

Somerset School

Safeguarding Policy -

(2) A guide to the role of the DSL



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Introduction

This policy is written in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

This policy is also written for students over 18 years and is in line with the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Education Act 2002. Those over the age of 18 are referred to as Students.

Wider Policies support this Policy. All are numbered and sit alongside to create the school safeguarding policy.

1. Child Protection Policy
2. Role of the DSL Policy
3. Child on Child Abuse Policy
4. Filtering and Monitoring Policy
5. Managing Low Level Concerns Policy
6. Absent from Education Policy
7. Schools Safer Recruitment Policy
8. Managing Contextual Risks to Children
9. Adult Safeguarding Policy

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to inform staff of the role of the DSL, giving clear guidance of the DSL's role, particularly including the following:

- Managing referrals
- Working with others
- Information Sharing and managing the Child Protection File
- Raising awareness of Safeguarding issues – locally, nationally or globally
- Training, knowledge and skills
- Providing support to staff
- Understanding the views of children
- Holding and Sharing information

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is an appointed senior member of staff from the school/college leadership team. Governing bodies and proprietors ensure the designated safeguarding lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. This person is not the proprietor and often carries out a dual role such as being a senior member of teaching staff whilst also undertaking DSL responsibilities.

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).

Schools and colleges may decide to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding lead. Any deputy (or deputies) are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to

appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection/safeguarding, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility is not delegated.

Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child/student welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, in addition to contributing to the assessments of children and students.

There can only be one DSL and depending on the size or complexity of the school, a number of deputy DSLs can be appointed to support.

DSL's are often responsible for the safeguarding and protection of those over 18 years. They are provided with suitable safeguarding training to ensure they are competent and confident with safeguarding this age group.

The role of the DSL

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and/or other such media is acceptable.

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead, to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead refers cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the relevant local authority social care department and LADO as required
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern whilst supporting staff who make referrals to the Prevent team
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm caused to a child/student to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. NPCC - When to call the police¹ should help the DSL and staff to understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead:

- acts as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff

¹ when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf (npcc.police.uk)

- acts as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaises with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, police investigations or adult safeguarding investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children and some adults to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.
- liaises with the "case manager" and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child/adult protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaises with staff, especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school/college nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads, mental health support teams, special educational needs coordinators (SENCO) and named persons with oversight for SEND in a college regarding all matters concerning safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety)
- promotes supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/students, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- works with the headteacher/Principal and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection/adult safeguarding issues that those in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on a person's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.

This includes: ensuring the school or college knows who its cohort of individuals who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support, making reasonable adjustments to help individuals who have or have had a social worker reach their potential whilst recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on the person's educational outcomes.

Information sharing and managing the child protection/adult safeguarding file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection and adult safeguarding files are kept up to date. Information is kept confidential and stored securely.

The DSL is responsible for maintaining safeguarding/child protection concerns and referrals whilst ensuring these are kept in a separate file for each individual.

Records include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

We recognise that in some settings there may be a different strategic lead for promoting the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker, particularly in larger schools or colleges. Where this is the case, the DSL works closely with the lead to provide strategic oversight for the outcomes of these children and young people.

The DSL ensures the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two of KCSiE 2025.

Where children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead ensures their child protection/adult safeguarding file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible; within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This is transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO) or the named person with oversight for SEND in colleges, are aware as required.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact a person's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection/adult safeguarding file, the designated safeguarding lead considers if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school/college in advance of the individual leaving to help them put in place the right support which would allow them to thrive in the new school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting those who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse.

Raising awareness

The designated safeguarding lead:

- Ensures there is a whole school/college approach to safeguarding and that staff maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here'
- Promotes a culture of openness and transparency where staff feel able to share their concerns
- ensures each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's or college's child protection/adult safeguarding policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- ensures the school's or college's child protection/adult protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- ensures all child protection and safeguarding policies are kept up to date and are available publicly
- ensures parents/carers know referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made in addition to knowing how the school or college will manage this
- links with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements, and
- helps promote educational outcomes by sharing information about welfare, safeguarding, and child protection/safeguarding issues that individuals who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school/college leadership staff.

Training, knowledge and skills

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role including safeguarding of those aged 18 years. This training should be updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) also undertakes Prevent awareness training.

Training provides designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of individuals, as well as specific harms that can put people at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority social services departments, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority safeguarding arrangements
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection/adult safeguarding case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and students
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on an individual's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, in addition to what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
- are alert to the specific needs of those in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children/students safe whilst they are online at school or college
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them
- provide annual safeguarding training to all staff and ensure staff have read and understood Part One of KCSIE
- provide ongoing safeguarding information throughout the year – this could be in the form of a regular safeguarding email or newsletter

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

The DSL should also have regular supervision meetings with their manager which explores and provides the support they need in addition to providing an opportunity to meet as a designated team to review cases and look at initiatives moving forward.

Providing support to staff

Training supports the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection/adult safeguarding matters.

This includes:

- ensuring staff are comfortable and confident to share any concerns they may have and act on these
- providing feedback to staff members once an outcome has been reached so that staff are reassured they have been listened to
- supporting staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including informing the provision of academic and pastoral support.

Understanding the views of children/students

All children should feel heard and understood. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) are therefore supported to develop knowledge and skills that:

- encourage a culture that listens to children/students and takes account of their wishes and feelings
- understand the difficulties that children/students may have in approaching staff about their circumstances
- promote the building of trusted relationships which facilitate communication

Holding and sharing information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of KCSiE, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead is equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing within the school, college, with other schools and colleges upon transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals

Review History

A review will be undertaken annually as a minimum.

However, subject to a significant safeguarding concern this policy and all other attached policies will be reviewed and monitored as part of a lessons learned review.

**Reviewed – December 2024 by Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Children’s Services.
Review also undertaken by Hill House School, Pottersbury Lodge School, Spring Hill School and Lufton College.**

Last Review – September 2025

Next Review – September 2026

Written by:

This policy was written by Matt Nicholls – Head of Policy Children’s Services and was reviewed by Christina Leath – Group Safeguarding Director. This policy has been reviewed by the DSL of the School and agreed by the head of the Governance Board.