type=catalog

www.protectuk.police.uk/advice-and-guidance/response/act-youth-run-hide-tell

www.protectuk.police.uk/actinabox

ACT for Education e-learning is bespoke training aimed all staff working in education settings and will teach learners how to identify security vulnerabilities, suspicious activity and how to respond when there is an incident.

National Protective Security Authority, Security-Minded Communications guidance

www.npsa.gov.uk/

www.npsa.gov.uk/security-best-practices/security-culture/security-minded-communications-guidance

This provides tailored guidance for educational settings in the UK, enabling settings to utilise various communications channels to deny and deter hostiles from undertaking hostile acts against their school, nursery, college, or university.

Terrorism and national emergencies: Terrorism threat levels

www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency

This link provides information on the current threat level of the UK.

DfE Lockdown Template

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bathnes.gov.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FDfE_Lockdown_Template.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

A template document that can be used for lockdown planning.

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www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/.

Young carers: identification and support

Since 2023, young carers (YCs) have been included in the school census data which has enabled more consistent tracking of their progress and attainment. The resultant data has demonstrated that young carers face many inequalities in education. Schools and settings are working to identify and support young carers and, in the audit, many of you identified that this was a focus area for action over the next year. Equally, YCs are identified in KCSiE as being one of the groups who may require earlier intervention, being identified as potentially having a higher level of vulnerability. The HSCP Education subgroup recently had input from Corniche Plumridge from the Hampshire Young Carer's Alliance on the challenges for YCs and support we can offer through education. I have used the information she presented, and some additional resources in the following article.

Definition: who are young carers?

The Carers Trust (<https://carers.org/>) and The Children's Society (www.childrenssociety.org.uk/) define a YC as: "A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person. They often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult."

What this looks like in our schools and settings is a child or young person who helps to look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. This could be a parent or carer or a sibling, or another family member and what distinguishes children as a YC is that the responsibilities persist over time and are important in maintaining the health or wellbeing of the family member.

What is the prevalence of this in our schools and settings?

In January 2025, the national statistics showed that there were 64,500 children and young people identified as being a YC in 2024/2025 which equates to 0.8% of the under 18 population. However, in this data, 69% of schools recorded that they had no YCs in their school. Those involved in supporting YCs believe this to be a considerable under representation, with estimates being that in reality one in five learners in every classroom could be defined as a YC.

In Hampshire, the most recent statistics show there are:

- 2527 YCs in the county
- The Hampshire Young Carers Alliance (HYCA) is aware of 3360 YCs
- The HYCA is actively supporting 1741 YCs
- 1632 YCs are known to Hampshire schools.

Given the pattern of the national statistics, it is likely that this too is an underestimate of the number of YCs in our educational settings.

Why is this important – what impact can being a YC have?

Before detailing the negative impacts of being a YC, it is important to acknowledge that young people identify that there are some positives in this role. Positive impacts can include having a sense of pride in being a carer, close family relationships and the development of the skills involved in looking after someone in a range of ways – practically, emotionally and having enhanced financial awareness.

However, there are also heightened vulnerabilities. Data released by the Carer's Trust in October 2025 shows that:

- fewer than half (45%) of young carers left secondary school with five GCSE passes including English and mathematics
- YCs are 25% less likely than their peers without caring responsibilities to achieve this academic milestone
- fewer than half of YCs (49%) left primary school this year with expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics
- just half of YCs (51%) finished school with GCSE passes in English and mathematics compared with 65% of non-carers
- the Covid social mobility and opportunities (COSMO) research found that a higher proportion of YCs had to go to a different school, sixth form or college (23%) after Year 11 because of their grades being lower than expected compared to young people with no declared caring responsibilities (17%)
- The Nuffield Foundation (2025) found that on average, YCs obtained 19% fewer A Level passes than non carers and were 64% more likely to follow vocational qualification pathways even though these did not secure better outcomes for them
- University College London (UCL) analysis showed that young carers were 38% less likely to obtain a university degree than their counterparts; for those caring more than 35 hours a week, they were 86% less likely
- The Young Carers in Education Research briefing (May 2025) (House of Commons) identified that YCs are 25% less likely to achieve AAB or above at A Level (and 37% less likely to achieve A*AA) which has implications for courses that can be accessed in Higher Education.

HSCP have identified that a YC becomes vulnerable when the level of care giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate, risking the child or young person's own emotional or physical wellbeing or educational achievement and life chances.

Negative impacts include:

- isolation
- missing out on childhood
- feeling guilt or resentment
- lack of recognition
- health problems
- feeling different
- keeping family secrets
- living in poverty
- problems with transition to adulthood.

How can education settings help?

First of all, we need to be able to identify our YCs. The most obvious way to do this is through the YC or parents or carers informing educational settings that this is the case. However, it is not always this simple. Sometimes they, or their families do not want to identify that they are a YC – they may not want the label and may feel that people will judge them or there will be negative connotations to this. Equally, the young person or family may not recognise that they are a carer. As with other areas of vulnerability within safeguarding, for that child, young person or family, this is just how life is and it may not be something that has been considered.

How can we identify a YC?

