

KCSIE 2023 update summary

There are three additional paragraphs in this year's document. They cover filtering and monitoring, retention of documents, and use of school sites by outside organisations. Here's what they say:

Filtering and monitoring

This is a repeated theme throughout the document. There is a focus on the importance of staff having 'an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities' of filtering and monitoring.

The KCSIE 2023 outlines that a school's Child Protection Policy should reflect its approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks. This includes awareness of the ease of access to mobile phone networks.

It also reasserts that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should take responsibility for this.

However, paragraph 141 states that 'governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system.'

Another important consideration for governing bodies, the KCSIE says, is cost versus safeguarding risk.

The following paragraph, 142, gives some clarity, linking to the existing [DfE filtering and monitoring standards](#), and sets out that schools should:

- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- Review filtering and monitoring provision at least once per year
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- Have effective monitoring strategies in place to meet the school's safeguarding needs

There is also a helpful link to additional guidance on filtering and monitoring from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) which is worth looking at, especially if you're a DSL.

Retention of documents

Another addition to KCSIE 2023 is a clarification about what documents schools should keep during recruitment, and for how long.

Paragraph 276 helps to clarify that copies of documents used to verify a successful candidate's identity, right to work, and required qualifications, should be kept on their personnel file.

However, it stipulates that should schools choose to retain copies of DBS certificates and records of criminal information disclosed by the candidate, there must be a valid reason for doing so, and they should not be kept for longer than six months.

This is in compliance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#), which covers these documents.

When the information itself is destroyed, schools can keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result, and the recruitment decision if they choose to.

But the KCSIE goes on to emphasise that schools don't have to keep copies of DBS certificates.

Use of school sites by outside organisations

The final additional paragraph to KCSIE 2023 relates to raising concerns and managing allegations when an incident occurs while outside organisations (such as community groups, sports clubs, or after-school activity providers) are using school premises.

It confirms that the school maintains safeguarding responsibilities, and that the school should follow its safeguarding policies and procedures, as if the incident had occurred during normal school hours, including informing the local authority designated officer (LADO).

Minor changes

There are several minor changes to the KCSIE 2023, including an extension to part 3 on safer recruitment.

The section on the need for ongoing vigilance (paragraph 343) now explicitly says that schools need to maintain a culture where all staff 'feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where it is appropriate, outside of the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.' The mention of online spaces is new, here.

There is also a language change from children 'missing from education' to children 'who are absent from education'.

There is an emphasis on the safeguarding risks for those absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods (paragraphs 99 and 175), without meeting the threshold of 'missing from education'.

We need a robust response for persistently absent pupils as they are at risk of safeguarding issues 'including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines'.

The links for further support now include the ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

School impact

So, what does all this mean for teachers? Here are some suggestions for how you can digest the changes, and how they'll affect your setting:

Filtering and monitoring

- Check your filtering and monitoring procedures:
 - + Who is responsible for the filtering and monitoring?
 - + Who checks and responds to any attempted breaches of the filtering systems?
 - + How frequently is this done?
 - + How is this recorded?
 - + Who decides what is inappropriate and harmful content?
 - + Who checks the filtering systems are up to date, and are monitoring for appropriate words?

This should not solely be the responsibility of your school's IT provider or server.

The DSL needs to have a lead role and there need to be clear procedures to respond to safeguarding concerns and responsibilities under the PREVENT duty.

Further small changes

Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in this area, by including it in training and annual updates.

- Check your cyber security is robust and appropriate.
- Check if you are keeping copies of ID documents for staff and if so, where.
- Ensure that governors understand their duties under the [Equality Act](#) including reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities.
- Ensure that your attendance policies are clear about the safeguarding risks for children absent or missing from school, including those absent on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods. This should include how those supporting attendance work with the DSL.
- Check the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns about other organisations and individuals using your school's site. Also ensure that any lettings policies and hiring contracts state these clearly.
- Continue to review your procedures for conducting online searches for shortlisted candidates. This should include informing them that you will undertake these checks, by way of the application form and/or in letters inviting candidates to interview.
- Ensure that your school clearly states and circulates its culture of safeguarding. It should explicitly include all staff and their responsibilities in and outside of school, as well as on and offline.
- Check that your policy on referrals to Channel refers to those *susceptible* to (rather than *vulnerable* to) being drawn into terrorism, and recognises that any referral requires the individual's consent.
- Ensure that the section on forced marriage in your Child Protection policy reflects that any form of marriage for someone under 18 is illegal, even where the situation doesn't include violence, threats or another form of coercion.