Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools

Update No 4 – September 2024

This update provides some important revisions to the DE guidance document '*Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools'*, which issued in September 2023.

The guidance was designed in a binder format to allow for easy use and is also available on the DE website (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools). The website version will be updated to reflect the following amendments/updates along with some other more minor typographical corrections.

We would encourage you to print the updated guidance and this table for insertion in your binder.

Section of Safeguarding Guidance	**Amendment details**
Title Page	Addition of: '(also includes separate annexes for pre-school, early years and youth settings)'
Table of Contents	Section titles amended to reflect changes in terminology.
Acronyms	New/missing acronyms added to list.
Section 3	Update to wording under the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act. Update to confirm a new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy for 2023-2030 is being developed jointly by the Departments of Justice and Health and will be published in 2024
Section 4.2 The School Safeguarding Team	Includes updates regarding the employment of individuals with social work qualifications/experiences in schools and their role in relation to safeguarding. Also includes updated wording on the self-evaluation proforma for safeguarding and child protection offered by the ETI.
Section 4.7.2 Designated Teacher Training/Deputy Designated Teacher Training	Additional paragraph providing clarity regarding the ETI inspections and safeguarding training requirements.
Section 4.11	Additional paragraph providing details of the Safer School App available to schools as a further safeguarding support tool.

Section 6.3 Domestic and Sexual Abuse	Language updated to reflect current terminology and to confirm a new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy will issue later in 2024.
Sections 6.6 Children who display harmful sexual behaviour and 6.6.1 What is harmful sexual behaviour?	The language used to describe harmful sexual behaviour has been amended to reflect the language used in DE Circular 2022/02.
Section 6.7 Online Safety	Updates regarding forms of electronic communication and the publication of the SBNI's Growing Up Online: Children's online activities harm and safety in Northern Ireland – an evidence report.
Section 6.9 Sexting and 6.9.1 Sexting between individuals in a relationship	Terminology updated to 'Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes' and definition amended to align with that utilised by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.
Section 8 Preventative Curriculum	Section re-written to include updates in relation to the ETI's report on the Preventative Curriculum in Schools and EOTAS Centres.
Section 8.1 Relationships and Sexuality Education	Section re-written to reflect the ETI report on the Preventative Curriculum in Schools and EOTAS Centres, the progress on the Gillen Review, The Relationships and Sexuality Education (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 and subsequent new guidance published by DE (Circular 2024/01).
Section 8.2 Domestic and Sexual Abuse	Terminology updated and reference to new strategy due to be published in 2024 included.
Section 9 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools	Updates provided regarding the development of EdIS and new guidance on information-sharing for child protection by the Information Commissioner's Office included.
Section 10.3 Safe Handling/Use of Reasonable Force	Confirmation new guidance being developed by DE will be statutory.
Section 11 Contacts	Updated - PSNI CRU is no longer contactable by 101, or by telephone, only through the email address provided.
Section 11	Contact details now provided for the Regional Emergency Social Work Service included.

Annex B Other Agencies and Support Services	Details of the Safer Schools Northern Ireland app provided
Annex D Safeguarding and Child Protection in Pre-school and Early Years Settings: A Summary Guide	Clarity provided regarding references to 'pre-school education settings' and terminology relating to the Record of Complaints Against Staff book updated and used consistently throughout. Updates concerning ETI inspections of pre-school education settings.
Annex E Safeguarding and Child Protection in Youth Settings: A Summary Guide	Sections on Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Safeguarding for Adults at Risk of Harm have been amalgamated.
Various	All references to 'Sexualised Behaviour' changed to 'Sexual Behaviour'.
Various	All references to 'non-teaching' staff changed to 'support' staff'.
Various	References to 'Anti-bullying' changed to 'Addressing bullying' and clarity regarding actions required of BoG in cases of alleged/confirmed bullying type behaviour provided.
Various	Confirmation has been provided that a new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy will be published in 2024.
Various	All references to Circulars 2012/19 and 2013/01 are followed with the note 'currently under review.'
Various	Website links have been updated and other minor typographical corrections have been made.
Various	Contact details have been reviewed and updated.