

**Safeguarding Practice Audits**

**Guidance for Schools and Colleges**

**Introduction**

[The Education Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents)section 175 and 157,makes it a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, [Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf) sets out how schools and colleges must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Status of education settings:

**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.

**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). 316-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.

**Governing bodies and proprietors:** in auditdocument, this is abbreviated this to GB / P

KCSiE uses the terms **“must”** and **“should**”, “**must**” is when it is a legal required to do something and “**should**” when the advice set out should be followed unless there is good reason not to, the Safeguarding practice standard and descriptors **that you are required to evidence are** based on this concept.

In preparation for an audit there are other associated statutory and local guidance’s that should be read in conjunction with the appropriate section of KCSiE and the status of the setting.

* [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf).
* [Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)
* [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/section/ZA2)
* [What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused](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)

These are some other recommended resources:

* [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/hscp.aspx)
* [The continuum of need](https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/families-first-interactive-process-map.pdf#:~:text=If%20the%20family%20isn%E2%80%99t%20already%20receiving%20support%2C%20the,child%20is%20at%20imminent%20risk%20of%20serious%20harm%29.)
* [information sharing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice)
* [General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)](https://www.gov.uk/data-protection)

**Quality Assurance**

The purpose of auditing safeguarding practice is to ensures schools / colleges are providing high-quality standards and promote continuous improvement in practice to keep children safe, from a management perspective, they can ensure regulatory standards are met.

Auditing and quality assurance provides an opportunity to demonstrate how a school is operating efficiently and effectively, adhering to high standards that aim to provide a consistent and excellent education that helps children and young people develop academically, socially, emotionally in order to achieve their best outcomes.

The audit tools that the CPSLO service have produced are based on key parts and annexes of KCSiE, they are designed to support schools/ colleges leadership and management to self-evaluate safeguarding specifically to areas of practice and the role and responsibilities of whole school staff including management. By scrutinising schools’ frameworks, procedures, and policies leadership and management can reinforce the school’s vision, ethos and keep track of the strategic direction and further embed this in the **‘whole school approach’.**

Auditing and quality assurance can demonstrate schools’ strengths and areas for improvement, this can serve to offer reassurance to external inspections and stakeholders e.g. making enquiries about if safeguarding practice compliance and contractual requirements for safeguarding are being met.

The initiative, oversight and planning of all audits is the responsibility of the management and leadership team in any status of education setting, typically this will be, Headteacher / Principal, DSL, Chair / Vice chair of governance board and the equivalent within Academy trusts and independent schools.

It is important that whoever leads on an audit canvasses the views and values of a range of stakeholders regarding their understanding of the safeguarding practice within the setting, this can include, staff, volunteers, CYP / voice, parents / carers and other relevant partner agencies if applicable. This will enhance the quality of the analysis and action planning at the end of the process.

The criteria for undertaking an audit can be initiated in a number of ways for the purpose of the audits that CPSLO service have produced there are two main factors:

1. **Inhouse -** Education setting initiates to self-evaluate the standard of their safeguarding practice and it could also be that an inspection is imminent and therefore they want to prepare for this. The education management and leaders may be experienced in undertaking audits in house and independently e.g. not requiring external support. Therefore, guidance and materials can be accessed on the CPSLO service page of Hertfordshire grid for learning [Child protection: policies, procedures and forms - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/policies-procedures-and-forms)

This stated, the education lead auditor may have some initial queries about undertaking an audit, if so, they can contact the CPSLO service for advice. If you know who the CPSLO is for your school / college, you can contact them directly, if not please email [cpsloadmin@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cpsloadmin@hertfordshire.gov.uk) this will be passed on to the appropriate CPSLO for the settings district.

1. **CPSLO service initiates audit as part of their Quality assurance and improvement in Practice role -**

Regulators (Ofsted / ISI, DfE) and other professional bodies receive a range of queries, complaints and allegations from professionals and members of the public, including material on social media platforms and topics of public interest.

They will request reassurance from the Local Authority in a number of ways to help inform their decision making regarding a particular setting. Depending on the nature of the concern/referral the education settings management may receive contact from the Local Authority Designated Officer service or / and CPSLO to make enquiries to whether alleged incidents are known to have happened and to ratify the quality of decision making and actions by the setting.

The information may be anonymous, or our services may not be able to disclose where we received information from, but we will require all known information by the setting; given that both our services are employed by the LA we would be acting on their behalf and therefore would have the right to ask to see sight of investigations or records held by the setting if necessary.

In these circumstances it is important to note that CPSLO role is not to regulate or comment on whether safeguarding is effective or not (only regulators can make these judgements) but we are in a position to provide reassurance back to the source raising the query.

It can be as a result of these types of circumstances that either the education setting or the CPSLO service (on behalf of LA) consider it beneficial to all parties to seek more in-depth reassurance of the safeguarding practice and procedures in the given setting. This is the criteria for the CPSLO service to offer support and oversight of an audit to be undertaken by the setting.

