

Excellence in Practice: Safeguarding Toolkit



A tool to prompt thinking about every day provision in schools.

Key Factors:

- Culture is open and transparent, not compliance-driven
- Safeguarding is understood as everyone's responsibility
- Staff operate with a mindset of "it could happen here"
- Pupils both are safe and feel safe

SAFEGUARDING CULTURE



Staff speak confidently about safeguarding responsibilities

Pupils approach trusted adults without hesitation

Concerns are openly discussed across staff teams

Staff challenge inappropriate behaviour immediately

Safeguarding language used consistently in school

Red Flags:

- Staff unsure how to report concerns
- Pupils reluctant to share worries
- Concerns minimised or delayed
- Inconsistent responses between staff

Key Factors:

- Leaders maintain strategic oversight of safeguarding
- Decision-making is transparent and open to scrutiny
- Leaders actively learn from incidents and refine practice

LEADERSHIP OF SAFEGUARDING



DSL is visible, accessible, and well-known

Leaders regularly check safeguarding practice (not just systems)

Strong and active multi-agency links

Leaders know vulnerable pupils personally

Safeguarding is discussed routinely in leadership conversations

Red Flags:

- DSL role unclear or overly isolated
- Safeguarding seen as operational, not strategic
- Weak oversight or evaluation
- Leaders unable to explain impact

<div>Key Factors:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are well trained, confident, and empowered• Safeguarding knowledge is applied, not theoretical• Staff understand their individual responsibility	<div>STAFF KNOWLEDGE & RESPONSIBILITY</div>	<div>✓</div>	<div>Red Flags:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I’d pass it on” without clarity• Staff unsure of thresholds• Over-reliance on DSL• Differences between teaching and support staff
	Staff can clearly explain reporting processes		
	Staff know signs of abuse and risk indicators		
	Staff confidently describe what happens after reporting		
	All staff (including non-teaching) aligned in practice		
<div>Key Factors:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systems lead to timely and effective action• Pupils receive appropriate help and support quickly• Safeguarding processes are accessible and well understood	<div>MANAGEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING</div>	<div>✓</div>	<div>Red Flags:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delays in action• Poor-quality or incomplete records• Weak follow-up• Systems exist but not consistently used
	Concerns logged promptly and consistently		
	Safeguarding systems used effectively (e.g. CPOMS)		
	Clear evidence of timely referrals and follow-up		
	Multi-agency work is active		
	Online safety systems functioning		
<div>Key Factors:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaders recognise risks of child-on-child harm at all times• Staff respond quickly and effectively to all concerns• Prevention is prioritised, not just response	<div>CHILD-ON-CHILD SAFEGUARDING</div>	<div>✓</div>	<div>Red Flags:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inconsistent sanctions• Overuse or misuse of isolation/suspension
	Staff challenge harmful language immediately		
	Pupils report incidents confidently		
	No tolerance of “banter” masking harm		
	Clear reporting systems understood by pupils		
<div>Key Factors:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are proactive, not reactive• Low-level concerns are treated seriously• Vigilance is consistent across all staff	<div>STAFF VIGILANCE</div>	<div>✓</div>	<div>Red Flags:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff passive or static in supervision• Issues escalate before intervention• Low-level concerns ignored
	Staff actively scan and supervise environments		
	Early intervention in emerging issues		
	Concerns followed up consistently		
	Staff demonstrate curiosity and professional challenge		

Key Factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils at greater risk are identified early and supported effectively• Leaders prioritise those most in need	KNOWLEDGE OF VULNERABLE PUPILS	✓	Red Flags: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff unaware of vulnerable pupils• Generic rather than targeted support• Gaps in tracking or follow-up
	Staff know key pupils and their contexts		
	Regular check-ins with vulnerable pupils		
	Attendance and safeguarding linked		
	Adapted support in place		
Key Factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding is embedded across the curriculum• Pupils are equipped to recognise risk and seek help	SAFEGUARDING CURRICULUM	✓	Red Flags: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coverage is superficial or tokenistic• Pupils lack understanding of risks• Curriculum not responsive to context
	Pupils learn about safety (online, relationships, risk)		
	Curriculum is age-appropriate and sequenced		
	Pupils can articulate what they have learned		
	Displays reinforce safeguarding themes		
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Key Factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding extends across the full school day• No gaps at start, transitions, or end of day	TRANSITIONS (BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL)	✓	Red Flags: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unsupervised arrival or dismissal• Chaotic transitions• Pupils left unsupported
	Staff supervise entry and exit points		
	Calm, orderly transitions		
	Vulnerable pupils monitored closely		
	Safe dismissal procedures		