The key thing, as with everything in education, is to have professional curiosity – to notice, to listen and to ask questions. There's also a whole range of things we can look out for that may help:

- ensure staff are aware of the importance of identifying YCs and the impact this can have. Make sure they know to report this if a child or young person refers to a caring responsibility in the home. A child or young person may tell anyone within the school or setting so the message is to never assume that other people know and make sure we pass information on

- think about those parents, carers and families where we already know there may be indicators such as disability, illness, mental health conditions, or substance misuse. Think about siblings in the house that have additional or complex needs
- YCs may talk about doing extra jobs in and around the home such as cooking, cleaning, shopping or helping siblings get to school
- they may talk about doing physical or personal care – helping someone get out of bed, move around, get dressed or help with a wheelchair
- they may help with managing budgets or collecting prescriptions
- they may give their siblings and parents emotional support and may talk about this.

And then there are the other signs and indicators that we may spot – as with many elements of safeguarding, these can be indicative of other risks, so it always goes back to professional curiosity:

- regular lateness
- low attendance
- not completing homework
- tiredness
- low attention span
- lack of motivation
- low mood/mental health
- presenting as anxious
- parent or carer uses disabled parking space
- lack of parent/carer attending school or setting events
- on pupil premium or free school meals
- change in hygiene or appearance
- change in behaviour – becoming aggressive or angry, withdrawn or quiet.

How can we support?

Education staff have a key role in identifying and supporting YCs. Just asking a few simple questions can help identify these vulnerable young people in your setting and also help reduce the stigma of caring, making it feel OK and normal to talk about it at school or college. There is a whole range of guidance and resources out there to help schools and settings identify and support YCs. Here are just some of the tips for identifying and supporting.

- Remember the YCs definition and record those that are living with someone with a long term illness, disability, a mental health diagnosis, or addiction as these children or young people meet the definition.
- Identify and record any pupils or students you think might be YCs, even if they do not currently need or want any extra support. This will help you to spot if things start to change. For example, if attendance starts to drop or there is a change in behaviour, presentation or progress.
- If you do an information session or assembly to raise awareness, make sure there is follow up as some YCs will not identify themselves in large groups.
- Adapt questions to a group discussion if you are raising awareness – this allows for peer interaction which may encourage YCs to talk about their experience.
- If you think a child or young person may be a YC and want to have a conversation about it, think about right time and place, who is best to have this conversation (probably someone who the child or young person knows and feel comfortable with), and make sure they understand that this conversation is confidential and information will only be shared if there is risk of harm.
- Respect the child or young person's wishes if they do not want information shared and do not want support.

- Being transparent about what the school or setting offer in support for young carers, what the definition of a YC is and how information is shared, or not. This may encourage those who are reluctant to self identify to feel comfortable and confident to do so.
- Think about how support can be personalised for the child or young person. Different YCs may want or need different things. For some this is about providing a space to talk about their experiences or just a chance to have some *down time*. For others, it may be about providing them with life experiences and chances they may not otherwise have – for example, visiting a college or university and supporting and identifying their aspirations.

It is worth noting that the Carers Trust advice states that schools and settings do not have to have parental consent to record a child or young person as a YC for the purpose of the census, although it is important to respect the wishes of the family and child or young person. In completing census returns, schools and settings can include any child or young person who provides or intends to provide care or support to someone because of a physical or mental illness, disability or addiction. YCs do not have to have a young carers needs assessment or be receiving specific support at the time of the census return.

A good starting point

A good starting point for raising awareness is to sign up for the young carers alliance (YCA) mailing list. They send very informative newsletters and you can sign up here: <https://carers.org/young-carers-alliance/young-carers-alliance>. This link also takes you through to the YCA website where you will find resources for professionals and tips and support for families.

Other resources and websites that may be helpful

Who is HYCA? – Hampshire Young Carers Alliance

Hampshire Young Carers Alliance

Supporting Young Carers across Hampshire

www.hyca.org.uk/community/hampshire-young-carers-alliance-20676/who-is-hyca/

We are a consortium of 10 Young Carer projects who are all independent charities, working together under a memorandum of understanding, to serve Hampshire young carers – raising awareness, advocating and championing for these amazing young people.

If you go to the HYCA website, you can use the *Contact* page to link to local projects in your area.

Young Carers Identification Guide a tool for education staff

www.actionforcarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Young-Carers-Identification-Guide-a-tool-for-education-staff.pdf

This is a great resource/tool which provides a series of questions, written by young carers, that professionals can use to work with children and young people who they believe may be a young carer.

Supporting professionals working with young carers – The Children's Society

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/young-carers

Provides professional guidance and resources to support us in supporting young carers.

Young carers – Hampshire SCP

www.hampshirescp.org.uk/professionals/toolkits/early-help/early-help-5/

HSCP website which provides information and training courses on supporting young carers.

Supporting Young Carers Across the UK – MYTIME Charity

www.mytimeyoungcarers.org/

Mytime Young Carers is a UK based charity which supports young carers. The website contains pages aimed specifically at young people, as well as pages for parents and schools/teachers.

Young Carers, Mental Health Advice – YoungMinds

www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/young-carers/

Guidance and support for young carers. Our advice explains what young carers do, how to tell if it's getting too much and what steps you can take to get the help you need.

