

SAFEGUARDING ONLY

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State-funded school inspection toolkit

This toolkit sets out the areas that will be evaluated and graded on inspections of state-funded schools under sections 5 and 8 of the Education Act 2005. It can also be used by leaders to support self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

Find the whole document here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>

Safeguarding

This evaluation area considers whether:

- the school establishes an open and positive safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first
- leaders take an effective, whole-school approach to safeguarding

Inspectors focus on gathering evidence relating to the factors that statutory and non-statutory guidance, research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to safeguarding. This is so that pupils who need help and protection receive high-quality support.

The factors are:

- protecting pupils from maltreatment and harm, whether within or outside the home or online; schools are vigilant, maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- working with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies, in line with '[Working together to safeguard children](#)', to help and protect pupils
- being open and transparent, sharing information appropriately with others, actively seeking expert advice when required, making sure all safeguarding decisions are accessible for scrutiny, and accepting challenge so that the right decisions are made
- recognising that safeguarding issues might occur in any provision at any time
- ensuring that all those who work with pupils are trained well in supporting them to be safer, and are empowered to speak out and take action when there are concerns
- recognising that pupils who do not attend school (children missing education) might indicate safeguarding concerns, including neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse, or other harms both in and outside their home; these include concerns about child criminal or sexual exploitation, gangs, or online harms
- actively seeking and listening to the views and experiences of pupils, staff, and parents and carers (who we will refer to as 'parents' throughout, for ease of reading), and dealing promptly with any concerns
- having appropriate safeguarding and child protection arrangements, which ensure that leaders and staff:
 - identify pupils whose families may need help and support from other agencies
 - identify pupils who are at risk of harm or who have been harmed; this can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including from their peers), violence, grooming, exploitation, emotional, physical and sexual abuse and online harm
 - secure the help that pupils need and, if required, refer concerns in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
 - manage safer recruitment and allegations about adults who may pose a risk to pupils
 - are aware of and respond to some pupils' increased risk of needing help and protection, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who do not communicate verbally

- being receptive to challenge, and reflecting on practice, so that safeguarding policies, systems and processes are kept under continual review
- in maintained schools, maintaining a single central record of pre-appointment checks, in paper or electronic form
- in academies, maintaining a single central record, in paper or electronic form, that details the checks carried out in each academy within the trust

Considering safeguarding for different ages, phases and provision types

Trusts are not required to maintain an individual record for each academy, but they should record information in such a way that ensures the details relating to each academy can be provided separately.

When inspectors evaluate safeguarding for **pupils with SEND in specialist settings or mainstream settings**, they:

- seek to understand the needs of individual pupils and their particular challenges and barriers so that they are fully aware of these pupils' specific safeguarding vulnerabilities and needs
- work with leaders to draw on their insights into individual pupils and any additional support needed to keep them safe
- want to understand leaders' rationale for their approaches to teaching pupils to stay safe, for example by exploring how pupils learn about online safety, to make sure these approaches are reflective of the school's context and the needs of pupils

When inspectors evaluate safeguarding in **early years and key stage 1**, they will adapt their language when talking about safeguarding and online safety to reflect the pupils' ages and context.

Gathering evidence about safeguarding

Leadership of safeguarding, including establishing an open and positive safeguarding culture

In gathering evidence about the safeguarding culture, inspectors evaluate the extent to which leaders:

- establish a culture in which staff, pupils and parents feel comfortable raising and discussing concerns that relate to safeguarding pupils, and feel confident that appropriate action will be taken when necessary
- know and are assured that policies and procedures are understood, applied and have a positive impact on pupils
- ensure that pupils know who to go to for support
- establish purposeful and appropriate links with outside agencies to support the school's safeguarding procedures and practice, and to ensure that they meet their statutory duties, for example in working with safeguarding partners
- engage productively with multi-agency partners to get pupils the support they need

Safeguarding information for all staff to know and act on

In gathering evidence about safeguarding information for all staff to know and act on, inspectors evaluate the extent to which leaders:

