Child Protection Policy 2025/2026 – Nottinghamshire County Council Guidance

Published August for 1st September 2025

**For the attention of: All Headteachers, Principals, Governing bodies, Trusts, Senior Designated Safeguarding Leads and Alternative Education Providers**

# Introduction

**What is this document and what does it set out to do?**

This document is the **Nottinghamshire County Council** and **Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Model Child Protection and Safeguarding guidance** for schools[[1]](#endnote-1) and colleges[[2]](#endnote-2) to read before accessing and using the template provided.

The aims of the document are to support educational settings in understanding and applying statutory safeguarding requirements, and to guide them in reviewing and updating their child protection policies in line with current legislation and best practice.

It has been developed for use by schools, academies, colleges, and alternative provision settings, and is intended to:

* **Explain the safeguarding framework** and how legislation, statutory guidance, and local procedures apply to education settings.
* **Clarify the expectations of KCSIE 2025**, including who should read which sections, how it informs child protection policy, and how it supports a whole-school approach to safeguarding.
* **Highlight key changes** between KCSIE 2024 and 2025 to help settings identify and respond to new or revised requirements.
* **Signpost additional sources of support**, including local child protection services and relevant national guidance.
* **Provide practical advice** on how to use the updated child protection policy template, including what it contains and how it aligns with safeguarding expectations.

This guidance is primarily aimed at Head Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), senior leaders, governors, and others involved in shaping or reviewing safeguarding practice. It promotes a proactive, informed, and collaborative approach to child protection, ensuring that every setting is equipped to keep children safe.

# How Safeguarding Legislation, Guidance and Procedures Apply to Schools, Academies, Colleges and Alternative Provision Settings

Safeguarding responsibilities in education are primarily governed by **three key pieces** of statutory guidance:
**[Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf)****[[3]](#endnote-3)** – *(important information about this guidance can be found further on in this document)*[**Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67cba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf) as well as [**Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

These documents outline the duties of all education providers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They are supported by additional legislation and guidance, which apply **differently** depending on the type of school or setting.

**Maintained Schools and Further Education Colleges**Under Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents), local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools, and FE colleges must ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

**Academies, Free Schools, Independent Schools, and Alternative Provision**These settings are covered by Section 157 of the [Education Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents), which places similar safeguarding duties on proprietors of independent schools, including academies and city technology colleges. This is reinforced by the [Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283) ([guidance found here](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67605baec80a844a7aa4b7cb/Independent_School_Standards_Guidance.pdf)) which set out specific standards for welfare, health, and safety.

Additional safeguarding duties apply under:

* The [Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ff8aeed915d74e622bb59/NMSS-_Advice-_Final-_19-08-15.pdf), which set conditions for approval and continued operation of non-maintained special schools.
* Section 16H of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents), which empowers safeguarding partners to request information to support child safeguarding reviews.
* The [Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/16), which extends safeguarding duties to all providers of publicly funded post-16 education and training, including 16–19 academies and independent learning providers.
* The [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents) places a duty on education settings to have due regard to preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the [Prevent Duty](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e5a5bd3f69457ff1035fe2/14.258_HO_Prevent%2BDuty%2BGuidance_v5d_Final_Web_1_.pdf) and should be embedded within wider safeguarding policies and procedures.

**Teachers’ Professional Responsibilities**The [Teachers’ Standards](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/61b73d6c8fa8f50384489c9a/Teachers__Standards_Dec_2021.pdf) (2021) require all teachers, including headteachers, to safeguard pupils’ well-being in accordance with statutory provisions and to uphold public trust in the profession.

**General Duty to Follow Statutory Guidance**All schools and colleges in England must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when determining their safeguarding arrangements. This includes ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices reflect current statutory expectations.

# Keeping Children Safe in Education by DfE – 2025

**Which parts of the guidance should be read by who and how does this inform my child protection policy?**

[Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf)iii is statutory guidance published by The Department of Education. The guidance was published on the 7th July 2025 and becomes **statutory** guidance from **1st September 2025**.

It sets out the legal duties schools and colleges must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 in their establishments.

We recommend that the guidance is **read in full** by **senior leaders and designated leads**.
**All staff, at all settings must** read **Part 1** of the statutory guidance, as it outlines the essential safeguarding information that applies to everyone working in a school or college.

**Staff who work directly with children** should also read **Part 5**, which covers child-on-child sexual violence and harassment, and **Annex B**, which provides detailed information on specific safeguarding issues.

