



from Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team

We expected 2026 would be a year packed full of changes in the context of safeguarding and schools, and it certainly feels like this is underway already! With updates to legislation and policy looming, we'd encourage you to use your knowledge and expertise to help shape these by contributing to some important consultations that have been launched recently.

>> [Proposed draft of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 published](#)

The proposed draft of KCSIE for the next academic year has been published and contains significant changes, including more detail about forms of harm and new sections.

[The Safeguarding Network are delivering a series of free workshops to explore the proposed changes.](#)

The government is holding a consultation so [you can share your views to help shape the guidance](#) (closes 22 April).

Remember – this is a draft document for the purpose of consultation, schools don't need to make any changes at this stage. The final updated version is expected to be published at the beginning of the new academic year.

>> Online safety

The NSPCC recently published findings about [the impact of harmful online content on children](#), concluding it's unrealistic to expect children to avoid going online, or to ignore harmful content, so it is essential for adults to maintain an open dialogue, including exploring the advantages and potential dangers of internet use, and provide appropriate education on how to stay safe online.

[OfCOM have also launched a call for evidence](#) on this topic, to inform their statutory report about content that's harmful to children, in line with the implementation of the Online Safety Act. (Closes 10 March.)

If you're interested in more support on this topic – Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Lead, Emma Geiringer, is available to deliver training to school staff about opening up conversations with young people and families about internet / device use and online safety. [Find out more on the Safeguarding in Schools training information page.](#)

>> [Government publishes SEND reforms: 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving'](#)

The much anticipated SEND white paper has been published and sets out proposals to reform the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system in England to ensure every child can achieve and thrive. This will have a significant impact for schools.

[A 12-week consultation has been launched, which schools are invited to contribute to.](#)

Only after consultation would any proposed changes move into draft legislation, which would then need to go through Parliament. For now, existing SEND law remains unchanged.

>> [Help shape Southwark's Best Start in Life Local Plan](#)

Southwark's Best Start in Life Local Plan is currently in development, to work towards the Good Level of Development (GLD) target set by the Government for Early Years.

To gather evidence about what's in place, what's working well and any gaps or pressures in the system, Early Years Practitioners and partners are invited to complete a short workforce consultation. If you work with children under 5 or their families, please take a few minutes to share your views about:

- What's working well for families
- Where challenges are showing up
- What would make the biggest impact to early years outcomes

There is also [a survey that can be shared with families who may be interested in contributing from a community perspective.](#)
(Survey's close 15 March)

Southwark news

>> **Southwark's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Service now provided by Bede House**

The new **Women's Safety Alliance** service will expand the current domestic abuse (DA) support offer to wider non-DA VAWG crime including: rape, sexual assault, sex industry, trafficking for sexual exploitation, up-skirting, voyeurism, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honor-based abuse, digital stalking, exposure, and spiking.

The service is available to all those living in Southwark, including men and boys, who have experienced, or are at risk of, gender-based abuse. Support available includes:

- Advice and guidance
- Face to face advocacy support, safety planning, and emotional support
- Adult counselling and art therapy (12 weeks)
- Child art therapy for ages 5–17 years (12 weeks)
- Digital and remote support (phone, video call, text, email) for clients who cannot attend in person and where it is safe to do so

[The referral form is available online](#) and should be submitted to wsa@bedehouse.org. To discuss a referral, please contact the service on 020 7232 0860.

Bede House also deliver Healthy Relationship workshops and 1:1 support in schools for free. [More information is available in their flyer \(via the SELA site\)](#), and you can contact healthyrelationships@bedehouse.org to book.

>> **FREE workshops available to Secondary schools about homelessness**

[The homelessness charity Depaul UK is available to deliver FREE interactive workshops to secondary schools](#) to support students to understand homelessness, recognise the risks, make safer choices and know where to turn for help, plus targeted interventions for those identified as needing more support. They also offer staff CPD-accredited training around the tools and knowledge needed to identify young people at risk and respond appropriately.

[More information is available in their leaflet](#) but **please ignore the pricing as this service is fully funded for Southwark schools.**

Southwark training opportunities

>>[Sign up to the next Safeguarding in Schools FREE webinar](#)

This will be delivered by the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Team on the topic of **Responding to Direct Disclosures** on Thursday 19 March 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Handling disclosures can be daunting – this is a great opportunity to explore responses, roles and responsibilities when speaking to children about abuse.

[Recordings of all previous sessions in the series are also available to watch online.](#)

Organisations referenced in this bulletin are not necessarily commissioned or endorsed by Southwark council. **Please apply your own due diligence.**

Find out more about support from [Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team](#)

For safeguarding resources and training information visit [Safeguarding in Education](#)

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