Supporting Young Carers in Schools: A Toolkit for Young Carers Services – Carers Trust

<https://carers.org/resources/all-resources/27-supporting-young-carers-in-schools-a-toolkit-for-young-carers-services>

Carers Trust advocate for all unpaid carers. Their website provides a range of information about carers, news and information. In addition it includes a toolkit for supporting young carers in school.

Young carers – Barnardo's

www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/young-carers

Resources for training and identification, and guidance on how to support young carers.

Born to Care: Our Newest Report Shines a Light on the Youngest Young Carers – MYTIME Young Carers

www.mytimeyoungcarers.org/born-to-care-our-newest-report-shines-a-light-on-the-youngest-young-carers

Article about young carers under the age of five and their experiences.

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Restrictive physical intervention (RPI)

In February 2025, the government launched a consultation on the revised update to the 2013 *Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance*. The guidance in final form has now been published and is due to come into effect in April 2026. As with other articles in this edition of *Safeguarding Matters*, a number of schools and settings identified RPI as an *action* for their safeguarding plans this year. This article therefore outlines the key points in the new statutory guidance and is supplemented by information from the (PBS) Physical Intervention report discussed recently at the HSCP Education sub group.

The *Use of reasonable force* guidance aims to help schools *proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies*. There is acknowledgment that there are times when the use of reasonable force is lawful and Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides all school and education staff with the power to use this. However, there is also acknowledgement – as most educators will know – that the use of reasonable force can have a significant impact on all involved, pupils or students, staff and parents.

Therefore, the revised guidance provides clarification aimed to:

- help staff assess when the use of force is reasonable
- sets out circumstances in which reasonable force can be used
- aims to help staff feel more confident in using this power safely and appropriately.

It also provides, helpfully, some definitions around the terminology used to describe reasonable force – clarifying the meaning of the terms *reasonable force*, *restrictive intervention* and *restraint* and emphasising that these three are not mutually exclusive.

In other words, in an incident, all three may be used and examples are given of when this may be the case.

Definitions are also given of *significant incident* and *seclusion*.

In a nutshell

In brief, the guidance sets out that educational settings should do or have the following:

- a policy for restrictive physical intervention – the policy should be straightforward, accessible and easy to follow and emphasise that use of RPI should be minimised. PBS are currently reviewing the RPI policy and will be producing a new model policy in line with the guidance
- analyse the use of RPI to evaluate patterns or trends and inform planning. This may be linked to individuals, cohorts or groups (eg SEND) or to identify staff training needs
- a whole school approach to supporting all pupils and students to achieve and thrive
- staff training in preventative strategies: de-escalation, tone of voice, co-regulation, effective communication, and responding with empathy
- evaluate all incidents of RPI as soon as possible to look at impact on those involved (pupils and staff), patterns, trends and ways to avoid use in the future
- provide medical assessment as appropriate
- ensure debrief and additional follow up conversations are part of the process and procedure of the setting
- provide support for those who have witnessed the RPI
- record and report all significant incidents as soon as possible – this includes seclusion and non force related restraint (for example, removing a walking aid)

- report incidents (including seclusion and non force restraint) to the parents as soon as practicable and on the same day. While this may also be verbally, the guidance says it should be in writing
- ensure governors regularly review and interrogate data on use of RPI.

In more detail

So, what does the guidance say educational settings have to do?

The content below is not going to rewrite the guidance as I am sure many of you will have read it yourselves or will do now it is finalised. However, the following is a summary and highlights some key points.

Must and should

As with KCSiE, the guidance defines what is meant by must and should. Must is self explanatory in that it means must! *Should* is defined as being something that should happen unless there is good reason not to. It is important, therefore, that if you are not doing something defined as *should* that there has been a clear thought process about why the setting is not doing this.

Training

The guidance is clear that adequate training should be given to staff who are likely to need to use RPI or reasonable force to ensure they can do so safely and lawfully. This should sit alongside training in preventative strategies. The clear message in the guidance is that RPI should be the last action we take, preceded by a range of other strategies. School and setting leaders are entrusted with making decisions about which training to use based on the setting's context and need, but the training should be in line with the principles in the guidance.

There is also reference to ensuring staff welfare and wellbeing is considered with risk assessments carried out to ensure that staff who regularly work with pupils or students where use of reasonable force may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Deciding to use reasonable force or RPI

As already mentioned, the guidance has a very clear emphasis on not using reasonable force or RPI unless necessary with the expectation being that other preventative strategies will have been used first and that there will be a clear reason for deciding to use RPI.

Questions should be asked, before using physical intervention, about whether this is appropriate in the given situation with reference to:

- does it fit with the school's Child Protection (CP) (or other relevant) policies?
- are other adults present? Unless it is an emergency situation, it is advisable to have more than one adult present both for the pupil's safety and for safer working practice
- is it appropriate given the pupil/student's age and size?
- does the pupil or student have SEND or other vulnerabilities – particularly vulnerabilities which make physical contact even more distressing?
- are there other more effective ways to manage the situation?
- is RPI likely to reduce risk or escalate the situation? Will it cause more harm than the behaviour itself?
- is the use of RPI proportionate?
- will the use of RPI maintain respect for the pupil or student's dignity? Think about the location and environment
- have other strategies been used first to try to determine how the pupil or student is feeling?

