

Safeguarding Matters

FAO Headteachers, Governors, Designated Safeguarding Leads and key professionals

Liverpool Schools

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A message from the Schools Safeguarding Team

In October 2022 we welcomed Steve Watts to the Schools Safeguarding Team and many of you will have had the opportunity to meet him during the Autumn Term DSL Refresher training programme.



Steve brings a wealth of experience, having worked with children, young people and families since 1993. Immediately prior to joining School Improvement Liverpool, Steve spent eight years as the safeguarding lead for a multi-academy trust (MAT), which grew to more than 30 schools (including primary, middle, secondary and special schools) during his tenure. Prior to that he was an Integrated Service Manager for Suffolk County Council, leading their Early Help services in the West of the county. He has also been the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in both primary and secondary schools and is an experienced trainer, including being accredited by the Safer Recruitment Consortium.

Steve's connection with Liverpool is his son, who came to university in the city nine years ago and continues to live here with his wife and their son (Steve's first grandchild).

Both Nicky and Steve are available to provide third party safeguarding advice and guidance. When this is necessary please email safeguarding@si.liverpool.gov.uk and either Nicky or Steve will respond to your email as soon as possible. Please state if the matter is urgent or non-urgent. For urgent matters, please ensure you provide a mobile and landline number on which we can contact you. Clearly, there should be no delay in ringing children's services or police when this is required. In addition, schools can also seek advice from their local early help team or early help hub.

The team are also able to offer a range of additional services to schools including:

- A full and comprehensive onsite safeguarding review of key practices and statutory safeguarding requirements
- A review of the Single Central Record and safer recruitment practices
- Bespoke onsite training, for example, whole staff safeguarding training or in house DSL training

If you are interested in commissioning any additional services from the team, please email safeguarding@si.liverpool.gov.uk.

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Our training programme can be found [here](#) and includes:

- New to the Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead
- DSL Refresher training – Cyber Prevent twilight session
- DSL Refresher training – Young Carers Awareness twilight session
- DSL Refresher training – Enhanced Prevent Awareness twilight session (secondary schools)
- Full Safer Recruitment training for leaders and governors
- Safer Recruitment Refresher training for leaders and governors
- Undertaking safer recruitment checks and maintaining the Single Central Record for Business Managers and Admin Officers

The DSL Refresher twilight sessions are an addition to the training programme and are an opportunity for Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputies to supplement their half day refresher training with other key topics. The twilight sessions are often led by colleagues with a particular specialism.

As Keeping Children Safe in Education states:

"In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role."

We would also encourage colleagues to view and attend the training offer from their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.

New - Update to the Liverpool Levels of Need framework

Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership have launched a new Levels of Need framework. The briefing note found [here](#) includes links to the new LON document and a [video](#) explaining the levels of need.

The new Levels of Need document can be downloaded by clicking on [this link](#). We recommend saving this in order for the safeguarding team to continue drawing upon the Level 4 indicators when making a referral to Children's Services. Colleagues should ensure that they refer to this new framework with immediate effect.



One of the changes to the Levels of Need is that any need identified at Level 3 will be managed through the Early Help Hubs. Colleagues can make referrals at Level 3 using [this link](#). Further information about Early Help can be found [here](#).

Key reminders from the autumn term training

Some key points for schools to consider following the autumn term Headteachers' Safeguarding Briefings and DSL Refresher training programme are listed below.

- ✓ Key safeguarding policies have been updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. The suite of template policies can be found [here](#).
- ✓ Online searches have been introduced as a pre-employment check on all shortlisted candidates. A procedure has been developed and effectively implemented.
- ✓ Any new governors appointed from 1st September 2022 have received safeguarding induction training.
- ✓ The school has considered the implications of the statutory DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and has made changes to policy and practice, or further strengthened existing practice.
- ✓ School leaders and governors have drawn upon the 'Safeguarding Learning Walk' proforma
- ✓ Leaders and governors have considered how they support and safeguard children who may be LGBTQ+
- ✓ The school has reviewed key policies in line with new DfE guidance [Searching, Screening and Confiscation 2022](#) and [Behaviour in Schools 2022](#)
- ✓ Learning from the Child Q Practice Learning Review have been disseminated across school, including the requirement for children to have an 'Appropriate Adult' and the circumstances where this may be necessary, and adultification bias

