



Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2022: How it will affect you and how we can help



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Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2022: How it will affect you and how we can help

Looking after the welfare of young people is a huge task for any school, and it's one that has become increasingly difficult in recent months. Since the pandemic, the number of safeguarding concerns being raised in schools has risen dramatically and, with many of these incidents happening online or between children, schools are required to be increasingly vigilant. With local authority support stretched, the burden on schools can't be underestimated.

According to [Tes research](#), 78 per cent of school staff believe that there has been an increase in safeguarding concerns since the pandemic. 58 per cent claim that the majority of incidents happen online or on social media, outside of school hours. These include an increasing number of child-on-child abuse cases and incidents of sexual harassment.

With so many of these issues occurring beyond the school corridors, schools must rely upon preventative education and creating a culture that fosters trusting relationships between students and staff to help keep young people safe. According to [research by the NSPCC](#), which questioned 60 victims of childhood abuse, 80 per cent attempted to disclose what happened and 90 per cent of those had a negative experience.

The Department for Education's (DfE) newly updated [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2022](#) guidance puts increased focus on the importance of handling disclosures, while also highlighting the need to properly manage low-level concerns. It also underlines the need to recognise abuse in various forms, and demonstrates the need for the entire school staff, including governors, to be vigilant in spotting it.

This year's guidance also includes additions regarding the transfer of pupil data, online checks of prospective staff and underlines the importance of having an appropriate adult present during police investigations in light of the ['Child Q' review](#). As ever, there are important changes that designated safeguarding leads, and the whole school community, need to digest.

In this guide we highlight the key changes to KCSIE and explain how these changes will impact schools. We also offer some ways in which we can help.



believe that there has been an increase in safeguarding concerns since the pandemic



claim that the majority of incidents happen online or on social media, outside of school hours



of child abuse had a negative experience when they attempted to disclose abuse

Summary of the main changes

There are no big changes to the KCSIE 2022 guidance, but schools will need to understand and implement these points from 1 September:

- School and college staff will need to realise the difficulties children and young people may have in telling somebody they've been abused and recognise how important it is for staff to understand abuse and how to respond to concerns about it. Staff will also need to be able to determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
- Extra-familial harms are referenced throughout the guidance. This is harm that occurs to children outside of their family and often occurs during adolescence. The guidance recognises the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. Intra-familial harm is also highlighted and the need for support for any siblings.
- The previously standalone departmental advice *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* is incorporated into the guidance.
- References to 'peer-on-peer abuse' have been changed to 'child-on-child abuse' to make it clear who the guidance is referencing.
- The language regarding allegations and low-level concerns is more consistent throughout the guidance.
- Online safety messaging has been strengthened throughout the guidance and has been embedded into Part two of the guidance and annex B/C. The guidance promotes a whole school approach – from having appropriate training that should include governors, to communicating with parents and carers how children can stay safe online and what filtering and monitoring systems the school uses. These systems should be reviewed for their effectiveness.
- For safer recruitment, schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates, as part of the shortlisting process.
- The importance of RSHE in preventative education.
- The importance of the DSL's understanding and implementing of an appropriate adult when required (PACE Code C 2019).

What schools should do:

- ✓ Roll out more safeguarding training for all governors
- ✓ Check online safety training and filtering and monitoring systems
- ✓ Check RSHE provision and opportunities to teach safeguarding
- ✓ Check their safer recruitment policy and procedures
- ✓ Make sure the DSL is given time to do their role and has the support to do so

The main changes in detail

Victims and alleged perpetrator(s)

New text has been added around handling disclosures with sensitivity and understanding as the DfE have recognised how difficult it is for children and young people to come forward.

They have explained that in the guidance the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator(s)' or 'perpetrators(s)', have been used because they are 'widely recognised and understood terms', but that schools and colleges need to think very carefully about the 'appropriate terminology' to use on a case-by-case basis – especially in front of children and young people. This is because 'not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way' and also 'because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.'

Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

As with all previous instances of KCSIE, Part one is the section that governing bodies and proprietors should ensure is read and understood by all staff.

What has changed?

The most significant change to this part of the guidance is a greater emphasis on disclosures. In particular, a new paragraph 19 has been added that highlights the problems young people face when speaking about abuse and calls on schools and colleges to do all they can to support children in coming forward.

Part one also has more detail added on what constitutes abuse, clarifying that this does not necessarily mean physical harm and could include 'witnessing ill treatment of others'. It also includes a new paragraph (43) specifically on domestic abuse.

