

Safeguarding Bulletin - 2 September 2026

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Safeguarding bulletin



Welcome back

from Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team



We hope you had a restful break and are feeling refreshed ready for the new term!

There's no shying away from the safeguarding challenges we face, as highlighted in the [Centre for Young Lives 'State of the Nation' report](#) which reveals the crisis conditions many children continue to endure. We also know this will likely be a year of great change, with significant updates already having been made to [Keeping children safe in education](#) and major shifts expected to safeguarding arrangements through the [Families First Partnership programme](#) and the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#). However, we also have confidence in the strength, determination and skills of education settings across Southwark who are steadfast in their commitment to supporting and protecting children, young people and families. Remember – you are not alone in this task: we hope you find the key resources included in this 'back to school' edition of our bulletin useful, and please do call on the support of the Safeguarding in Schools Team whenever needed in the year ahead.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

The final version of [Keeping children safe in education 2026](#) came into force yesterday (1 September). Compared to the July 2026 'for information' version, the final version has six changes: four references of racism and faith-based prejudice as an explicit safeguarding category, appearing in Part One (paragraph 17), a new paragraph stating that racism and faith-targeted abuse can significantly affect a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety (paragraph 32), in the definition of child-on-child abuse (paragraph 37) and, as a whole-school culture, a new expectation that schools promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture as part of their safeguarding responsibilities (paragraph 119). The remaining two changes bring the definition of sexual abuse in line with Working Together guidance (paragraph 28) and tightens the safer recruitment of volunteers working in EYFS settings where schools are also subject to the EYFS framework (paragraph 386).

Schools and education settings are advised to include these changes in their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies. Southwark's 2026/7 model safeguarding policy is available below and will be updated further at a later date to incorporate these additional changes as well as the pending national/local changes through the national [Families First Partnership Programme](#) reforms (see more information below).

More generally, the new KCSIE 2026 contains more significant changes than previous years, bringing new considerations around things like DBS checks, toilet facilities and online monitoring and filtering systems. There are some helpful guides that explain these changes in detail, including from the [NSPCC](#) and [Safeguarding Network](#), and [the government have shared more information about the changes to regulated activity and DBS requirements](#).

Another change is that **all** staff now have to read Part 1 in full and, crucially, understand their safeguarding responsibilities from this. To assist with supporting your staff around this, it may be useful to have [translated versions](#) available or share audio versions which are available online across various podcast platforms.

National Policies & Statutory Guidance

In addition to the significant changes made in KCSIE, several other new policies, guidance documents and legislations have also been recently introduced or are in the pipeline:

>> [Working together to safeguard children](#)

Statutory guidance for effective multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children – updated March 2026.

>> [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)

Guidance on the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions in schools, including duties around recording and reporting - updated April 2026.

>> Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance outlining expectations on schools, local authorities and parents to achieve good attendance – updated July 2026.

>> Allergy safety in schools

NEW statutory guidance around safeguarding children with allergies, with statutory expectations for some settings including for staff training.

>> Families First Partnership programme and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

During this academic year, changes are expected to be implemented to some social care processes through the national [Families First Partnership Programme](#) reforms, underpinned by new [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#) which also introduced some new duties for schools and education settings.

We will continue to share information about how the reforms will be enacted at a local level as these develop.

>> SEND reform: Every child achieving and thriving

In the white paper published earlier this year (and subsequent consultation), the government launched their ambition to overhaul the SEND system in England, which means changes are likely over the coming years.

Southwark Policies

>> Updated model safeguarding policy

The above changes mean thorough updates are likely needed to school's policies & procedures. Our [updated model safeguarding policy for use by all Southwark schools and education settings in the 2026/7 academic year](#) has already been shared and is available online. When using this model policy, please remember to add your own school's/setting's details and make any edits that may be required so that the policy is applicable to your setting. Please also note that the policy reflects local authority arrangements as of August 2026 but changes may be needed as reforms are implemented over the coming months, so please keep your policies and procedures under review.

>> Briefing note on changes to regulated activity and DBS requirements

An information document has been shared by Southwark Schools HR team about changes to regulated activity, supervision exemptions and DBS requirements, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

>> Guidance for escalations within Southwark Social Care

Effective partnership working is rooted in clear communication and professional curiosity which at times requires challenge. When escalation is required, you are encouraged to speak with the Team Manager in the first instance, or, if needed, the

Service Manager. They will be best placed to support reflection around decisions made and contribute to establishing next steps.

Southwark guidance, support & training

>> **Southwark Key Contacts**

Download this handy list of key Southwark contacts, and [find out more about services on our website](#).

>> **Best practice guidance for referring to MASH**

A reminder that our best practice guidance on referring to Southwark MASH for partner agencies and professionals is available to download as a PDF.

>> **Sign up for Safeguarding in Schools webinar: Tackling Misogyny in Schools 22 October**

Staff from all schools and education settings across Southwark are invited to join this webinar on Thursday 22 October 2026, 12.30pm to 1.30pm to learn practical tools, activities and approaches to explore male identities, social media, the manosphere and healthy relationships with young people.

The session will be recorded and available to watch online, along with all previous recordings.

>> **Southwark Safeguarding Partnership Annual Conference – Wednesday 23 September**

Southwark Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Adults Board Conference 2026 is taking place on Wednesday 23 September from 10.00am to 3.30pm at London South Bank University with the theme of 'Think Family'. The event will include keynote speakers, hearing from those with lived experience, workshops, stalls, information stands and a great opportunity to network and share good practice across partner agencies. [Book your place now!](#)

>> **Southwark Virtual School Training Programme Autumn Term 2026**

Southwark Virtual School shares their Autumn term training programme with sessions for Designated Teachers, governors and safeguarding leads. Links to the webinar series are included in the programme and the Designated Teacher Training is running in-person at Canada Water Library on 18 October 2026. Please contact virtualschool@southwark.gov.uk with any queries.

>> **Southwark's new SEND Local Offer site has been launched**

Southwark's Local Offer provides information, advice and services for people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those who support them.

Safeguarding
in Schools

We're here to help!

More information is available about [the roles of the Safeguarding in Schools team and support offered to schools](#), including Policy and Procedure Reviews, and a [variety of training opportunities](#).

Please get in touch to find out more!

If you have any colleagues who would like to receive this weekly bulletin, they can [sign up to Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools bulletin](#).

Celebrating good practice

Do you have a safeguarding good practice example to be celebrated from within your school or work with partners? We'd love to share this in the bulletin! Please send to: emma.geiringer@southwark.gov.uk

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