- ✓ The school has agreed an appropriate risk assessment tool and management plan for responding to incidents of harmful or inappropriate sexualised behaviour between children
- ✓ Leaders and governors are aware of the local procedures in relation to low level concerns about adults working or volunteering in or on behalf of the school, and will seek advice from the LADO where a concern may be sexual in nature
- ✓ The Designated Safeguarding Lead has ensured that there are appropriate procedures for promoting the educational outcomes for children with a social worker, including a method for evidencing the impact of interventions and reporting outcomes to governors
- ✓ The Designated Safeguarding Lead has ensured that there is a safeguarding training plan for all staff and volunteers, ensuring it meets the needs of the school community and builds upon knowledge and understanding gathered over time. This plan also appropriately reflects the wider aspects of safeguarding, and training records enable sufficient oversight and scrutiny of attendance and refresher timescales
- ✓ The school has made contact with the NSPCC in relation to their Schools Service offer
- ✓ Leaders and governors have ensured they carry out an annual review of their approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment which considers and reflects the risks their children face (free tools available from [LGfL](#) and [SWGfL](#))

Online searches guidance

The new requirement regarding online searches on shortlisted candidates is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022:

“221. 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.”

To support schools with further defining their process in relation to this pre-employment check, the Schools’ HR and Safeguarding Teams produced some guidance and a template form which can be downloaded [here](#).

The requirement for this came into effect on 1st September 2022 therefore all recruitments taking place from this date onwards should include this new check.

Governor Safeguarding Induction resources

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 sets out that all new governors and trustees should receive safeguarding training at induction:

*“81. 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.”*

To support schools with meeting this requirement, we created a resource which schools can draw upon. The PowerPoint, accompanying notes and booklet to share with new governors can be downloaded and saved using this link:

Governor safeguarding induction

The PowerPoint should be used by schools as a starting point, with colleagues personalising it to provide relevant contextual information about their own school setting. Once the school specific information has been included, we anticipate that the session should take at least an hour to deliver.

Section 175 safeguarding audit - update

Schools will be aware that due to the fact the Virtual College are no longer offering their audit tool, we have needed to change the online platform on which we undertake our annual 175 audit of safeguarding practice. After undertaking research we made the decision to enter a contract with the provider [Phew!](#) who are an organisation who support many different local authorities and safeguarding children partnerships with their auditing process. Their platform offers a lot more flexibility and should make the process a lot easier and more user friendly for everyone involved. We are really hopeful that using Phew! to build our audit tool will mean that schools will see the audit process as more valuable and meaningful for their own quality assurance and self-evaluation of safeguarding.

We are currently building the audit tool and are hopeful that the 2022-23 audit tool will be launched by 1st March 2023 at the latest. As we have previously stated, schools have been advised to make preparations to undertake their audit during the month of March.

Some of the key changes to previous years are that as part of their evidence to support their evaluation of safeguarding practice, schools will be asked to:

- Evaluate the school's practice against Ofsted gradings in order to genuinely self-evaluate practice
- Use some practice standards in order to determine how well standards are embedded within the school
- Upload evidence (for example, relevant policies) to support the school's submission
- Create an action plan to support development of practice within the setting

The audit is predominately a self-evaluation tool which enables the school to demonstrate to itself and the Local Authority that it is compliant with a range of standards often linked to statutory responsibilities. We really hope that introducing the new tool will help this self-evaluation process.

A key part of each school's role in completing the S175 process is how they quality assure the audit. The Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor are expected to scrutinise and sign off the audit. This should include examining the evidence underpinning a range of questions. A copy of the audit signed by all parties should be retained in school and made available to the LSCP on request. In addition, the full governing body should maintain oversight of the process and establish any actions that have arisen are addressed.

