

# Keeping learners safe

A summary version



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Introduction

Wales is a great place to grow up. There are so many opportunities for children to learn, take part, be active and have safe, happy, healthy lives.

The Welsh Government wants all children to enjoy these opportunities. So, we have put strong safeguarding laws and systems in place to keep everyone safe.

**Safeguarding means protecting children from harm, abuse and neglect.**

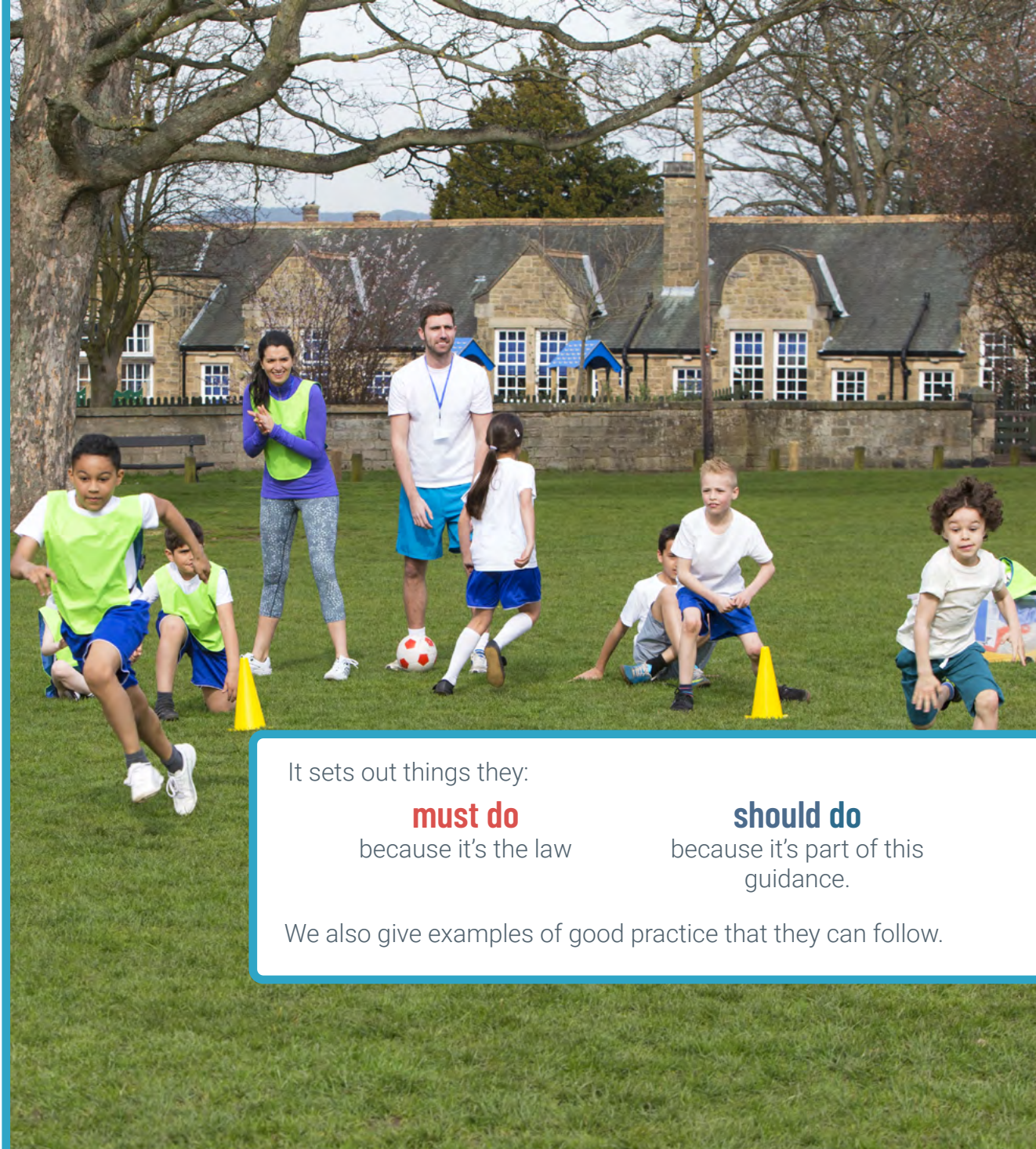
All local authorities, schools and colleges in Wales have a legal duty to protect and promote the well-being of children under 18.