The CPSLO service has separate guidance for this process and would in the first instance contact the setting management and discuss further what this would entail, however audits templates for both criteria are the same.

**Framework to evidence Safeguarding Practice**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Columns | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** |
| **Ref. #**  Number area of safeguarding for tracking purposes. | **Safeguarding practice standard and descriptors**  Minimum statutory requirements e.g. **‘Must’** and **‘Should’**  (practice in accordance with KCSiE) | **Evidence/examples of what practice is in place or not.**  School audit lead can provide examples to evidence practice, this will inform the rag rate e.g. Met, partially Met or Not met. | **RAG rate**   |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | | **Notes for action planning (Action required, by whom and when.)**  This section will form part of the final action plan (see section **E** at the end of the document) |

**Rag rating**

The ‘safeguarding descriptors’ set out in column **A** can be used to measure if the minimum standard of safeguarding practice is met, partially met or not. The outcomes of these in columns **B, C and D** can be transferred to the action plan **E,** on the last page.

**Rag rating**

The ‘safeguarding descriptors’ set out in column A can be used to measure if the minimum standard of safeguarding practice is met, partially met or not. The outcomes of these in columns B & D can be transferred to the action plan section on the last page.

**RED** - **Not met** - Insufficient evidence that safeguarding practice standards are being met, no examples stated in column **B**. Immediate action requiredto develop this to safer practice standard of **‘met’** rating.

**AMBER** - **Partially met** - Some evidence of good safeguarding practice standards met but not sufficiently evidenced in column **B**. Action required within one month to further development this practice standard to ‘**met’** rating.

**GREEN** - **Met** -Sufficient examples evidenced in column **B** This can be monitored to ensure continuous on-going good practice standards and date can be set to review this action.

**Types of audits and who can be involved.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Audit Type in accordance with KCSiE** | **Who can be involved in audits?**  *NB If school management / leaders do not act as the lead auditor, ensure they are asked for their views on safeguarding practice arrangements.* |
| **Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff:**  Provides the operational practice guidance for schools and colleges e.g. what staff should know and do to safeguard and promote the welfare of CYP.  **Who does part one relates to in schools / colleges?**  All staff including management and leadership. | **Those responsible for leading on this audit:**   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors /trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee   Who can you canvass for their understanding and views about safeguarding practice in school / college:   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors / trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee * Staff / volunteers * Parents / cares * Children / young people * Partner agencies |
| **Part two: The management of safeguarding**:  Responsibilities of governing bodies, proprietors, and management committees they should ensure that:  **Who does part two relate to in schools / colleges?**  Governance has strategic oversight of safeguarding arrangements as above which ultimately affects everyone in an operational role in the school. | **Those responsible for leading on this audit:**  Any of these or a combination e.g. head /DSL and C of G / or and Link governor for safeguarding.   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors /trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee   Who can you canvass for their understanding and views about safeguarding practice in school / college:   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors / trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee * Staff / volunteers * Parents / cares * Children / young people * Partner agencies |
| **Annex C:** **Role of the designated safeguarding lead:**  DSLs and deputies DSLs must have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their duties in accordance with their job description in relation to:  **Who does Annex C relate to in schools / colleges?**  Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies | **Those responsible for leading on this audit:**   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors /trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee   Who can you canvass for their understanding and views about safeguarding practice in school / college:   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors / trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee * Staff / volunteers * Parents / cares * Children / young people * Partner agencies |
| **Safeguarding Record Audit:**  This is a toolkit to assist the schools safeguarding team to quality assure that their child protection files are kept up to date, information is share in compliance with the data protection act and GDPR, (confidential) and stored securely.  NB recommended if you are due Ofsted / ISI  **Who does this relate to in schools / colleges?**  Whole schools safeguarding systems in place to identify concerns, record and report / refer to appropriate support and protection services. | **Those responsible for leading on this audit:**   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Link Governor / trustee or management in governance can participate but not have access to CYP records)   Who can you canvass for their understanding and views about safeguarding practice in school / college:   * Headteacher / principal * DSL /DDSL * Chair and Vice chair of Governors / trustees * Link safeguarding governor / trustee * Staff / volunteers * Parents / cares * Children / young people * Partner agencies   [Safeguarding records - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (thegrid.org.uk)](https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/safeguarding-records) |

All audits and other guidance can be accessed on CPSLO service page, of Hertfordshire Grid for Learning

[Child protection: policies, procedures and forms - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/policies-procedures-and-forms)

[Safeguarding records - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/safeguarding-records)

**Child Protection School Liaison Service**

Please find our contact details here: [Child protection schools liaison team handbook - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/child-protection-school-liaison-team-handbook)