While seemingly a small change, 'child-on-child' abuse replaces 'peer-on-peer' abuse, to ensure there is no confusion as to who this guidance is referencing.

What school and college staff should and do know

A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

In paragraph 2 the key points are now in bold:

*'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interest** of the child.'*

What school and college staff need to know

The new paragraph 19:

- Explains the reasons why children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused
- Makes clear the importance of staff considering how to 'build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication'
- Highlights the need for professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if staff have concerns about a child

'All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened this could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.'

How we can help

Read our article: **Sex harassment: How Ofsted inspections will change**

The introduction of this new paragraph 19 links to the recent reports from Ofsted on sexual harassment.

Schools will be judged 'ineffective' where they do not have adequate processes to deal with sexual harassment.

[Read article](#)

Watch our webinar: **Online sexual harassment: How to stay safe online**

Will Gardner CEO, Childnet International, and David Wright, director UK Safer Internet Centre at SWGfL, discuss the latest statistics around online abuse, explain the changes to Ofsted inspections, and provide tips and resources to help everyone stay safe online.

[Watch webinar](#)

Paragraph 23 has been reworded to emphasize extra-familial harms, sexual abuse and domestic abuse:

'All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.'

Indicators of abuse and neglect

Paragraph 26 has been reworded to recognise that harm can be caused by witnessing ill treatment of others:

'Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.'

Domestic abuse

The new paragraph 43 covers domestic abuse and again recognises that children may be affected by seeing or hearing abuse:

'Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.'

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

Paragraph 57 is a standalone paragraph with new bold text to emphasise that data protection regulations do not prevent the sharing of information to keep children safe:

*'DPA and UK GDPR **do not** prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.'*

Early help assessment

In paragraph 59, the text is now in bold to emphasise its importance:

'Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.'

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

A new paragraph 73 has been added around sharing low-level concerns:

'If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the school or college low-level concerns policy.'

What do the changes to Part one mean for schools?

With so many safeguarding incidents now occurring online and between children, the incidents themselves can be extremely difficult to spot. Where staff can have a real impact is in supporting young people to disclose when they have suffered some form of abuse. Forming trusted relationships and being able to recognise and manage a disclosure is vitally important.

Writing in Tes Magazine, Phil Naylor, deputy head of school at South Shore Academy, Blackpool, explains that [*spotting and acting upon a disclosure is key to schools tackling abuse*](#). "Opening up about something traumatic takes an incredible amount of strength and a lot of trust," explains Naylor.

"Sometimes a student may come to you to talk without really saying much. They may seem distant or hesitant when talking. Often they might start by telling us something small, something easier to talk about. It is important to remind the student that they are in a safe space and that there is support available for them if they need to talk about anything else. This reassurance can often be the thing that makes them feel safe enough to open up."

How we can help

Watch our webinar: Practical do's and don'ts of handling sexual abuse disclosures

Aged 13, Matthew McVarish's brave attempts to tell school staff that he was being sexually abused by a school teacher failed. In this webinar, Matthew explores the importance and application of the new universal guidelines for handling disclosures from children and young people, which he co-authored for the BRAVE Movement.

[Watch our webinar](#)

Part two: The management of safeguarding

'This part of the guidance sets out the responsibility of governing bodies, proprietors and management committees.'

What has changed?

Part two includes additional information that underlines why safeguarding is something that needs the focus of the entire school community.

Firstly, the addition of paragraph 81 stipulates that school governors and trustees should receive 'appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training'.

An additional paragraph (130) highlights the importance of preventative education as it prepares students for life in 'modern Britain' in which there should be a zero tolerance culture of 'sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment'.

In general, there is more detail about governor and trustee training and clarification to some paragraphs throughout the section. There is also a new reference to the importance of communicating with parents when it comes to students' online access outside of school and definitive timeframes given to the transfer of pupil data.

Legislation and the law

The new paragraph 81 stipulates that governors and trustees should receive appropriate training:

'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.'

The new paragraph 82 states that governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their legal obligations:

'Governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.'

The designated safeguarding lead

Paragraph 105 explains that all details of the role itself have been moved into Annex C.