It is **strongly recommended** that **Annex F** is read **by senior leaders and designated safeguarding leads**, as it highlights the changes made between the 2024 and 2025 versions of KCSIE. This will support schools in reviewing and updating their child protection policies to ensure they remain compliant and reflect current statutory guidance, safeguarding arrangements are in line with policy and that the policy links with other related policies, procedures and guidance.

**Governors and trustees** **must** read **Part 2**, which outlines their strategic safeguarding responsibilities, including oversight of policy, training, and compliance. It is also **strongly** **recommended** that **all governors** read the **full guidance** to support effective governance and assurance.

**How does KCSIE 2025 inform the Child Protection Policy?**

[Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf)iii sets out clear expectations for the development, content, and implementation of a school’s child protection policy, which must include the following:

**Whole-School Approach to Safeguarding**
The child protection policy must reflect a whole-school or college approach to safeguarding, ensuring that all systems, processes, and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. It must include procedures for child-on-child abuse, online safety, and safeguarding considerations for children with SEND. It must also acknowledge the lawful and proportionate use of restrictive practices, where necessary, and ensure these are clearly defined, risk-assessed, and monitored in line with safeguarding duties—particularly for children with SEND or behavioural needs.

**Clear and Compliant Procedures**
The policy must describe procedures that are:

* In accordance with government guidance.
* Aligned with local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*).
* Clear on how staff should respond to concerns, disclosures, and referrals.

**Reporting Systems for Children**
Schools must have accessible, well-promoted systems for children to report abuse or neglect. These systems must be described in the policy and ensure children know their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.

**Annual Review and Updates**
The child protection policy must be reviewed annually (at minimum) and updated to reflect:

* Emerging safeguarding issues.
* Lessons learned from incidents or reviews.
* Changes in statutory guidance or local procedures.

**Public Availability**
The policy must be publicly available, either on the school website or by other means. Parents must be informed of the policy and the school’s role in making referrals to statutory services.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Responsibilities**
The DSL must:

* Ensure all staff understand and have access to the child protection policy.
* Liaise with safeguarding partners and external agencies.
* Maintain and transfer child protection files securely.
* Promote a culture of listening to children and acting on their views.

**Staff Training and Induction**
All staff must receive:

* Induction training that includes the child protection policy.
* Regular updates (at least annually) on safeguarding and child protection.
Staff must understand their responsibilities and know how to respond to concerns.

**Online Safety Integration**
The child protection policy must include:

* Expectations for filtering and monitoring.
* Risks associated with mobile and smart technology.
* Procedures for managing online abuse and exploitation.

**Child-on-Child Abuse Procedures**
The policy must include:

* Procedures to minimise risk.
* Clear guidance on reporting, recording, and investigating incidents.
* Support strategies for victims, perpetrators, and affected peers.
* A zero-tolerance statement on abuse and harmful behaviours

**How does KCSIE 2025 ensure a whole-school approach and influence other policies?**

Many school and college policies are informed and link to [Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf)iii. Below is a list of policies we recommend you review in line with KCSIE 2025, as they are either directly referenced within the guidance or shaped by its statutory safeguarding expectations. Reviewing these policies ensures a consistent, whole-school approach to safeguarding.

*(Please note. This is not an exhaustive list and all educational settings should consider where KCSIE influences other policies, including those that may not be listed, and to what extent.)*
 **Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct**
- Informed by Part Four (Allegations against staff) and Part One (Safeguarding responsibilities)
- Must include guidance on low-level concerns, professional boundaries, and whistleblowing.

**Behaviour Policy**
- Informed by Part Five (Child-on-child abuse).
- Should address bullying, prejudice-based abuse, and sexual harassment.

**Anti-Bullying Policy**
- Informed by Part One and Part Five
- Recommended as a standalone policy to address bullying, including prejudice-based and discriminatory behaviours.

**Child-on-Child Abuse Policy**
- Informed by Part Five
- Recommended as a standalone policy to provide clear procedures for prevention, reporting, and response to child-on-child abuse.

**Online Safety Policy**
- Informed by Annex C (Online safety).
- Must reflect expectations for filtering and monitoring, AI risks, and digital safeguarding.

**Safer Recruitment Policy**
- Informed by Part Three (Safer recruitment).
- Covers vetting checks, regulated activity, and ongoing safeguarding responsibilities.

**Whistleblowing Policy**
- Informed by Part One and Part Four.
- Supports staff in reporting safeguarding concerns about colleagues or unsafe practices.

**Attendance and Absence Policy**
- Informed by Part One (Identifying children at risk).
- Should include safeguarding responses to persistent absence and children missing education.

**Allegations Management Policy**
- Informed by Part Four.
- Must include procedures for handling allegations and low-level concerns about staff.

**RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) Policy**
- Informed by references in Part One and anticipated updates to RSHE guidance.
- Should support safeguarding aims around consent, healthy relationships, and online safety.

**SEND Policy**
- Informed by Part One (Children with additional vulnerabilities).
- Must reflect safeguarding considerations for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

**Early Help and Pastoral Support Policy**
- Informed by Part One (Early help and multi-agency working).
- Should promote early intervention and referral pathways.

**Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy**
- Informed by Part One and Annex B.
- Must ensure appropriate and lawful information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

**Educational Visits and Homestay Policy**
- Informed by Annex D (Children staying with host families).
- Should include safeguarding measures for exchange visits and overnight stays.

**What are the updates from KCSIE 2024 to KCSIE 2025?**

The changes to [Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf)iii are minimal this year administrative word/paragraph changes but it is expected that these changes will align with other statutory guidance for example the Children and Wellbeing Bill and Family First Partnership Programme linked to social care reform. Below is a list of changes in the order in which they appear in KCSIE 2025.

**Summary – No changes made**

**Part one – No changes made**

**Part two –**

* + DfE are expected to publish revised statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education. KCSIE 2025 states that if published, they will signpost to the guidance. (pg. 36, para 128)
	+ Updated to clarify that misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories are safeguarding harms (pg. 36, para 135)
	+ The need to plan technology to meet schools service needs and assess against filtering and monitoring standards, can received personalised recommendations on how to meet them (pg. 40, para 142)
	+ Link added to how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to AI (pg. 41, para 143)
	+ Wording amended in the cybersecurity standards to clarify that it was developed to help schools improve their cyber resilience (pg. 41, para 144)
	+ Information added to clarify and reflect existing alternative provision guidance (pg. 47, para 169 – 170)
	+ Updated to clarify that ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ is now statutory guidance (pg. 49, para 177)
	+ The role of the virtual head has been extended to include responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care (pg. 54, para 199)
	+ DfE are expected to publish revised guidance on gender questions pupils. KCSIE 2025 states that if published, they will signpost to this. (pg. 56, para 204)
	+ Removal of ‘spectrum’ and ‘disorder’ to align with SEND code of practice (pg. 56, para 205)

**Part three –**

* + Reference to TRA’s Employer Access Service removed and replaced with new link to GOV.UK page (pg. 74 & 75, para 260 & 266)
	+ Reference to Employer Secure Access removed and replaced with new link to GOV.UK for S128 checks (pg. 85, para 319)
	+ Information added to clarify and reflect existing alternative provision guidance (pg. 87, para 331)

**Part four –**

* + Amended to correct the title of the Information Commissioner’s employment practice guidance (pg. 106, para 422)

**Part five –**

* + Link added to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation’s ‘Shore Space’ which offers a confidential chat service supporting young people concerned about their own or someone else’s sexual thoughts and behaviours (pg. 140, para 545)

# Additional Guidance and Support and Nottinghamshire Services

**What other guidance and support is available?**

The non-statutory advice [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf) provides practical guidance to help practitioners identify signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and outlines appropriate actions to take in response. While not statutory, it complements KCSIE 2025 and supports effective safeguarding practice.

In cases where staff feel unable to raise concerns internally—whether about child protection failures or the handling of a concern—the NSPCC’s dedicated whistleblowing helpline offers an alternative, confidential route. Staff can contact the helpline by calling 0800 028 0285 (available Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 8:00pm) or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

**What Nottinghamshire services and support is available?**

**Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)**The NSCP is an independent safeguarding partnership responsible for coordinating the work of agencies across Nottinghamshire to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It provides multi-agency safeguarding procedures, guidance, and training, and monitors practice through audits, child safeguarding practice reviews, and performance data. All education providers should be familiar with the local safeguarding arrangements and reflect these in their Child Protection Policy. You can find more information at [Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership](https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/)

**Early Help – Pathway to Provision**The Pathway to Provision handbook supports practitioners in identifying a child, young person and/or a family’s level of need, and referral pathways to the most appropriate service to provide support. The handbook and more information can be found here-[Pathway to provision](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-children-and-families-alliance/pathway-to-provision)

**MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)**MASH is Nottinghamshire’s social care front door for safeguarding referrals. It brings together professionals from social care, health, police, and other agencies to ensure timely and effective responses to safeguarding concerns. You can find more information at [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/safeguarding/childrens-mash)

**ESHAWH – Education Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing Hub**The ESHAWH team supports schools in addressing safeguarding, health, and wellbeing issues. Their remit includes online safety, exploitation, mental health, RSHE, and inclusive behaviour strategies. They offer policy templates, lesson plans, and anonymised consultations. They do not work directly with children but provide advice, training, and quality assurance of resources. You can find more information at[ESHAWH](https://em-edsupport.org.uk/Page/11813)