Education settings are in a good position to spot signs of abuse, neglect or harm. We want to make sure they have all the guidance and support they need to keep children safe and promote their well-being. So, we have written this **Safeguarding Guidance**.

This Guidance **must** be read and followed by:

- local authorities
- governing bodies
- all schools including nursery schools and independent schools
- all colleges.

It is effective practice for wider education settings and agencies to follow this guidance too.



It sets out things they:

**must do**

because it's the law

**should do**

because it's part of this guidance.

We also give examples of good practice that they can follow.

# About safeguarding in Wales

## All education settings must:

- reduce risks
- take the right actions to keep children safe
- follow the law
- follow all national and local policies, guidance and procedures
- have their own policies and procedures
- know about safeguarding needs in their area.

## If they don't, we can take action.

### Single point of contact

Each local authority **must** have a safeguarding single point of contact for people working with children. This helps everyone know where to go if they think a child is at risk.

### Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

Each school or college **must** have a DSP. Everyone working in the school and college should:

- know who their local authority contact is
- know their DSP.

### Safeguarding Children Boards

Each local authority is a member of a Safeguarding Children Board. This Board works across different services, including education. Local authorities **must** make sure the Director of Education is a member of the Board and attends meetings.

## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children under 18. It's at the heart of everything we do in Wales. Adults should make sure all children can enjoy these rights, including the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect (Article 19).

We want all services to:

- put children's rights at the centre of planning and delivery
- give every child an equal opportunity
- build children's capabilities so they can experience their rights
- listen to children and taking their views into account
- be accountable for decisions and actions that affect children's lives.

## Inspections

All schools and colleges are inspected by Estyn, and sometimes the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Inspectors look at how they keep children safe and check their safeguarding policy.

It's good practice for the Designated Safeguarding Person to check how the school keeps children safe at least once a year.

### We also keep children safe through:

- **The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.** These help services understand their roles and responsibilities: [safeguarding.wales](https://www.safeguarding.wales/).
- **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.** This law sets out how schools and colleges should step in early when they think a child is at risk and keep them safe.
- **The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.** This law has a Duty to Report. Schools and colleges **must** tell the local authority when they believe a child is at risk.
- **The Equality Act 2010.** Local authorities, schools and colleges **must** be fair places that treat everyone equally.



# Safeguarding roles and responsibilities

It's everyone's job to keep children safe. Each part of the education system has a role and responsibility.

## Local authorities

Every local authority is responsible for protecting children. They **must** have a designated lead officer of safeguarding for education.

The local authority should make sure:

- their senior education officers are on the SCB
- they support services to work together
- they work with other partners like the police and health services
- all education settings have all the resources they need to keep children safe
- they work with independent, voluntary-aided and foundation schools
- all schools are following this guidance
- teachers and school governors have all the training, support and advice they need
- all staff have up-to-date safeguarding training
- they know and support each school's DSP and designated governor
- all schools have policies and steps for dealing with issues, including allegations against staff
- schools do the right employment checks, including DBS checks.

Local authorities are responsible for the safety of children:

- waiting for a school place
- in pupil referral units
- who are home tutored.



Local authorities have three different responsibility levels:

- **strategic responsibilities** – to make sure their plans, resources and systems keep all children safe
- **support responsibilities** – to make sure they support all education settings in the right ways
- **operational responsibilities** – to make sure all their day-to-day working and actions keep all children safe.

## Governing bodies

Governing bodies **must**:

- make sure the school or college has safeguarding protection policies and procedures
- carry out the right checks for new staff and volunteers including DBS checks
- make sure all head teachers, teachers and other staff have up-to-date training
- make sure clear guidance is given to temporary staff
- make sure the DSP, the designated governor and the chair of governors work with the Safeguarding Children's Board and other services.

Schools and colleges should have a designated governor for safeguarding. They take responsibility for child protection. All members of governing bodies should:

- have safeguarding and child protection training in their first term
- complete the Keeping Learners Safe modules.