Information sharing

New text has been added to paragraph 121 to include the time frame of transfer of files when children leave a school or college:

*'Where children leave the school or college, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and **within 5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the **first 5 days** of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required.'*

Opportunities to teach safeguarding

In the new paragraph 130, content has moved across from the previous standalone guidance **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges** to reflect the crucial role of preventative and age-appropriate education, and a whole-school or college approach:

'Schools and colleges play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. The school/college will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school/college life. These will be underpinned by the school/college's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such a programme should be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities). This program will tackle at an age-appropriate stages issues such as:

- *healthy and respectful relationships*
- *boundaries and consent*
- *stereotyping, prejudice and equality*
- *body confidence and self-esteem*
- *how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour*
- *the concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and*
- *what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.'*

Online safety

Paragraph 136 now includes reference to governing bodies and proprietors to show the importance of governance training for governors.

Filters and monitoring

Paragraph 141 now includes [South West Grid for Learning's tool](#) to:

'check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content).'

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

Paragraphs 151-152 have been expanded to include harm thresholds.

How we can help

Watch our webinar: Managing allegations of abuse against staff

Safeguarding and child protection expert Ann Marie Christian discusses why 'whistleblowing' must be embedded in your school policies and what you should do to ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff.

[Watch our webinar](#)

Take our course: Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

Written in partnership with safeguarding expert, Ann Marie Christian, this course will help you to learn about:

- The importance of being alert
- What to do if you have a concern, doubt or worry about a colleague's behaviour, motivations or intentions
- What happens when an allegation is made and the potential outcomes

This course is available to buy in our [online shop](#) or as part of our [safeguarding training package, Tes Safeguarding](#).

[Discover Tes Safeguarding](#)

Boarding schools, residential special schools, residential colleges and children's homes

The new [National minimum standards for boarding schools](#) have been included in paragraph 160.

Children requiring mental health support

Some new resources are listed in paragraph 184.

Virtual school heads

A new paragraph 194 is included on the role of virtual school heads:

'In addition to their statutory duties, the role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.'

Children with special educational needs and disabilities or physical health issues

Paragraph 198 now includes:

'Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.'

Two new paragraphs have been added focusing on the need for children with SEND to receive extra support and attention:

Paragraph 199 states:

'Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and the SENCO or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college.'

Paragraph 200 states:

'Schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.'

Links to specialist organisations that can provide further information have been added to paragraph 201.

How we can help

Read our expert guide: SEND Review: A summary of the new proposals

The DfE's SEND Green Paper contains a number of recommendations for schools. Get a breakdown of the changes that have been suggested and how we can support your school in our free, expert-written guide.

[Read the guide](#)



Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

Three new paragraphs (202-204) have been included with some of the content moved from the *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* advice.

Paragraph 204 states that:

'LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.'

How we can help

Take our course: Raising Awareness of LGBT

This course will help you to learn how organisations and schools can provide an inclusive environment for children and staff, providing information and understanding on:

- LGBT within an education setting
- The stresses and importance of addressing LGBT issues including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying

This course is available to buy in our [online shop](#) or as part of our [safeguarding training package, Tes Safeguarding](#).

[Discover Tes Safeguarding](#)

What do the changes to Part two mean for schools?

While only Part one of any KCSIE guidance needs to be read by every member of staff, the additions to the document further underline the fact that safeguarding requires a whole-school approach. Ensuring governors, teachers and parents receive the necessary information or training will provide an important step towards creating a safer environment for young people.

According to Tes research, [43 per cent of school staff do not feel they have received sufficient guidance on how to deal with allegations of sexual harassment and violence](#). This is of particular concern, not least because, from September, schools judged to have inadequate processes with which to deal with sexual harassment will be marked as “ineffective” on safeguarding.

Luke Ramsden, senior deputy headmaster at St Benedict’s School in Ealing writing in Tes Magazine, sees [preventative education playing a key part](#) in a growing number of students willing to speak out. “We strengthened the safeguarding training offered in our personal, social, health and economic education programme, and talk through fictionalised case studies with our students of what actually does happen when a concern is made – in particular, when other agencies become involved.”

Ramsden claims that “a greater willingness to report concerns is helping to deter students from unacceptable behaviour.”

With regards to the transfer of pupil data, schools will need to be organised to ensure relevant data is transferred securely and in a timely fashion, either internally or externally. Speaking to Tes Magazine, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and welfare officer Thomas Michael highlights the potential problems that could come with these newly stipulated deadlines.

[“The five-day deadline will be tricky for schools](#) where different systems are in place or deal with a large number of students,” he says. “The big challenge will be Year 11s, whose destinations are often not confirmed initially, and are subject to change.”

How we can help

Take our course: A Guide to UK Data Protection: Education

Endorsed by specialists in data protection, 9ine, this course will give you a firm understanding of the principles of data protection, as well as acquaint you with the essential requirements in your school.