Seclusion

The guidance usefully draws a distinction between seclusion and removal from class for disciplinary purposes. It is made clear that:

- seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil or student is highly dysregulated
- it is defined as a non disciplinary intervention for use when a pupil or student is not acting with intent – in other words, when they are unable to regulate their behaviour and are in distress
- it is not a punishment, sanction or consequence
- it is time limited to cover the period when there is risk of harm. Once the pupil or student is regulated, they should be allowed to leave the space
- pupils/students should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion, and the environment should not feel threatening or intimidating
- an incident of seclusion should be recorded and reported in line with the reporting and recording requirements.

An additional key point made is that seclusion is not a disciplinary response to *deliberate or wilful* behaviour. The guidance makes clear that there are similar disciplinary measures which involve removal from classrooms, but these are not defined as seclusion.

Pupils or students with SEND

The guidance includes a whole section on consideration for pupils and students with additional needs and the range of school and setting responses and responsibilities in relation to this group. This section makes reference to many of the things that you will already be doing, such as:

- thinking about the reasons or triggers for behaviour

- having a planned preventative response for those with additional needs
- having a risk assessment in place for individuals where physical intervention may be necessary
- a whole school response in terms of thinking about how the school environment may be experienced by those with additional needs
- use of key identified staff to support individuals particularly in times of dysregulation
- distraction strategies
- co-production of individual support plans
- review of individual support plans and risk assessment at regular intervals and following any significant incident.

Record significant incidents

- Helpfully, the word *significant* is defined in the guidance as “*any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff.*”
- Appropriate physical contact is also *defined* through the examples given which include giving first aid, comforting those in distress, handshakes or a pat on the back to praise, demonstrating use of musical instruments or exercises in PE and, importantly *guiding or escorting pupils.*
- It is also important to note that the requirement to report applies even if the use of reasonable force, seclusion or non force related restraint is part of a behaviour support plan and agreed by parents.
- Guidance is given about what to record about each incident on the reporting form. This includes all of the key details you would expect.

During the audit process, some schools and settings raised the question of whether guides should be recorded as physical intervention. It is indicated in the guidance that guides or escorts will not come under the definition of *significant* incident.

Inform parents as soon as possible

- Governing bodies (maintained schools) and proprietors (others) must ensure a procedure is in place for reporting each significant incident to parents of the pupils as soon as practicable – except where doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil.
- Reports to parents should include time, date, location, approximate length of time force was used, type of reasonable force applied, degree of force, details of any physical injuries sustained, brief account of why force was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Reports should be made even if the use of reasonable force is agreed as part of the pupil or student's support plan.
- Schools and setting should communicate this information to parents in writing.
- Best practice would include inviting parents in to have a follow up discussion about the incident. This could include behavioural triggers, what de-escalation strategies were used, whether the plan was followed, what might be done differently in future.

I think this final point is really useful and will hopefully support in reducing complaints – having a follow up discussion will allow parents the opportunity to raise any concerns and ask questions after the initial report has been made. Giving them the time the next day or a few days later would, usefully I think, allow for reflection and follow up.

Hampshire support and guidance

As many or most of you will know, PBS took over the leadership of physical intervention oversight in schools from the Educational Psychology (EP) service in April 2025. This means that PBS now:

- update the Hampshire policy for schools
- chair the physical intervention steering group and carry forward the strategic actions identified
- maintain and disseminate knowledge of government legislation
- provide support and advice to others in Children's Services
- coordinate the training packages for schools and settings
- plan for and implement the evaluation and impact of training
- respond to queries regarding legal and policy issues.

In 2024/25, the service delivered:

- six Team Teach events delivering training to 104 delegates from 35 mainstream schools.
- special school training with three schools and four resource provisions training 13 intermediate tutors
- awareness raising sessions to 15 mainstream schools numbering 406 delegates
- de-escalation to 4 schools numbering 143 delegates.
- special school training with PBS staff refreshing three intermediate tutors and providing initial training for a further three.

Through the audit results, it is evident that RPI is being used in primary, secondary, special, and alternative provisions. As the new guidance comes into effect, PBS are currently reviewing the Local Authority model policy for schools and settings and ensuring that PBS Team Teach training materials and course content are reflective of the new guidance.

HIAS curriculum update

You can contact PBS about training through the following email address:

pbs.teamteach@hants.gov.uk

Useful links and guidance

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England

www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

Behaviour in Schools Advice for headteachers and school staff

www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2

Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6943dad6501cdd438f4cf5aa/Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf

Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65ce3721e1bdec001a3221fe/Behaviour_in_schools_-_advice_for_headteachers_and_school_staff_Feb_2024.pdf

Further guidance and resources for supporting behaviour in schools – GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2/further-guidance-and-resources-for-supporting-behaviour-in-schools

Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention – GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbe55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges – GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges

Mental health and behaviour in schools – GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

Mobile phones in schools – GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools

Mental health and behaviour in schools: Mentally Healthy Schools

www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-or-college-resources/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools/

What is ARC? – ARC Framework

<https://arcframework.org/what-is-arc/>

Cindy Pritchard

Inspector/Adviser for Safeguarding, HIAS

Artificial intelligence: risks and benefits

As with other articles in this edition of Safeguarding Matters, a number of schools and settings identified use of generative AI or just AI generally as an action for their safeguarding plans this year. I recently attended a very helpful and informative session delivered by the London Grid for Learning (LGfL) entitled, 'A Safeguarding First Approach to Using GenAI in Schools. I have used my notes from this webinar, along with some other resources in the following article.