## Head teachers, principals and leaders

Head teachers, principals and leaders **must** make sure all teachers, staff and volunteers:

- follow the safeguarding protection policies and procedures
- have the resources they need to keep children safe
- have time to train and take part in meetings
- know how to raise concerns about a child in the right ways
- know who the schools DSP is and how to contact them.

They should:

- promote open communication between staff and pupils
- have more than one DSP if their school size needs it
- make sure the DSP has all the resources and support they need
- give the DSP time to take part in safeguarding meetings and help other services assess a child's needs.





## Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

The role of the DSP is to keep children safe, give advice and support staff. Their role is **not** to investigate allegations or claims of abuse.

The DSP **must**:

- be a senior member of staff, able to make decisions or take action
- have training in safeguarding
- be available to discuss any concerns
- know how to recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and harm, including online abuse
- know how to report concerns to the local authority or the police
- keep the head teacher up to date with all child protection concerns.

They should:

- communicate with learners and staff
- be up to date with ongoing cases or concerns
- have support from leadership
- have at least one deputy to help them
- work with other services so they know about risks in their area
- check policy and practice at the school or college at least once a year
- make sure staff, learners and their families have all the information they need, in ways they can understand.

If a child has a Care and Support Protection Plan, the DSP should be involved.

## Initial Teacher Education Partnerships

Some schools and colleges partner with Universities and have student teachers. They **must** make sure all student teachers are safe to work with children in schools. They should make sure student teachers:

- have support for their well-being
- develop good working practices around safeguarding
- know about all the law and guidance about safeguarding.

## Owners of independent schools

If the owner of the school isn't the head teacher, they **must**:

- communicate regularly with the head teacher
- keep up to date and with all the safeguarding issues.

If a school provides accommodation for children, they **must** register with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). These schools are inspected by CIW and Estyn.

## Work-based learning providers

The provider **must** make sure children are safe. They should:

- check all staff are safe to work with children
- give guidance on safeguarding
- have a designated safeguarding lead officer
- train and support all staff on safeguarding.

## Contractors

Any contractor working at the school or college **must** have had a DBS check. They can use the:

- [DBS eligibility tool](#)
- [DBS website](#).

## All teachers, staff and volunteers

Everyone should:

- understand the safeguarding policy
- have induction and refresher training covering safeguarding
- understand the causes of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
- be able to recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
- know what to do if they have concerns.

All staff **must** have refresher training at least every two years.

The DSP **must** keep a record of all staff training, including the dates and details of the provider.



# Responding to concerns

When everyone works together and responds to concerns in the right way, it makes a big difference to children's lives.

All schools and colleges should:

- work with local authorities, the police, health services and other services
- build relationships with other services
- have clear steps for making referrals and sharing information
- make referrals quickly so children and families get the support they need when they need it.

The DSP should:

- help staff
- work closely with other services
- make sure everyone is aware of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures: [safeguarding.wales](https://www.gov.wales/safeguarding).

## Information

Schools and colleges **must** share and explain all policies and procedures as part of the staff induction process. During induction, staff **must** be given information about the DSP and how to contact them. All staff should:

- be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
- be aware that abuse, neglect and harm can affect anyone
- speak to the DSP if they have concerns
- know they can contact the local authority children's social services team if they need to
- always act in the best interests of the child.



## The right response to safeguarding concerns

Anyone who expresses concerns about a child to the school or college **must** never be asked to make a self-report to social services or the police. Their concerns **must** be shared with the DSP.

Concerns **must** be shared with social services in a report. This doesn't always lead to further action, but it helps build a picture so families get the support they need quickly.

All information and reports **must**:

