

Safeguarding bulletin - 16 September 2026

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Safeguarding bulletin



Hello

from Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team

Safeguarding
in Schools

Southwark has launched a consultation on a major reform of children's social care services, to deliver the Government's [Families First Partnership Programme](#). We hear all too often from our families, and from schools, that the current social care system needs to be simpler and more accessible, that it needs to act earlier, and have less handovers and changes of team and allocated worker. The national reform programme aims to create a seamless experience for families and partner agencies, reduce the disruption caused by moving between services, and to deliver a whole-family plan that builds on strengths to improve outcomes for children. This will mean some significant changes to the way our Family Early Help and social work services are structured in Southwark, with separate services and teams being merged into a single all-through Family Help service. We are also consulting on moving the future service into a locality model, bringing services closer to schools to create more consistent and stronger relationships.

We are keen for all schools to contribute to this consultation to help us design the best system for Southwark. You can [find more details on the schools' website, including how to feedback.](#)

New: Information Sharing Duty

Information Sharing Duty

Statutory guidance for safeguarding organisations and their practitioners

A guide to information sharing in the interests of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, pursuant to s16A of the Children Act 2004

September 2026

Last week, the government published new [Information Sharing Duty statutory guidance](#), which will come into force on **30 September 2026**.

It changes the way all agencies should approach information sharing, removing many perceived barriers. A key point is that agencies **must** share information where it is relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of a child, not only in Child Protection instances, but also where concerns relate to early help, prevention and unmet need (other than in extremely limited circumstances). This means parental consent is not required for information to be shared, including for purposes of Early Help referrals, but it remains good practice to ensure families are informed of all safeguarding actions and supported to understand the reason and legal basis for these. Families can still choose whether to engage with support offered. GDPR and data protection obligations still guide **how** information should be shared.

Southwark news

>> [Southwark Parenting Support](#)

Southwark has a variety of Parenting Programmes available for different age groups and needs, including support for fathers and sessions delivered in multiple languages. Parents and carers can self-refer or be referred by professionals, but new starters can only join for the first three weeks so please share the information with families and encourage sign up.

The Parenting Team also deliver '[TAP-in' sessions: one off information sessions about key topics](#) like digital safety, Autism, ADHD, and emotional wellbeing.

>> [Children Not in School Update: Alternative Provision](#)

Southwark's Alternative Provision resources have been updated to support schools in making referrals for children and young people who are unable to access suitable full-time education due to illness, exclusion or other exceptional circumstances.

Updated resources include:

- [Alternative Provision Section 19 Panel Terms of Reference](#)
- [An Accessible Process Guide to accompany the Terms of Reference](#)
- [Alternative Provision application form](#)
- [New Health Professional Information Form](#) (completed by health professionals) to support decisions where health affects school attendance:

- [Sickness Return Form](#)

All resources are also available on the [Alternative Provision webpage](#).

Before making a referral, schools should ensure that available support and reasonable adjustments have been explored, the views of the child and family have been considered, and appropriate evidence is provided.

The Alternative Provision Panel considers whether the Local Authority has a duty to arrange education under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and whether any additional support may be required.

For further information please contact: ap.referrals@southwark.gov.uk

Southwark training opportunities

>> **Southwark Virtual School: Designated Teachers Training Day, Thursday 8 October, Canada Water Library, 10am - 3:30pm**

Designated Teachers and senior staff are [invited to sign up](#) for Southwark Virtual School's first Designated Teachers conference of the year.

The day will run as follows:

Meet and Greet	10.00 - 10.20
Introduction	10.20 - 10.30
Delivering trauma-informed support in schools for children who are in care and care-experienced – Dr James Hanley (Carelink clinician and service manager). • Early experiences and the impact on learning • The impact of care experience • How trauma manifests in school • What works in school for children who have experienced trauma	10.30 - 12.30 This session includes presentations and activities.
Lunch	12.30 - 13.30
The Virtual School – Reflections and learning from 25-26 - Usha Singh	13.30 - 14.00
Children and Wellbeing Bill and Virtual School - Kate Bainbridge	14.00 - 14.30
Using Pupil Premium Plus to improve outcomes: from funding to impact - Usha Singh & Virtual School	14.30 -15.00

Discussion and chance to ask questions	15.00 -15.30
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Other training opportunities

>> **Free #LookCloser programme of learning, October 2026 – March 2027**

This free series of training sessions draw from The Children's Society's expertise working around child exploitation and abuse, including insights from strategic partners and young people. They cover topics including Financial Exploitation, transitional safeguarding and considering anti-racism and gendered assumptions in tackling child exploitation.

Other news

>> **Healthy Living Toolkit Survey**

The Young People's Healthy Living Toolkit Group are a group of young people working alongside Barnardo's and AstraZeneca to create a Healthy Living Toolkit for those aged between 10-24 across the UK. The toolkit is being designed to provide information, advice and practical support to help young people make informed choices about their health and wellbeing. To make sure it reflects what young people actually want and need, they are running a survey to understand:

- What information is most important to young people
- Which health and wellbeing topics should be included
- The best ways to share information so it is useful, engaging and easy to access

The survey only takes a few minutes to complete, and all responses are anonymous. Please share with any young people aged 10-24.

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

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

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

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