Quality Assurance of safeguarding practice

When schools receive external scrutiny of safeguarding practice, either through the inspection process, a commissioned safeguarding review or as a result of a specific incident, it can sometimes reveal that procedures are not as leaders and governors would expect. Some of the more common issues can be:

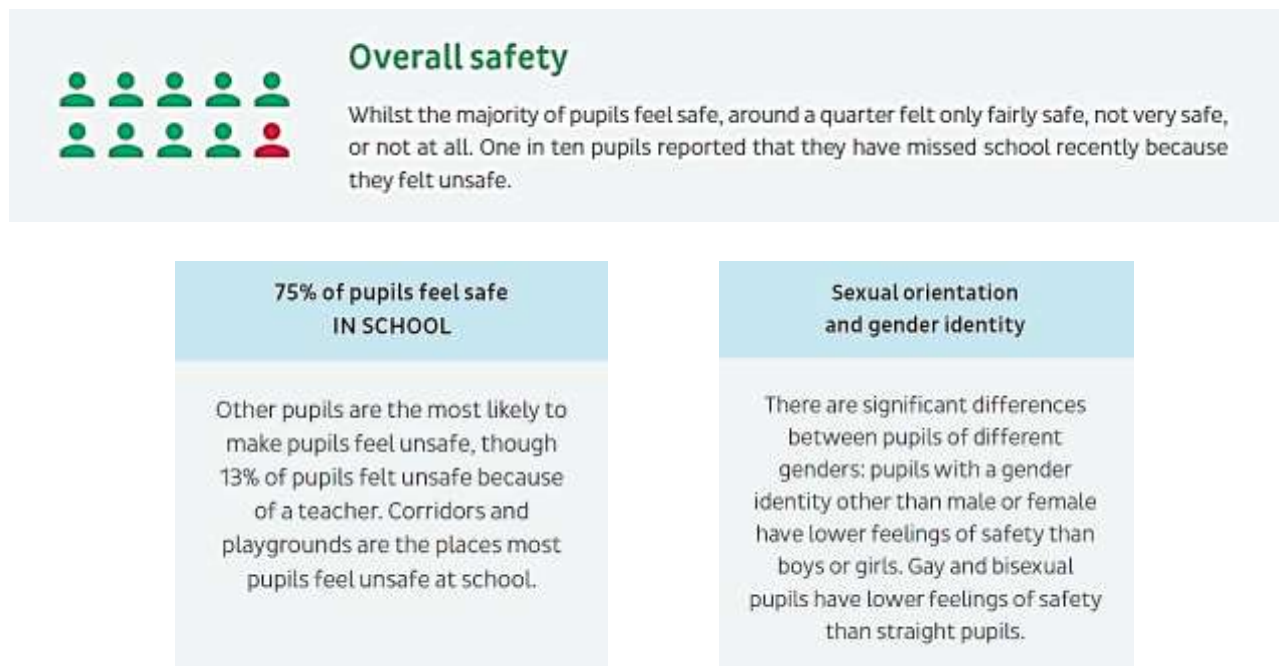
Single Central Record and safer recruitment practices

A key part of any external scrutiny is the examination of safer recruitment practices and the single central record. A theme from a number of inspections this year has been errors or omissions in the single central record which could have been prevented if there was regular quality assurance activity by leaders and governors.

Student voice activity

A significant part of the inspection process is speaking with children from across the school. Inspectors want to test out the effectiveness of safeguarding practice by understanding what it is like to be a child within the school. Leaders and governors should undertake regular student voice activity in order to ensure that they fully understand the views of all groups of pupils within the school. This should enable schools to appropriately act upon any issues raised, and draw upon student voice to influence the development of policy and practice.

A useful review to reflect upon is the 2022 Pupil Safeguarding Review by Edurio/The Key. The survey used for the basis of this report included responses from approximately 70,000 pupils with a focus on safety, whether children feel safe and whether they know what to do if not. Whilst it is encouraging that 75% of children who took part reported feeling safe in school, it is also important to reflect on the smaller percentage of children who did not. Extracts from the executive summary include:



The full report can be found [here](#).

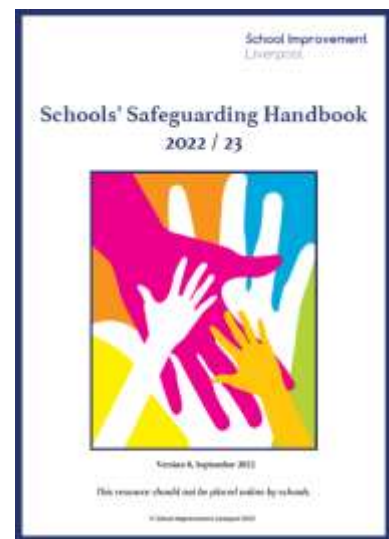
Start / end of day protocols

Over time, schools have been encouraged to ensure they embed a safe handover system which ensures that children are physically passed over to the identified person collecting them. Often, when systems break down it can be down to human error rather than inadequate processes, however we would strongly urge leaders to satisfy themselves that their current procedures are suitable and are implemented consistently across the setting.

Unfortunately there have been several situations this academic year whereby pupils have been able to leave the school site unaccompanied at either the start or end of the school day. Thankfully no harm has come to any of the children concerned, however it does serve us with a timely reminder about reviewing our start and end of day protocols.

Resources to support quality assurance activity

We provide a range of resources and templates within the [Schools' Safeguarding Handbook](#) which aid leaders with the regular quality assurance of safeguarding across the school. We would strongly recommend that schools draw upon the range of resources found in Section 3 which include the Headteachers' Quality Assurance Checklist, a Single Central Record and personnel file checklist and a Safeguarding Learning Walk proforma amongst others. These resources are designed to enable leaders to undertake a range of activities that support the scrutiny of practice. These activities can also form part of Link Safeguarding Governor meetings and safeguarding learning walks, and the outcomes should feed into the termly report to governors.



Liquid Logic update

Liverpool City Council are in the process of allowing school's to have access to the Early Help Module of Liquid Logic. Emails have been sent to all Liverpool schools' safeguarding email accounts, requesting the completion and return of the Acceptable Use Policy / Data Sharing Agreement which then enables LCC colleagues to set up the school's account. The majority of schools have already responded to this request, however we would still encourage safeguarding teams to double check that the email has been received and that the forms have been returned. Many thanks to LCC colleagues for driving this initiative forwards.

Prevent updates

Prevent Self-Assessment Tool

The Department for Education has released a new [self-assessment tool](#) for schools in England to help them better understand how well they meet their Prevent duty responsibilities. The tool can help schools understand how well embedded their Prevent policies and practices are and encourages a cycle of continuous review and improvement.

The tool includes [a guide on how to make use of the tool](#) as well as a [supporting spreadsheet](#) to help measure how well embedded policies and practices are.

This self-assessment tool is designed to assist schools to review how well embedded and effective their Prevent responsibilities are in advance of Ofsted inspection and deliberately mimics the Ofsted EIF to allow schools to:

1. Assess their level of Prevent compliance
2. Align compliance with Ofsted's EIF grading (1 – 4)
3. Identify gaps and weaknesses that can be developed to improve safeguarding effectiveness
4. Support a level of consistency in compliance with the Prevent Duty nationally

The Dept for Education Prevent Team have been hosting some **free** webinars that help to make best use of the tool and embed improved practices. Schools can register to attend the final webinar using this Eventbrite link:

- **Tuesday 28th February 2023 10.45am to 11.30am** - [A webinar to support schools to use the Prevent Self-Assessment Toolkit Tickets, Tue 28 Feb 2023 at 10:45 | Eventbrite](#)

A Prevent DSL Handbook for schools and colleges

The Dept for Education has also published new non-statutory guidance for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to [help them safeguard learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#).

The guidance is designed to explain the Prevent statutory responsibilities to keep children, young people and adult learners safe from the risk of extremist ideology and radicalisation and the referral process. The guidance reflects learning since the introduction of the [Prevent Duty](#) in 2015.

Prevent training for staff

Schools in Liverpool can take advantage of whole staff training delivered by the Prevent Education Officer, Joanna Fitzsimmons. Her contact details are:

Joanna Fitzsimmons, LCC Prevent Education Officer
07515 332702
joanna.fitzsimmons@liverpool.gov.uk

For those who prefer online training there is a new and revised Prevent training course which has been developed by the Home Office. This replaces the previous training and can be accessed using the link below:

[Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people vulnerable to radicalisation | Prevent duty training](#)

Support for schools outside of Liverpool

As Liverpool is deemed to be a priority area by the Home Office, it means that Liverpool schools have access to the Prevent Education Officer. Schools outside of Liverpool now have access to some support from the Regional Prevent Coordinator Nigel Lund.

Nigel is currently the North West HE and FE Regional Prevent Coordinator. At the end of last year his role expanded to include providing support to schools across the north west in areas which do not receive additional Prevent funding from the DfE and as a result, do not have a Prevent Education Officer. This includes Cheshire, Merseyside (Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral) and Cumbria.

The support he can offer to schools sits alongside his existing role with FE and HE therefore he is unable to provide training, but he is able to offer advice so please do make contact with him if you have concerns about a child or family relating to extremism or radicalisation. His contact details are below:

Nigel Lund, North West HE & FE Regional Prevent Coordinator
07384 452146
nigel.lund@education.gov.uk

Act Early – stories and resources

Last month, [Educate Against Hate](#) published an interesting blog post, written by Mubina Asaria from LGfL about adopting a contextual safeguarding approach to radicalisation and the online space by combatting extremism in the classroom using the [Act Early](#) stories. Aimed at secondary age students, each story has a video case study and ready-to-use slides featuring icebreakers, conversation starters and cross-curricular activities. The resources can be incorporated into literacy, drama, Religious Education and PSHE/RSHE as well as assembly time or drop-down days, to help young people think critically about vulnerability and reflect on the tactics used by extremists. You can read the blog [here](#).

Merseyside Police Safeguarding for Cyber Prevent

Cyber Prevent is an approach to preventing cyber dependent crime and Merseyside Police under the direction from the NCA deliver Cyber Choices for Children & Adults. Through co-ordinated action and targeted interventions, Cyber Prevent seeks to proactively prevent individuals from engaging in or progressing further down a cyber-criminal pathway. Cyber Prevent also engages with secondary audiences who may hold influence with those at risk of cyber offending, such as DSLs, Parents and teachers.

Constable 6354 Gareth Jones is the Cyber Prevent Constable for Merseyside and covers every borough of Merseyside and is promoting Cyber Prevent to all teachers, parents and DSLs, ensuring that whilst safeguarding children, Cyber is not forgotten about.

Constables Jones' aim is to identify children and adults who are engaging in Cyber activities that are steering them down the wrong path. He will educate them, educate their parents/guardians, teacher etc, divert them down the right path and provide alternative provisions to allow the subjects skillset to develop.

During any safeguarding bear in mind key aspects of somebody who might benefit from Cyber Prevent;

- Always on their computer
- Extensive knowledge of Cyber / Coding / Dark web etc
- Has knowledge of Booting / Hacking / Cheating on online games
- Neurodiverse person who spends most of their time on a computer

The above is not an extensive list and sometimes it is hard to define somebody who would benefit from Cyber Prevent but if you would like further information about Cyber Prevent and Cyber Choices contact Constable Gareth Jones on the below email;

Cyber.Dependent.Crime.Unit@merseyside.police.uk

If you would like to refer somebody to Cyber Prevent please use the below link or QR code.

<https://forms.office.com/r/wX4Ys7ypdn>



No contact will be made to the person or their parent/guardian before permission from the referrer has been given.

Constable Jones will also be delivering a DSL Refresher twilight session on the subject of Cyber Prevent on 22nd February 2023. Places can be booked [here](#).

LGfL Cyber Security Schools Audit

Our friends at LGfL have recently published reports into the cybersecurity audit which they conducted with National Cyber Security Centre last year. The reports outline the threats facing schools today, the measures that are in place (or not), how effective they are and how quickly schools have recovered from cyber-incidents. The second LGfL report includes further guidance and analysis from experts and international partners, with next steps to strengthen protections across a sector which is increasingly being targeted. You can read the reports on the [LGfL website](#).



It is important that Headteachers and DSLs consider the importance of cybersecurity as due to the nature of our reliance on electronic systems within schools (for example, registers, child protection management systems, etc.) if we have no systems as the result of a cyber-attack, it limits or even prevents our ability to keep children safe.

Internet Watch Foundation TALK checklist

The [Internet Watch Foundation](#) have a useful guide for parents and carers about what they can do in order to be aware of online risks to their children and the scale of the issue. If schools have not already shared this resource with families, it can be downloaded [here](#).