- ensure that staff know, understand and uphold their safeguarding responsibilities
- ensure that the school has policies and procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns about adults, poor safeguarding practices and whistle-blowing

Management of safeguarding

In gathering evidence about the management of safeguarding, inspectors evaluate the extent to which leaders:

- ensure that the school works in partnership with other local agencies to identify, help and protect pupils at risk of maltreatment or harm within or outside the home or online
- appoint an appropriate senior member of staff to the role of designated safeguarding lead to carry out the school's statutory duties to identify, help and protect pupils, including as set out in the '[Prevent](#)' duty
- have a designated teacher for children who are looked after or previously looked after
- ensure that the school's procedures protect pupils who are at greater risk of harm, for example those attending alternative provision
- ensure that pupils are taught how to stay safe and keep others safe, including online
- ensure that the school's information systems safeguard pupils effectively from online harm
- notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements to make sure these are suitable and safe

Safer recruitment

In gathering evidence about safer recruitment, inspectors evaluate the extent to which leaders:

- receive suitable training in safer recruitment, and understand and follow safer recruitment practices
- know and understand the checks required for all staff, and all other adults in the school, including visitors, volunteers and contractors
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out and managed effectively
- obtain written confirmation that the required safeguarding checks have been carried out on all staff working at any alternative provision that the school uses
- ensure that the single central record indicates that all the required pre-appointment and vetting checks for staff have been made

Child-on-child violence

In gathering evidence about child-on-child violence, inspectors evaluate the extent to which leaders:

- fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence, which includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse (including physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm, with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils' own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse)
- ensure that staff are aware of the signs that pupils may be at risk of becoming involved in violence and understand that early, evidence-based intervention can be key to preventing them from going on to commit violence
- take timely action to support and protect the victim, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other pupils who are involved or otherwise affected
- have appropriate risk assessments that are reviewed regularly
- make sure that staff know and understand the scale and range of sexual violence and sexual harassment, and the circumstances under which these occur, including beyond the school and/or online
- ensure that staff respond quickly and effectively to all signs of child-on-child violence and all reports and concerns about it
- have clear, effective systems for reporting incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment, for sharing information and for consulting with multi-agency safeguarding partners

Grading safeguarding

Not met	Met
<p>The safeguarding standards have been developed from the requirements of ‘Keeping children safe in education’ and ‘Working together to safeguard children’. Safeguarding is likely to be ‘not met’ when any of the following apply:</p> <p>Serious and/or widespread failures in safeguarding lead to pupils, or particular groups of pupils, being unsafe.</p> <p>Leaders and those responsible for governance (we will refer to this group as ‘leaders’ throughout this section for ease of reading) have not taken sufficient action to resolve weaknesses following a failure of safeguarding that meant pupils may not have been kept safe.</p> <p>Leaders are not open to challenge and/or do not learn from issues or incidents.</p> <p>If pupils are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day), leaders are either not clear where the pupils are or are not able to demonstrate that they have taken steps to safeguard them. This includes pupils absent from education and those attending inappropriate, unregistered or unmonitored alternative provision.</p> <p>Pupils have little confidence that the school will tackle concerns about safety, including the risk of abuse. This is because leaders have not taken their views seriously and/or have not dealt with relevant concerns, so they feel unsafe.</p> <p>Leaders do not fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse</p>	<p>The safeguarding standards have been developed from the requirements of ‘Keeping children safe in education’ and ‘Working together to safeguard children’. Safeguarding is ‘met’ when all the following apply:</p> <p>Leaders have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Multi-agency working is effective. There is strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Leaders actively try to learn from safeguarding cases and incidents and take any action needed.</p> <p>Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. Their voices are heard, including the voices of pupils who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day). Teaching pupils about how they can stay safe and when they may need help is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils and parents know who to go to for support.</p> <p>All staff are vigilant and carry out their responsibilities effectively to keep pupils safe. Staff understand the signs of possible safeguarding concerns. They respond by following the school’s systems confidently and consistently.</p> <p>Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse (including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils’ own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).</p>