Overview

The use of AI is supported by the government as *“a fundamental part of its mission to break down barriers to opportunity for children and young people”*. The DfE has further stated that: *“If used safely, effectively and with the right infrastructure in place, AI can ensure that every child and young person, regardless of their background, is able to achieve at school or college and develop the knowledge and skills they need for life.”*

Artificial intelligence is clearly here to stay and the use of it is growing. The Unicef Report *Generative AI: risks and opportunities for Children* reports:

“AI is already central to children’s digital environment, through recommendation algorithms or automated decision-making systems... Generative AI will no doubt take an even greater hold of their digital experiences, and at a rapid pace. ...It is being embedded as chatbots, digital assistants, personal assistants and search engines into software and apps already used by children. ...Generative AI systems are being fine-tuned within specific sectors, potentially enabling more targeted and powerful capabilities.”

Remember the positives of AI

Before getting to the potential safeguarding risks of using AI and GenAI in particular, it is worth emphasising and remembering that this can be a fantastic tool for schools and settings. It can be used to foster creativity, provide multiple perspectives, summarise materials, generate lesson plans and learning resources, and stimulate image creation. It can lead to greater efficiency, personalisation, availability and innovation.

Equally, using AI is exciting and engaging for our children and young people and any discussions around the use of this technology need to come from a starting place of acknowledging this or we risk alienating our learners before we have begun. We need to embrace it, but also remember that we, as adults, are the guardians of the technology. In the LGfL webinar, it is emphasised that the tech companies are concerned with economics and profit – not welfare and protection. We are therefore urged to approach the use of AI with caution and protection in mind.

As Sufian Sadiq, the Director of Teaching School, at the Chiltern Learning Trust said: *“AI has the potential to support education in many ways, reducing workload and supporting teachers in powerful new ways. But as we embrace this technology, the humans are more important than ever, grounded in critical thinking, professional judgment, and ethical responsibility.”*

The government has produced some really useful training modules on this which can be found here: Using AI in education settings: support materials – GOV.UK:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-ai-in-education-settings-support-materials

There are also links at the end of this article which are helpful in exploring the uses and benefits of AI and signposting to further information to support with this.

What is AI?

- **Artificial intelligence:** technology which enables computers to mimic human cognitive functions like learning, reasoning, problem solving and perception, allowing them to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence and that involves data whose scale exceeds what humans can analyse.
- **Platforms and tools which use AI:** examples include Alexa, Hive, Uber eats, Facebook, LinkedIn, Netflix, Fitbit, Google Maps, and smart home devices.
- **Generative AI:** a type of artificial intelligence that creates new, original content - such as text, images, music or code – by learning patterns from vast datasets. This enables it to produce new outputs in response to user prompts. It uses deep learning models, such as large language models (LLMs) to understand complex inputs and generate human-like, relevant and often creative responses.
- **Tools which use GenAI:** examples include Chat GPT, Gemini, CoPilot, Adobe, Claude.

What are the risks we need to be aware of?

There are a range of risks associated with the use of AI and GenAI in particular that we need to be mindful of as adults, educators and safeguarding professionals. Some of these are as follows:

- **risks of sharing personal data online:** this increases the risk of cyber crime and extortion
- **fake child sexual abuse material (CSAM):** AI can create CSAM and the IWF has reported an alarming increase in GenAI produced imagery, which has now extended into moving imagery. There has also been a considerable increase in self-generated CSAM with children and young people exploring this tech, including use of nudifying apps
- **adult content via chatbots:** chatbots (which are explored in more detail below) can engage children in explicit adult conversations and make adult imagery available
- **inappropriate advice:** chatbots can give harmful, inappropriate and even illegal advice. For example, on topics such as mental health, dieting, physical appearance or sex and relationships
- **emotional impact of AI companions:** AI companions can replace human interactions and relationships. The artificial can become more important than the real world. This risks harm to children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing
- **bias reinforcing harmful stereotypes:** AI can deepen stereotypes by reinforcing harmful biases. Common Sense Media's (www.commonsensemedia.org/press-releases/common-sense-media-launches-first-ever-ai-ratings-system) research consistently finds that AI systems inherently contain a wide variety of **racial and gender biases**, which stem from the massive, and often biased, datasets they are trained on. Their research highlights how this can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and lead to unequal opportunities or unfair treatment in educational and social contexts.
- **exposure to harmful or fake content:** children and young people can be exposed to harmful or fake messages which promote false ideals or narratives

A deeper dive into three of the risks

Chatbots

First of all, a few statistics from the Internet Matters *Me, Myself and AI* report (July 2025):

- 64% of children have used chatbots
- 35% of children talk to chatbots like they are a friend
- 71% of vulnerable children are using chatbots.