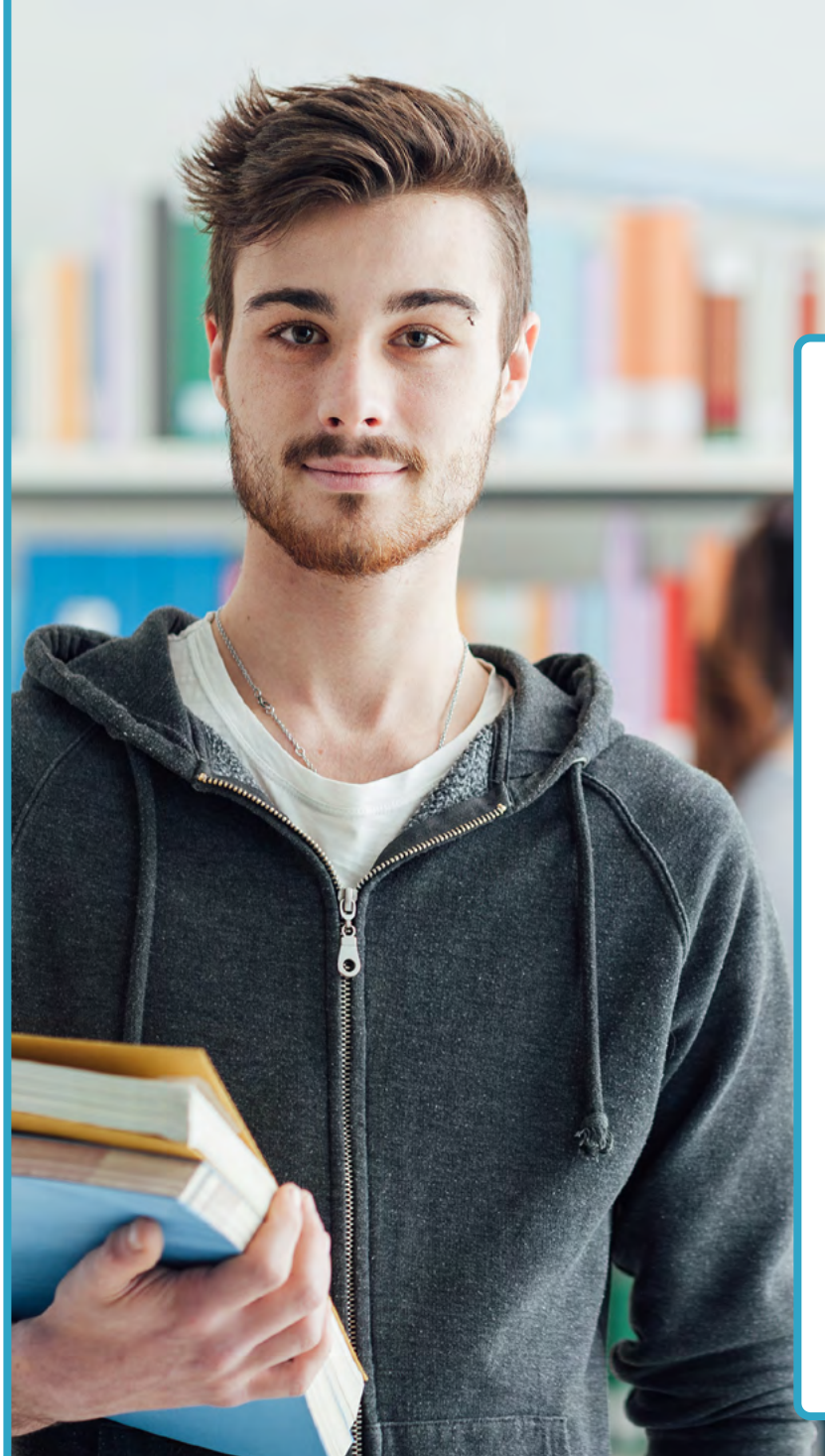
- be accurate, concise and clear
- be kept confidential and only shared in the right ways.

## Getting advice

Every school and college **must** have a suitable system in place for staff to get advice and collect information. If staff have concerns, they **must** talk to the DSP.

## Investigations

Schools and colleges **must** not carry out their own investigations. If the concern is about a member of staff, schools and colleges **must** report it to the local authority or the police.



## Listening to the child

All schools and colleges should be a safe place for children to talk about things that affect them. Staff should:

- encourage children to speak out about concerns
- share clear information about helplines and peer support schemes.

Children will talk about their concerns and problems with people they feel they can trust and are comfortable with. This may not be a teacher or the DSP. If a child talks to a member of staff, they **must**:

- write a full record of the conversation as soon as possible stating time, full date, place, circumstance of the meeting, who was present
- be clear about facts, observations, allegations and opinions
- note any action taken or comments / advice given
- sign, time and date it
- contact the DSP.