This course is available to buy in our [online shop](#) or as part of our [safeguarding training package, Tes Safeguarding](#).

[Discover Tes Safeguarding](#)

Part three: Safer recruitment

What has changed?

The standout new inclusion to Part three relates to the importance of schools conducting background checks on candidates during the application process. When this iteration of KCSIE was put out for consultation this raised a number of questions, with Dai Durbridge, a partner at law firm Browne Jacobson, claiming that *this was 'the one [addition] that most of us in education are discussing'* when writing in Tes Magazine.

The new paragraph (220) does not go into much detail about the search itself but explains that the information should be 'publicly available online' and something that the school may then 'want to explore with the applicant at interview'.

On the back of the tragic murder of Sarah Everard and the increasing prevalence of online issues in Teaching Regulation Agency prohibition cases, the DfE wanted to test whether, as part of their due diligence checks on shortlisted candidates, schools and colleges agreed that KCSIE should recommend they consider conducting online due diligence checks on publicly available information on those candidates shortlisted for a post.

Application forms

Paragraph 214 has been updated to be clear a curriculum vitae (CV) should only be accepted alongside a full application form. CVs on their own will not contain all the information required to support safer recruitment.

Shortlisting

The standout newly included paragraph 220 states that schools should consider carrying out online searches on shortlisted candidates:

'In addition, as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview.'

Employment history and references

Paragraph 223 now includes additional advice around unsubstantiated concerns or allegations:

'Any repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in any reference.'

Ongoing vigilance

Additional text has been added to paragraph 343 to emphasise the importance of all staff understanding 'the process and procedures to follow if they have a safeguarding concern about another staff member.'

How we can help

Take our course: Safer Recruitment in Education

This course will help you to understand what you need to do to safeguard children and young people from unsuitable people who might apply to join your education setting.

This course is available to buy in our [online shop](#) or as part of our [safeguarding training package, Tes Safeguarding](#).

[Discover Tes Safeguarding](#)

What do the changes to Part three mean for schools?

There is little guidance as to what exactly schools should be looking for when they conduct online searches, so being fair and transparent in this process is key. Helen Baxter, an administrative officer at a school in the Midlands writing in Tes Magazine, says that as well as performing the checks, [schools will need to update their job advertisements](#) and create a protocol for performing the checks.

"Schools will need to add to their application form that they will be checking their online presence," she says. "They should also create a matrix, where the parameters of what they're searching for are recorded, to ensure that there is consistency in the range of what is searched for with each candidate."

With no precise list of criteria, schools will have to use their own judgement on what they include in their search. Legal expert, Dai Durbridge wrote in Tes Magazine that [some things will raise obvious red flags](#).

"Some of the more obvious things recruiters should look for would include evidence of offensive or inappropriate behaviour, jokes or language, discriminatory comments, inappropriate photos, drug or alcohol misuse and anything that suggests they may not be suitable to work with children," Durbridge explains.

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

What has changed?

Part four has seen only minimal changes but it's worth noting the additional information around low-level concerns, which has been given more clarity throughout the guidance.

While the majority of this advice was added last year, the new detail states that schools should have policies in place for any incident that does not meet their local authority's harm threshold, therefore increasing the chance of early intervention in these types of situations.

There is additional information about malicious misinformation, how any low-level concerns should be shared and clarification on the decision making and responsibility for these types of concern.

The section has also been retitled to clarify that it relates to safeguarding concerns and allegations.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

Paragraph 406 has been reworded to refer just to allegations:

'If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school or college, should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.'

Learning lessons

Paragraph 419 and 420 have been updated to make it clear that learning lessons applies to all cases not just those which are concluded and found to be substantiated.

Section Two: Concerns and or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

This section has been restructured and includes new paragraphs on low-level concerns.

New paragraph 422 states that schools should have appropriate policies and processes in place to deal with low-level concerns:

'Governing bodies and proprietors should have policies and processes to deal with any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold, referred to in this guidance as 'low-level' concerns. It is important that schools and colleges have appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.'

What is a low-level concern?

New paragraph 427 describes how low-level concerns may arise:

'Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.'

Sharing low-level concerns

Additional information has been added to paragraphs 432 to 435 to provide clarity around low-level concerns.

Of particular note is paragraph 432 which states that the headteacher or principal is the ultimate decision maker when it comes to low-level concerns:

*'Schools and colleges should ensure that their low-level concerns policy contains a procedure for sharing confidentially such concerns which is clear, easy to understand and implement. Whether all low-level concerns are shared initially with the DSL (or a nominated person (such as a values guardian/safeguarding champion)), or with the headteacher/principal is a matter for the school or college to decide. If the former, then the DSL should inform the headteacher/principal of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern. **The headteacher/principal should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in some schools/colleges, the headteacher/principal may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.'***

What do the changes to Part four mean for schools?

As already discussed, the bulk of changes around handling low-level concerns came last year. However, the number of clarifications on this topic in this year's guidance could indicate that this is something schools are struggling with. For that reason, it's worth reviewing your policy and clarifying exactly how low-level concerns should be shared.

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

What has changed?

Previously a piece of standalone guidance, the *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school and colleges* document has been withdrawn and the advice instead incorporated throughout KCSIE, especially in Part two and Part five. This avoids duplication as much of the content in the standalone advice was already in Part five of KCSIE.

Given the prevalence of concerns around sexual violence and harassment, as highlighted by last year's Ofsted investigation, all school staff are advised to read this new section.

The changes this year aren't large, but there is a useful link to [London Grid for Learning's Undressed resource](#), which provides advice on teaching students about the dangers of getting naked online.

There are also additions highlighting the importance of children knowing the law on child-on-child abuse, the understanding of intra-familial harm and schools' relationship with statutory safeguarding partners.

The guidance makes it clear that a zero tolerance approach should be taken.

Support for schools and colleges

The new [LGfL Undressed](#) resource has been added to Paragraph 465:

'LGfL 'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.'

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

What to consider

Paragraph 482 includes an extra point which highlights the 'Importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents'.

Options to manage the report

2. Early help

An extra paragraph (492) explains how schools should work with statutory safeguarding partners:

'Schools and colleges, as relevant agencies, should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered, as part of the local arrangements. Safeguarding partners should publish a local threshold document which includes the process for the local early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided, and DSLs (and their deputies) will need to familiarise themselves with this document.'

What do the changes to Part five mean for schools?

Sexual violence and harassment continues to be a huge issue for schools and young people, and is now receiving increased attention from inspectors. The major changes to this section came last year, in light of the *Everyone's Invited* campaign and subsequent Ofsted investigation, which advised schools to assume sexual harassment is happening on campus, even if it hasn't been reported.

However, according to Tes research, [25 per cent of school staff surveyed did not feel confident in handling reports of sexual harassment, abuse or violence](#). This illustrates that there is still some way to go in making sure these concerns are dealt with effectively.

"In order to establish a culture where all kinds of sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are recognised and addressed, [staff training needs to be a priority](#)"; that's according to Sarah Eggleton, an assistant headteacher at a secondary school in Manchester, writing in Tes Magazine.

For Eggleton, training will include: "What constitutes sexual harassment, recognising 'low-level' instances and responding in a safe and respectful way, being aware of your own bias, removing 'gender' and using appropriate vocabulary."

How we can help

Take our course:

Sexual Violence and Harassment between Children and Young People

This course will help you understand what sexual violence and sexual harassment are and the relevant law and statutory guidance. You'll learn what action to take, how to support children involved in or experiencing sexual violence and harassment and how to implement preventative strategies.

This course is available to buy in our [online shop](#) or as part of our [safeguarding training package, Tes Safeguarding](#).

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Annexes

What has changed?

There have been no significant changes to Annexe A. Annexe B contains some new links to resources and guidance on country lines and forced marriage, plus further text and links on mental health, to provide schools with more support.

Perhaps most significantly, Annexe C has additional information about working together but making sure the rights of the child are followed, in light of the 'Child Q' review.

Annex B: Further information

County lines

There is a link to a new [County lines and criminal exploitation toolkit](#) published by the Home Office and The Children's Society to provide 'further information on the signs of a child's involvement in country lines.'

Mental health

New text is included about the impact of adverse childhood experiences on a child's mental health with links to guidance and resources:

'Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.'

More information can be found in the [Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance](#), colleges may also wish to follow this guidance as best practice. Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See [Every Mind Matters](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.'

Forced marriage

This paragraph contains a new link to 'multiagency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage' [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage](#).

Annex C: Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Working with others

An additional point has been added about working together but making sure the rights of the child are followed. The DLS is expected to:

'liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance – [PACE Code C 2019](#).'

From the 1 September 2022 schools will need to adhere to the latest statutory guidance published in the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Note: Please be aware that paragraph numbers are subject to change before the final launch in September.

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