These stats show that the use of chatbots is already widespread. The other important thing to note here is the higher number of vulnerable children and young people who are using chatbots. In some ways this is not surprising in that talking to a chatbot supports some young people to feel more comfortable in interacting given that the physical proximity to a 'person' is removed, the chatbot's responses are aimed at 'pleasing' the consumer (as the platforms want the users to continue their engagement), and responses are predictable.

The problem with this is:

- chatbots are not inherently programmed to *think* about a user's welfare. They are designed with ethical guidelines and safety protocols to avoid harm, but the primary programming goals for chatbots are typically commercial (customer service, efficiency) or functional (providing information, engagement), not a genuine concern for wellbeing
- there have been cases which have emphasised very considerable concerns about the safeguarding guardrails in place or lack of. These have included cases where young people have taken their own life with evidence highlighting that chatbots either failed to signpost the young person to help and support, or actively encouraged them through ignoring suicide ideation, encouraging self destructive thoughts or giving practical advice on how to make a noose or write a suicide note. In some cases, the families have taken legal action

against Character AI, ChatGPT and OpenAI for failing to put appropriate safeguards in place

- other cases have involved chatbots giving advice on diet, lifestyle (such as drugs or alcohol), and sex and relationships. At times, this advice was harmful, misleading or illegal. Heat Initiative carried out research into harmful interactions via chatbots. They set up five fake profiles of 12-15 year olds and monitored the number of harmful interactions via chatbots in 50 hours of conversation. The results showed 296 incidents of grooming or sexual exploitation, 173 incidents of emotional manipulation and addiction, 98 incidents of violence, substance abuse and harmful advice, 58 incidents of mental health risks and 44 incidents of racism and hate speech
- children can form strong relationships with chatbots. A chatbot gives immediate responses, can love bomb, provides frictionless interactions, is there to please and is always available. Or they can use emotional manipulation to make a child feel bad about leaving a chat. What does this teach children about relationships? What is the wider impact of this? What impact might this have on children and young people who are vulnerable or already experiencing mental health difficulties?

Disinformation

KCSIE 2025 for the first time included reference to children and young people being taught about misinformation, disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories. As the tech progresses, the concern around misinformation, disinformation, and fake news is likely to become a bigger challenge. What do we need to think about?

- Many fake videos and images are extremely believable. It is increasingly difficult, at times, to tell the difference between what is real and what is disinformation.
- Posting of disinformation can cause huge disruption and absorb resources that would be better deployed elsewhere. For example, a notable incident occurred in Lucknow, where a journalism student used an AI application to edit a photo of himself, adding a leopard to the background and posting it

online with the message that leopards were roaming the town. The image circulated rapidly on social media, leading to school closures, advisories for residents to stay indoors, and a significant commitment of emergency resources. It is also led to the arrest and detention of the journalism student. How do we build resilience in our children and young people to question what they see? How do we educate them to use AI ethically and responsibly?

- Believing disinformation or fake imagery can lead to children and young people feeling embarrassed, confused and less trusting. Vulnerable children report greater feelings of worry and are more likely to believe AI or fake content. This impacts on social and emotional development and mental wellbeing.
- The question is what does it mean when we can no longer believe anything we see or read online? What does that lead to in our society? How can we ensure our curriculum encourages children and young people to think critically about what they see or hear and to fact check so they can question what is fake, but also believe what is real?

Data privacy

Using AI in education can create privacy and security risks so it is vital that schools and settings think about how tools are used. The potential risks are:

- it may expose sensitive student or staff data through breaches or sharing with third parties. This can lead to violations of privacy laws (like GDPR), especially because AI often uses large amounts of data for training
- the lack of transparency – AI systems can be *black boxes*, making it hard to know how data is processed
- these issues can result in misuse, unauthorised access, and difficulties in limiting data collection.

For example

There have been cases of teaching staff using AI tools to help with report writing, seating plans and lesson planning. There is no problem with this, but in some cases staff have uploaded

information such as pupil names, SEND status, pupil premium status, date of birth into the tool. The problem here is that data is held by the platform and used to train the Large Language Model (LLM). This creates issues of data protection. If staff are using the free version of a platform, assume the data is being held and *owned* by the platform and is being scraped for training the AI tool. Make sure the platform is set up to ensure it is not allowed to harvest the data and make sure staff understand what information can and cannot be uploaded into the tools used.

Next steps for schools and settings

There is wide variation in how far along the road schools and settings are in their response to AI. The following are some suggestions to support with developing your approach and things to think about. If you would like further input on this, the link for the LGfL webinar is at the end of this article.

The first thing to remember is, as the GOV.UK paper on *Generative artificial intelligence in education* says, “*Safety should be the top priority when deciding whether to use generative AI in your education setting.*”

- **Suggestion 1: decide on your approach.** The quote from the GOV.UK article above uses the word *whether* when referring to use of GenAI. So, the first question is to decide whether the school or setting is going to use GenAI and AI at all. Then, what the school or setting is going to use and the purpose of this. This should be discussed by the leadership team and governors or proprietors with the focus on *why*. What is your *why*? How does the use of GenAI fit with your pedagogical approach? Your values? What does it bring to the setting? What are the benefits to staff, pupils, the community? This will steer and guide which tech you want to use.
- **Suggestion 2: audit where you are (self evaluation).** Where are you now? This is the opportunity to assess the setting’s readiness for the use of GenAI/AI. Do you

have a policy? Do you have a clear digital strategy for the use of technology into which AI fits? What is your digital infrastructure? How much tech support do you have to help set this up or troubleshoot? How competent and confident are staff? What are the training implications? What is already being used and by whom? What does this tell you? If staff are already using certain tools, do you want to approve them? If children and young people are already using AI, how does this fit with the curriculum? Do the platforms you are using already have GenAI in them? Do you want to enable this or disable this?

- **Suggestion 3: policies.** This is not just about the development of an AI policy but also thinking about the inter-connectedness of policies. In developing your AI policy, think about how this interacts with your other policies for: safeguarding, child protection, online safety, acceptable use of IT, behaviour, data protection, code of conduct, and any others this may impact upon. Ensure that there is explicit reference, as needed, to the use of AI and GenAI. Phil Bagge (HIAS) has produced some guidance on the development of an AI policy which can be found on the HIAS Moodle: <https://leadership.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=141>
- **Suggestion 4: incident management procedures.** Plan for what will happen when there is an incident or risk involving AI or GenAI. For example, what will the school or setting response be when pupils share GenAI CSA imagery of each other? When a deepfake image of a teacher is produced by a pupil or posted online? When a teacher puts details of pupil names, date of birth and other personal information into an AI tool, breaching data protection?
- **Suggestion 5: evaluate and assess the tools the setting will use.** Ensure that all tools and vendors are fully evaluated, taking into consideration data protection and safeguarding risks. Carry out a risk assessment for data protection for any tools that you decide to use.
- **Suggestion 6: filtering.** Discuss with your IT providers how you ensure tools are set up to control AI, even if you are not permitting it. A review of categories may be helpful to ensure that AI image and chat generators are blocked. Check this with your filtering provider and check also if https decryption is enabled. This allows the setting to control and switch off different elements of websites or applications providing a more granular approach to what you block or allow.
- **Suggestion 7: user authentication.** Think about which AI tools you want to permit and for whom. If you have user authentication, this enables the school or setting to control this and which URLs you block or unblock for particular users.
- **Suggestion 8: monitoring and supervision.** Your monitoring system will already track what is being typed in and will evaluate whether this presents a risk. Using this can help to identify gaps in filtering provision in relation to AI and can also help shape curriculum changes – if monitoring identifies an emerging theme in what pupils are searching for, this can support with developing curriculum inputs on this.
- **Suggestion 9: tool configuration.** Ensure you have a clear process in place to train staff on what is permitted (in terms of AI tool usage) and not. Which ones, as a school or setting, are agreed and what is the ‘why’ for this? What will the process be for staff to request to use a new or different tool? What is the approval process? Ensure that your IT support have set up tools to prevent data being scraped.
- **Suggestion 10: parental involvement.** Regardless of what AI and GenAI the school or setting does or does not use, it is still vitally important to support parents in terms of signposting to resources, key safety messages and helping them to understand the risks so that they can appropriately monitor, supervise and talk to their child about their interactions online.

- **Suggestion 11: staff training.** Ensure there is ongoing auditing of staff confidence and understanding of the use of AI and GenAI, and that time is built into CPD to provide appropriate training on what it is, the tools the school or setting will and will not use, and the policies and expectations around usage.
- **Suggestion 12: curriculum.** Last but absolutely not least! As we know, children and young people are already using AI and GenAI, so they are already exposed to the risks around this. Development of a carefully planned and thought through curriculum, which links to PSHE and RSHE is vitally important. This will focus on digital literacy and safeguarding, helping to prevent harm and empowering our learners with the skills and understanding they need so that they can use and apply AI thoughtfully, responsibly and innovatively. How does the curriculum develop their reasoning? Problem solving? Deeper thinking skills? Critical consumer skills? The ability to decide when to use the tech or not?

A couple of final points

The Sutton Trust article *Artificial Advantage* highlights one of the problems in terms of use of AI in relation to safeguarding which is that many schools and settings have yet to develop a policy and identify a *lead* in this regard. It further highlights that state schools are behind private schools in responding to AI. The Internet Matters *Me, Myself and AI* report also highlights that 52% of private school children reported using GenAI compared to 18% of state school children. This is worth noting as pupils in private schools are already being educated and accessing curriculum input in GenAI. The tech is changing rapidly and the knowledge, understanding and skills associated with using AI will be necessary for many of the jobs that our children will be moving into. Consideration therefore needs to be given to how this discrepancy between pupils in independent schools and state schools is potentially already creating inequality and disparity in future access to the job market.

The final point emphasized by LGfL and in most of the resources and training around GenAI, is that we must maintain human oversight, review and curiosity in our use of this technology. Continuous review will be necessary due to the rate of development and in terms of safeguarding, it will be very important to ensure that staff have regular update training to ensure they can recognise the risks and maintain vigilance to keep our children safe.