## Welsh language

All schools and colleges should:

- make the active offer of Welsh language part of all their work
- be sensitive to other language and cultural needs when talking about sensitive issues.

## Involving parents or carers

Parents and carers need to understand that schools and colleges have a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. It's good practice to include this in the prospectus and information given to families.

The child's safety **must** come first. If it's safe, discuss any concerns about a child's well-being with their family. If it's not safe, contact the DSP.

The DSP will work with other services and the police to decide what happens next.

## Additional learning needs

All schools and colleges should:

- understand that children with additional learning needs may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect and harm
- understand the barriers they may face (especially around communication)
- provide any additional safeguards needed to protect them.

## Culture and beliefs

All schools and colleges should:

- get to know the culture and beliefs of families in their community
- deal with sensitive issues like female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

## Past experiences

Experience of abuse and neglect can make children more vulnerable. Staff should be aware of this.

## Immediate concerns

Schools and colleges **must** tell the local authority if they believe a child is at serious risk. If there are immediate concerns about a child's safety, the police **must** be contacted straight away.

### Reporting concerns to social services or the police

The DSP **must** decide whether to report to social services and/or the police. The report **must**:

- be in writing
- have all the basic information including cause for concern
- be sent within 24 hours.

If a report is made in person or by telephone, it **must** be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Outside of office hours, reports **must** be made to the social services emergency duty service or to the police.

The DSP should:

- share the report with the staff member involved and the head teacher or principal
- explain what is happening, who is taking the actions and why.



## Information-sharing

Information needs to be shared in the right ways. The DSP should make decisions about what information to share.

The Safeguarding Children's Board should make sure all schools and colleges know how to share information safely.

## Duty of confidentiality

There are times, when it's in the best interest of a child, that confidential information needs to be shared. If this needs to happen the school or college should:

- support the child
- tell the child, unless it puts them at further risk
- make sure any decision is recorded.

## Record-keeping

The DSP **must**:

- keep detailed and accurate written records of safeguarding concerns in a secure place
- keep these records confidential and separate from other learner records
- send a copy to a child's new school or college when they move
- understand how long records should be kept once the child has left your environment.

# Safeguarding in specific circumstances

Teachers, staff and volunteers should know the signs of a child at risk of harm, neglect and abuse so they can raise their concerns and safeguard children.

## All Wales Practice Guides:

- [Safeguarding children from Child Criminal Exploitation \(CCE\)](#)
- [Safeguarding children from child neglect](#)
- [Safeguarding children from Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\)](#)
- [Safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse](#)
- [Safeguarding children from harmful practices related to tradition, culture, religion or superstition](#)
- [Safeguarding children where there are concerns about Harmful Sexual Behaviour \(HSB\)](#)
- [Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care](#)
- [Safeguarding children from online abuse](#)
- [Safeguarding children who may be trafficked](#)
- [Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children \(UASC\).](#)

## Peer-on-peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

The DSP should have training to understand and recognise this type of abuse. Schools and colleges should use:

- [Wales Practice Guide on Safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation \(CSE\)](#)
- [Wales Practice Guide on Safeguarding children where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour.](#)

More guidance is available on Hwb.

## Child abuse images and the internet

Schools and colleges should use the guidance, training and support from:

- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre](#)
- [Wales Practice Guide on Safeguarding Children from Online Abuse.](#)





## Children missing from home or care

Schools and colleges should:

- use their attendance records to spot patterns of absences
- stay in contact with parents and carers
- follow up quickly to make sure a child is safe.

Attendance records can highlight concerns and prevent abuse. If a child is missing, schools and colleges should refer to:

- [Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children who go missing from home or care.](#)

## Bullying

We have guidance for governing bodies and local authorities to help prevent bullying: '[Rights, respect, equality](#)'.

Schools and colleges **must** take steps to stop bullying and keep all children safe. There are toolkits on the Hwb.

## Hate Crime

We have funded:

- a children and young person's helpline at [MEIC Cymru](#)

a National Hate Crimes and Incidents Centre at [Victim Support Cymru](#).

## Inclusion and pupil support

The [Inclusion and pupil support guidance](#) helps schools and colleges understand their responsibilities.

## