

KCSIE 2026: Revisions (TBC by DFE) in detail below

Schools shouldn't "initiate any action" on social transition

- Guidance applies where a school is responding to a request relating to social transition made by a pupil or their parent/carer. The school should take a "very careful" approach, as accommodating social transition is an "active intervention"
- Make sure that support for pupils in keeps their options open
- Consider writing a policy that sets out the steps that your school will go through when a child requests support.
- When considering a request for support with social transition, document and keep records of your decision-making process
- Consider how best to fulfil your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in your school, and what the impact of any decision would be on all those affected. This means considering what is in the best interests of the child and other children. A decision about social transition may not be the same as the child's wishes
- As circumstances and needs may change over time, schools may also need to revisit your decisions or approach to a child's social transition at appropriate points.
- Individual members of staff should not adopt any changes related to social transition unless a decision has been made by the school in consultation with parents/carers
- Involve parents/carers in the process:
 - Engage with parents/carers as a "matter of priority" if a child questioning their gender asks for support (paragraph 260).
 - Practically, this means informing them of a pupil's request to socially transition.
 - However, if a pupil confides their feelings about gender to a staff member but doesn't ask school to make changes to how they're treated – in other words, the pupil doesn't request to socially transition at school – the school is not required to share this with parents/carers, except in cases of a related safeguarding risk
 - There may also be "rare circumstances" where involving a child's parents/carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them. In these cases, the DSL should determine what action is needed to safeguard the child before any decisions are taken or the parents/carers are contacted.

- Schools must maintain single-sex facilities.
 - Schools must not allow pupils into facilities designated for the opposite biological sex, with "no exceptions". Schools need to make this clear to the child when discussing their request for social transition. This includes:
 - Toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - Boarding or residential accommodation
 - Participation in sports designated for the opposite sex where there are safety reasons for single sex e.g. PE
 - There is more guidance on this in paragraphs 94 to 97 (sports), 104 to 115 (toilets and changing rooms) and 191 to 196 (accommodation)
- Schools are expected to make all relevant staff aware of a child's biological sex in all cases
- Schools are legally required to record a child's biological sex accurately wherever it is recorded
- Schools should support pupils and staff who may find the guidance upsetting
- Some pupils and staff may feel worried or upset by some of the language or guidance included in the draft document, or by headlines or misconceptions they may have seen about the proposed changes. Make it clear to them that they can talk to you or another trusted member of the leadership team about their concerns.

New expectation for all staff to read Part 1 of KCSIE in full

- Under the new guidance, all school staff are expected to read part 1 of the document in full (currently, schools can decide whether to let staff who don't work directly with children read a condensed version).
- Annex A – the condensed version of part 1 in KCSIE 2025 – has been removed.

New expectations for child protection policies

- The policy should:
 - Recognise that dismissing abuse as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of misogyny
 - Clarify that for some (but not all) forms of child-on-child abuse, it's more likely that girls will be victims and boys the perpetrators

- Include the school's approach to the consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos made using AI, e.g. deepfakes
- Include "physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon" and "harmful sexual behaviour, including misogyny" as forms that child-on-child abuse can take

Mental health

- Mental health problems can develop into safeguarding concerns, rather than just being indicators that a child may have suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation. These concerns could include:
 - Self-harm
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Risk of suicide
- There's a new list of warning signs that staff should look out for that might indicate a child is struggling with their mental health.
- It provides new guidance on the steps staff should take if they have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, and what to do in an emergency.

Serious violence

- New guidance on serious violence as a safeguarding concern. It lists activities that might fall under "serious violence", including:
 - Physical assault
 - Carrying, threatening with, or using weapons
 - The fact that it could occur in the context of peer conflict, bullying, or criminal exploitation
- The updated guidance includes schools' key role in protecting children from violence, and information on early, evidence-based support for those considered at risk.

Mobile phone policies

- All schools should be mobile phone-free by default.
- Schools are expected to implement a policy where pupils don't have access to their phones throughout the day, in line with DfE advice on mobile phones in schools. It's up to headteachers to decide how best to achieve this within your school's own unique context.

Guidance on AI

- New links to resources to support DSLs in making decisions around the use of generative AI in school. (para 160-1)
- Clarification that:
 - Intimate images can be generated using AI, e.g. through deepfakes
 - Generative AI applications can simulate harmful online interaction for young people

Those requiring mental health support

- Staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. While school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat mental health problems, they still have an important role to play by:
 - Promoting good mental wellbeing and preventing the onset of mental illness
 - Observing pupils and identifying early those who may be experiencing mental health problems or at risk of developing one
 - Ensuring early targeted support is provided
 - Working with/making referrals to specialist services where needed
- The guidance also contains information on support from the mental health support team (MHST) and links to available mental health resources.

Young carers

- Schools should be alert to the needs of young carers and recognise that caring responsibilities can impact:
 - Attendance
 - Attainment
 - Behaviour
 - Wellbeing
- It sets out the importance of early identification to make sure young carers receive the right support.

Safeguarding children with medical conditions

- A child having a medical condition isn't in itself an indicator that a child is at greater safeguarding risk.
- If a clinical incident takes place at school, the DSL should work with the responsible healthcare professional to consider whether any safeguarding duty has been triggered and what action is required.

Updated guidance on child-on-child sexual harassment and violence

- Part 5 of the draft guidance contains several changes in discussing sexual harassment and sexual violence between children, to clarify that harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- Throughout part 5, HSB is included alongside sexual harassment and sexual violence in guidance on how to prepare for, respond to, and take action following incidents.
- The guidance clarifies that all instances of harmful sexual behaviour should be responded to with the same safeguarding principles, and considered within a child protection context. It specifically refers to misogyny as a form of inappropriate behaviour that requires early intervention

Definition updates and clarifications

- Replacing the terms “indecent”, “nude, semi-nude” and “also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery” with “self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes”
- Replacing the term "so-called honour-based abuse" with "honour or faith-based abuse"
- Further references to misogyny throughout the guidance
- New references to trainee teachers added throughout part 4, in regard to concerns and allegations made about staff
- New references to community-based early help and family help resources that staff should be aware of
- An expanded list of children who staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for, including those who are parents or pregnant, those who have exhibited early signs of harmful behaviour, and pupils repeatedly removed from the classroom
- Clarification on the definition of emotional abuse to include verbal abuse
- Clarification that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both victims and alleged perpetrators
- Adding new expectations to have robust cover arrangements for the DSL role (for example, using a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system) to ensure the continuity of safeguarding responsibilities
- Adding "racism" and "derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict" to behaviours that schools should create a culture of zero tolerance to through preventative education

- Updated definitions of online risk categories
- Updates to the definition of "reasonable force" in line with restrictive intervention guidance
- Clarification of the definitions of categories of visitors to schools