**EM Ed – East Midlands Education Support Service**EM Ed provides school improvement consultancy, safeguarding training, and support to schools, academies, and MATs across Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands. Their offer includes DSL training, RSHE support, and mental health first aid programmes. You can find more information at [East Midlands Education Support Service](https://em-edsupport.org.uk/)

**Schools Portal**The Nottinghamshire Schools Portal is a central hub for safeguarding information, policy templates, training materials, and updates. It includes access to resources and other county-wide support services.More information can be found at:[Nottinghamshire Schools Portal](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal)

**Families First Partnership Programme (In Development)**This national programme supports the implementation of children’s social care reforms, including Family Help, multi-agency child protection, and Family Group Decision Making. Schools are expected to engage with local safeguarding partners to ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time. **Nottinghamshire is still in development of this and all schools and colleges will be notified of updates.** Information regarding the programme can found at: [Families First Guidance (2025)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6825b992a60aeba5ab34e006/The_families_first_partnership_programme_guide.pdf)

# Template Child Protection Policy – How to use

The Child Protection Policy should describe procedures which are in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the safeguarding partners. It should be ‘effective’ and updated annually (as a minimum) and be available publicly either via the school, academy, or college website or by other means*.*

**How to edit and use the Nottinghamshire Child Protection Policy template**

The template provided aims to:

* Provide a **framework** for schools to develop their own child protection and safeguarding policy.
* Ensure alignment with the latest statutory guidance, including [**Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf) and [**Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67cba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf).
* Support schools in embedding a **whole-school approach to safeguarding**, tailored to their individual context, ethos, and community.
* Clarify the **roles, responsibilities, and procedures** for safeguarding children, including how concerns should be identified, reported, and managed.
* Promote **consistency**, **compliance**, and **best practice** across Nottinghamshire education settings.

The template provided is designed to be ***customisable*** with clearly marked sections for school-specific content and supported by practical tools and appendices to aid implementation.

***Please pay attention to any red italicised text. The red italicised text signifies where schools and their relevant parties must specify information that is specific to how they intend to keep children safe, free from abuse and risk of exploitation.***

All content should be read and adjusted according to your school/learning environment profile. It should mirror your school’s safeguarding arrangements, and the procedures you have in place to manage, report/refer all child protection and safeguarding concerns.

This template from Nottinghamshire County Council is **only a framework** and should be seen as a starting point for development to fit your school, academy, or college individual context.

To ensure compliance with KCSIE 2025, your Child Protection Policy must be tailored to reflect the specific safeguarding needs of the children and young people on roll at your school, academy, college, or alternative provision setting. These needs will vary depending on the age range and context — for example, nursery, primary, secondary, post-16, and multi-academy trust settings. Where an academy is part of a multi-academy trust, it is essential that the policy content is agreed across the trust and reflects the safeguarding arrangements in place within each individual school.
Your policy should also address any known safeguarding issues within your school or local community and be aligned with the safeguarding procedures and expectations set out by Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Once the Headteacher/Principal, leadership team, and Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead have reviewed and agreed the content of the Child Protection Policy, it should be formally approved at a full Governing Body or Trust Board meeting early in the autumn term. Following approval, the policy must be published on the school, academy, or college website, ensuring it is readily accessible to parents and carers, safeguarding partners, and the wider community.

**What other documents support the Child Protection Policy template?**

There are three other documents provided by Nottinghamshire County Council to support the template.

* Nottinghamshire County Safeguarding Flowchart
* Nottinghamshire County Guidance for Body Maps
* Nottinghamshire County KCSIE 2025 Quiz

The flowchart and body maps can either be downloaded as separate documents, or an alternative version of the template can be found with these documents incorporated as appendices at the end of the policy.

**Contact**

Should you have any queries regarding this guidance or policy template please contact:
Zain Iqbal – Safeguarding Children in Education Officer
Email: zain.iqbal@nottscc.gov.uk
Phone: 07824482429

1. ‘school’ means: all schools whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools (including academies, free schools, and alternative provision academies), maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units – KCSIE (2025) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. ‘college’ means further education colleges and sixth-form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and institutions designated as being within the further education sector. College also means providers of post 16 Education as set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended) 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers. For colleges, the guidance relates to their responsibilities towards children who are receiving education or training at these institutions. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. KCSIE 2025 sets out what schools and colleges should and must do to safeguard children. The changes this year have been classed a technical change only and aren’t substantive. It is important to remember that KCSIE is for information only and the final draft will be published for September. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)