Useful links and resources

For leaders and staff

Artificial Intelligence and Online Safety – SWGfL

<https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/artificial-intelligence/>

International Online Safety Policy Template – SWGfL

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/international-schools-online-safety-policy-templates/>

Understanding AI for School: tips for school leaders – Teacher Development Trust

<https://tdtrust.org/posts/download-understanding-ai-for-school-tips-for-school-leaders/>

How does Snapchat's new AI function *My AI* impact young people? – UK Safer Internet Centre

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/how-does-snapchats-new-ai-function-my-ai-impact-young-people/>

Artificial Intelligence: Considerations for Schools – SWGfL

<https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/artificial-intelligence/artificial-intelligence-considerations-for-schools/>

Support and Advice for Schools on Synthetic Media and Deepfakes – SWGfL

<https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/synthetic-media-deepfake/support-and-advice-for-schools/>

Online Reporting – SWGfL

<https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/reporting/>

Child sexual abuse material generated by artificial intelligence –an essential guide for professionals who work with children and young people

www.iwf.org.uk/media/ceel0u4z/ai-guidance-england-final.pdf

The biggest risk is doing nothing’: insights from early adopters of artificial intelligence in schools and further education colleges – GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/government/publications/ai-in-schools-and-further-education-findings-from-early-adopters/the-biggest-risk-is-doing-nothing-insights-from-early-adopters-of-artificial-intelligence-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges

AI chatbots are the ‘go to’ for millions of children – Internet Matters

www.internetmatters.org/hub/press-release/new-report-reveals-how-risky-and-unchecked-ai-chatbots-are-the-new-go-to-for-millions-of-children/

Protect Us

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuH-D-au1Ho

AI chatbots raise safety concerns for children, experts warn

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nArJwD_aE8

Dove vs. AI Beauty Standards: Keeping It Real With The Code

www.youtube.com/watch?v=relQAmmpbO8

Dove Toxic Influence: Mothers & Daughters Confront Toxic Social Media

www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF3iRZtkyAQ

For pupils

AI Adventure: Explore, Create, Innovate (Suitable for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 learners)

www.computingatschool.org.uk/resources/2024/sepember/ai-adventure-explore-create-innovate

Unit of work that teaches about Generative AI.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/assets/documents/ai-for-key-stage-two.pdf>

For parents and carers

Support and Advice for Parents and Carers on Synthetic Media & Deepfakes

<https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/synthetic-media-deepfake/support-and-advice-for-parents-and-carers/>

Artificial intelligence safety tips for parents | NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2025/artificial-intelligence-safety-tips-for-parents/

How to protect your children's back-to-school photos – NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2025/how-to-protect-your-childrens-back-to-school-photos/

AI – Cornerstone Church of English Primary School

<https://cornerstoneprimary.hants.sch.uk/digital-cornerstone/ai/>

HIAS curriculum update

Empowering Learners for the Age of AI An AI Literacy Framework for Primary and Secondary Education

https://ailiteracyframework.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AILitFramework_ReviewDraft.pdf

Generative AI: Risks and opportunities for children – Innocenti Global Office of Research and Foresight

www.unicef.org/innocenti/generative-ai-risks-and-opportunities-children

Artificial advantage? – The Sutton Trust

www.suttontrust.com/our-research/artificial-advantage/

Using generative AI to enhance teaching and learning – Cornerstone Church of England Primary School

<https://cornerstoneprimary.hants.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CCT-Using-generative-AI-to-enhance-teaching-and-learning.pdf>

From Paperwork to Progress: How AI Empowers the Modern SENDCo – Cornerstone Church of England Primary School

<https://cornerstoneprimary.hants.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/From-Paperwork-to-Progress-How-AI-Empowers-the-Modern-SENDCo.pdf>

How AI can be a panacea for the growing SEND, workload and retention crisis

https://my.chartered.college/impact_article/how-ai-can-be-a-panacea-for-the-growing-send-workload-and-retention-crisis/

Free, AI-powered lesson assistant – Oak National Academy

www.thenational.academy/ai

AI and Literacy – National Literacy Trust

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-is-literacy/ai-and-literacy/>

ETS 9c AI in Education ETS .mov – LGfL TV – Powered by eStream

<https://lgfl.planetestream.com/Embed.aspx?id=7758&code=bk~nlqbsYNjgeiOIZ6dMohAGZyB&hm=1&hs=1>

A Practical Guide to Prebunking Misinformation

https://prebunking.withgoogle.com/docs/A_Practical_Guide_to_Prebunking_Misinformation.pdf

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[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/.](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/)

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Also from HIAS!

Publications: If you enjoyed reading this curriculum update why not take a look to see what other publications are produced by the Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service. You will find a list of publications on our website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hias/curriculum-support.

Moodles: Have you visited the HIAS Moodles? The Moodle sites include top-quality resources, training and course materials – see: <https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/>. Do not forget to sign up to our site news pages so we can keep you up to date with the latest news and training opportunities from the HIAS subject teams.

Moodle+ offers access to a wide range of high-quality resources for subject leads and teachers for all key stages in primary and secondary and is available by subscription. For more information email HIAS Publications: hias.publications@hants.gov.uk.