Not met	Met
<p>(including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils' own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Leaders do not handle allegations of abuse swiftly and appropriately. This is likely to lead to pupils being put at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Leaders do not fulfil their responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the 'Prevent' duty.</p> <p>Leaders do not handle safeguarding allegations against adults in line with requirements. They do not fulfil their duty to refer allegations or concerns to the appropriate authority.</p>	<p>Leaders know and fulfil the statutory requirements for safeguarding. These include managing safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the 'Prevent' duty.</p> <p>The school has clear and accessible policies and procedures that keep pupils safe. Leaders are receptive to challenge and are reflective about their own practices. This means that the impact of safeguarding policies, systems and processes is kept under continual review.</p> <p>Leaders ensure that staff's work is monitored and that they get appropriate supervision and support. The conduct and behaviour of staff are appropriate. Leaders follow local authority procedures in managing safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults.</p> <p>Where appropriate, leaders have resolved any minor safeguarding issues identified during the inspection or are taking steps to resolve them.</p>

Grading Safeguarding

NOT MET	MET
<p>The safeguarding standards have been developed from the requirements of <i>Keeping children safe in education</i> and <i>Working together to safeguard children</i>. Safeguarding is likely to be 'not met' when any of the following apply:</p> <p>Serious and/or widespread failures in safeguarding lead to pupils, or particular groups of pupils, being unsafe.</p> <p>Leaders and those responsible for governance (we will refer to this group as 'leaders' throughout this section for ease of reading) have not taken sufficient action to resolve weaknesses following a failure of safeguarding that meant pupils may not have been kept safe.</p> <p>Leaders are not open to challenge and/or do not learn from issues or incidents.</p> <p>If pupils are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day), leaders are either not clear where the pupils are or are not able to demonstrate that they have taken steps to safeguard them. This includes pupils absent from education and those attending inappropriate, unregistered or unmonitored alternative provision.</p> <p>Pupils have little confidence that the school will tackle concerns about safety, including the risk of abuse. This is because leaders have not taken their views seriously and/or have not dealt with relevant concerns, so they feel unsafe.</p> <p>Leaders do not fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils' own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Leaders do not handle allegations of abuse swiftly and appropriately. This is likely to lead to pupils being put at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Leaders do not fulfil their responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the 'Prevent' duty.</p> <p>Leaders do not handle safeguarding allegations against adults in line with requirements. They do not fulfil their duty to refer allegations or concerns to the appropriate authority.</p>	<p>The safeguarding standards have been developed from the requirements of <i>Keeping children safe in education</i> and <i>Working together to safeguard children</i>. Safeguarding is 'met' when all the following apply:</p> <p>Leaders have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Multi-agency working is effective. There is strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Leaders actively try to learn from safeguarding cases and incidents and take any action needed.</p> <p>Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. Their voices are heard, including the voices of pupils who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day). Teaching pupils about how they can stay safe and when they may need help is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils and parents know who to go to for support.</p> <p>All staff are vigilant and carry out their responsibilities effectively to keep pupils safe. Staff understand the signs of possible safeguarding concerns. They respond by following the school's systems confidently and consistently.</p> <p>Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils' own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).</p> <p>Leaders know and fulfil the statutory requirements for safeguarding. These include managing safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the 'Prevent' duty.</p> <p>The school has clear and accessible policies and procedures that keep pupils safe. Leaders are receptive to challenge and are reflective about their own practices. This means that the impact of safeguarding policies, systems and processes is kept under continual review.</p> <p>Leaders ensure that staff's work is monitored and that they get appropriate supervision and support. The conduct and behaviour of staff are appropriate. Leaders follow local authority procedures in managing safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults.</p> <p>Where appropriate, leaders have resolved any minor safeguarding issues identified during the inspection or are taking steps to resolve them.</p>