

Safeguarding Briefing

Edited by Andrew Hall
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Monday 10th November 2025

Asbestos & You - HSE

As you are well aware, asbestos is still present in a significant number of buildings, including schools. It is often hidden away in difficult-to-reach areas, which can make safe removal complicated and expensive.

Asbestos safety is not straightforward. There are legal duties, health risks, and practical considerations to balance.

How confident are you in your understanding of asbestos?

Take the quiz to find out:

<https://hse-hse.involve.me/asbestosandyouquiz>

Ofsted and AI

Ofsted has set out how inspectors will consider artificial intelligence in schools and care settings. AI is not judged as a separate issue, but inspectors will look at how its use by staff, pupils and parents affects safeguarding, data protection, equality and children's day to day experiences, both positive and negative.

Key points

- Ofsted does not inspect AI tools themselves, only their impact on children and learning.
- Providers are not required to use AI; decisions must be sensible and child focused.

- Inspectors may check policies on pupils using AI for homework and coursework.
- Risks considered include data protection, safeguarding, bias and discrimination.
- Evaluation focuses on leaders' decision making and the effect on children's experiences.

You can find their information here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-approach-to-ai/how-ofsted-looks-at-ai-during-inspection-and-regulation>

Safeguarding Update and Review

Thursday 27th November 2025, 4.00–5.30pm (live online session)

This live CPD session is for DSLs and school leaders who want a focused safeguarding update and structured time to review their term's work.

In the first part, I'll provide a clear, practical update on three key areas this term:

- new safeguarding requirements in early years
- the Operation Encompass mandatory guidance
- staff behaviour and professional boundaries, drawing on the review into the conduct of headteacher Neil Foden

The focus will be on what these developments actually mean in practice and what schools need to do next.

In the second part, I'll help you review this term's safeguarding work using the five Rs of effective safeguarding – Risk, Response, Refer, Record and Reflection – so you can identify patterns, spot pressures and identify a small number of priorities for next term. This is not supervision and we won't discuss individual children.

You'll leave up to date on key changes, with a simple 5R Termly Safeguarding Review you can use with SLT and governors, and a clearer sense of what needs to happen next. Although it's best experienced live,

an on-demand recording will be available afterwards for all registered delegates.

Places cost £59+VAT and can be booked here:

<https://event.webinarjam.com/gv91z/register/9kor9ug5g>

Question of the Week

If the age of consent for sexual activity is 16, why do we still have safeguarding laws and expectations for 17 and 18 year olds particularly around:

- relationships with adults in a position of trust
- sexual exploitation
- sexual images?

Answer

Even though the age of consent is 16, 16- and 17-year-olds are still children in safeguarding and child protection law.

Positions of trust: adults working in schools and similar settings have power, influence and authority. A sexual relationship between a member of staff and a student under 18 is a criminal offence because the power imbalance means the young person cannot genuinely give free consent. Other people in a position of trust include sports coaches, faith leaders and social workers. (See '*The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended in 2022)*')

Sexual exploitation: a young person can technically consent to sexual activity and still be groomed, coerced or exploited. The law recognises that 16- and 17-year-olds can be targeted and manipulated, so we still have a duty to see them as children who may need protection.

Sexual images: it is illegal to create, possess or share sexual images of anyone under 18.

In safeguarding, we do not think 'they are basically adults now'. We remember they are still children in law, and that these extra protections are there for good reasons.



Charity Wing Walk for Alex, The Leukodystrophy Charity

More donations always welcome!

Back in May I told you that my wife, Kate, and Bryony, her business partner at Harbour Counselling were intending to do a Wing Walk to raise funds for a small charity supporting children and adults with Leukodystrophy. Bryony and Kate are therapists and worked closely with a young person with Leukodystrophy and their family.

[Donate here](#)

Wing Walking is very weather-dependant and unfortunately the first (and second) flights were both called off. Further delays getting slots mean that it wasn't until last Sunday (2nd November) that they were finally able to get airborne.

Leukodystrophies are rare genetic disorders that mainly affect the white matter of the central nervous system (ie the brain or spinal cord). They affect people of all ages and backgrounds, most notably children. Leukodystrophies are usually degenerative and in many cases, this sadly means a reduced or limited lifespan.

[See Kate's video here](#)

It would be fantastic if you were able to donate to Kate and Bryony's Just Giving Page for Alex, the Leukodystrophy Charity here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/team/kate-bryony-1>

Kate and Bryony flew with [Classic Wings](#) at the Imperial War Museum Duxford.

Parental Use of Cannabis (Kent Safeguarding Partnership)

Clear Minds Safer Homes is a new Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership campaign that challenges the myth that cannabis is “low risk”, highlighting how parental use can undermine supervision, decision making and emotional availability, while also potentially exposing children to illegal activity in and around the home, including drug dealing, unsafe adults and potential police involvement.

Use of cannabis can lead to:

- **Impaired supervision and decision making:** being intoxicated or heavily stoned can reduce a parent’s awareness of risks, delay their responses, and make accidents or neglect more likely.
- **Emotional unavailability and inconsistent care:** regular use can affect mood, motivation and engagement, so children may experience unpredictability, poor routines and reduced emotional warmth.

Find the resources here:

<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/clear-minds-safer-homes>

Report: England Schools Online Safety Policy & Practice Assessment 2025 (SWGfL)

SWGfL’s new national analysis of online safety in England’s schools shows steady improvements in digital safeguarding, but also highlights persistent weaknesses in leadership training, community engagement, and collaboration with external agencies.

Almost half of schools report no engagement with external stakeholders around online safety, and nearly 41% provide no online safety training for governors.

You can read the full report here:

<https://swgfl.org.uk/360report2025/>

Forthcoming Courses

Advanced Safeguarding for Designated Safeguarding Leads

"I just wanted to say that I thought today's training was absolutely fantastic. By a mile it was the most engaging training I have done."

Next live online Advanced Safeguarding Course:

Wednesday 26th November 2025 [Book Online](#)

The on-demand version is available year-round and is updated regularly [Book Online](#)

Take a look at our other courses here:

<https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/availablecourses>

Many of our online courses are available in [Safeguarding.Pro](#) with full-year access included.

Are you a busy DSL with no time?

Need a place to ask questions. find support and download resources

Click here and join Safeguarding.Pro today!