

Safeguarding Briefing

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Specialist Safeguarding Consultant



19th January 2026

Anxiety Toolkit - Anna Freud Organisation

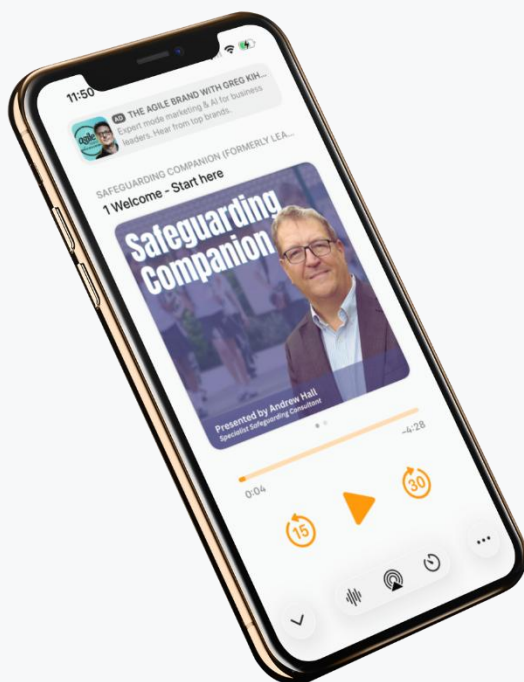
We all get anxious, no matter the age. Anxiety is simply the brain's response to new situations and constitutes its preparations to deal with the unknown. That is not a pleasant feeling, blood rushes to the arms and legs, the heart quickens and the brain can feel constrained and dazzled.

Without support to help them understand and manage these feelings, children may find it harder to recognise what is happening or to manage anxiety's effects in the moment. It is, though, vital that children learn to handle anxiety and even use it to propel them forward in complex environments.

The Anna Freud Organisation has recently published resources aimed at teachers tackling this topic in the classroom.

You can find the toolkit here:

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/lets-talk-about-anxiety-animation-and-teacher-toolkit/>



The Safeguarding Companion

- members-only audio-first CPD
- published on Mondays during term time, alongside the Safeguarding Briefing
- listen on your commute, during a walk, or at the end of the day
- informed by current issues, emerging topics, serious case reviews, and my four decades in schools
- £9.97 monthly

Join Safeguarding Companion

Online Grooming (Breck Foundation)

In February 2014, 14-year-old Breck Bednar from Surrey was groomed online by an 18-year-old male he met through gaming. Over several months, the older individual manipulated Breck into trusting him and distancing himself from his family. Breck was lured to a flat under false pretences and was fatally stabbed. The offender later pleaded guilty and received a life sentence with a minimum term of 25 years.

Following Breck's death, his mother set up the Breck Foundation in his memory to raise awareness of online grooming, exploitation and digital risk, and to educate children, families and professionals so that other young people are better protected when using online spaces.

Today, the charity works nationally with schools, parents and professionals to improve understanding of online harm, gaming-related

grooming and digital resilience, using Breck's story to help prevent similar tragedies and strengthen safeguarding practice around online safety.

Their website resources are available here:

<https://www.breckfoundation.org>

Vacancy for an Education Programme Officer (East of England)

The charity is currently recruiting an Education Programme Officer (East of England) to deliver its online safety work in schools and community settings. The role focuses on delivering talks to children, parents and professionals, working alongside school safeguarding leads, and helping build ongoing relationships with schools.

The role would suit someone confident delivering sensitive safeguarding content, with a strong understanding of online harm, good organisational skills, and the resilience to work respectfully with Breck's story.

Occasional evening and weekend work is required.

The closing date is Monday 9th February 2026 at 10:00am

Full details are here: <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/breck-foundation/education-programme-officer-east-of-england-/1053192>

Question of the Week

Reviewing our safeguarding reporting system, I see the following entry:

A Year 8 pupil reports that another student has been repeatedly targeting them over several weeks. This has included being shoved and tripped in corridors, having their bag emptied and belongings damaged, being called degrading names linked to their ethnicity, and being filmed on a mobile phone and mocked in a group chat. There has been no sexual language or sexual behaviour involved.

Which safeguarding category or categories do you think this concern falls under?

Suggested answer (for discussion feedback)

This concern would appropriately be categorised as child-on-child abuse. People sometimes think that child-on-child abuse refers only to sexual abuse.

In this case there is no sexual behaviour involved, the concern describes abusive behaviour by one child towards another, including physical,

discriminatory and online abuse, all of which fall within KCSIE's definition of child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse is an umbrella term for harm caused by another child.

Key points to think about:

- Child-on-child abuse is defined by who is causing the harm, not by whether the harm is sexual.
- Harm can be cumulative, repeated "smaller" incidents can amount to serious abuse.
- Labelling this only as "behaviour" or "bullying" may reduce safeguarding oversight and delay appropriate support.
- The presence of discriminatory language and online abuse increases the seriousness of the concern.
- Categorisation matters because it begins to shape the response
- How might our response change if this is recognised as child-on-child abuse rather than only bullying?
- What safeguarding actions might be missed if the pattern of harm is not fully recognised?
- How can recording systems support staff to capture overlapping forms of harm, rather than forcing a single label?

UPDATED GUIDANCE

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE)

From Wednesday 1st April 2026, all schools in England must comply with updated statutory requirements on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. These changes apply to maintained schools, academies and independent schools.

What has changed?

- **New legal duties to record and report** incidents involving reasonable force, seclusion and restraint (including non-force restraint), with records completed the same day.
- **Mandatory information for parents**, with written notification provided wherever possible on the same day, even where interventions are part of an agreed plan.

- **Clearer statutory guidance** on what must be recorded, why interventions were necessary, and what de-escalation was attempted first.
- **New national guidance on seclusion**, which was not previously covered.
- **Stronger emphasis on prevention and de-escalation**, reducing reliance on restrictive interventions.
- **Greater focus on SEND, safeguarding and leadership oversight**, including analysis of incident patterns and disproportionate impact.

Further guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Safeguarding Companion - Latest Episode

Travelling to and from school (15 minutes)

Andrew Hall examines how routine, familiarity, and distraction can quietly mask safeguarding risks, challenging assumptions about everyday environments and how children and young people navigate spaces adults consider safe.

[Join the Safeguarding Companion here](#)

Combatting Extremism in the Classroom - free webinar for schools (LGfL) 4th February 2026 3.45pm

Protecting students against the threat of extremism and online exploitation can be challenging, particularly in today's ever-changing landscape. LGfL are hosting a free webinar to support staff in tackling extremism in the classroom on **Wednesday 4th February at 3.45pm**.

This one-hour webinar provides Safeguarding, PSHE and RSHE leads with an overview of effective strategies, cross-curricular activities and practical tips to help build young people's resilience to extremist narratives, manage challenging conversations and promote critical thinking online. The session will explore age-appropriate resources for lessons and assemblies, helping to unpick the building blocks of extremism and enabling staff to address:

- online hate and free speech
- disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories
- peer pressure and identity

- exploitation and grooming
- protective factors
- barriers to disclosure and the consequences of not challenging extremist behaviour

Suitable for Safeguarding, PSHE, RSHE and Curriculum leads, this webinar supports a whole-school approach to safeguarding.

To book go to: <https://lgfl.bookinglive.com/book/add/p/249>

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 21st January 2026 [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.

Until next time, keep safe,

Andrew Hall

Specialist Safeguarding Consultant



Safeguarding Companion
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The banner features a smartphone on the left displaying the 'Safeguarding Companion' app interface. On the right is a portrait of Andrew Hall, a man with glasses and a blue shirt. The background is a solid blue color.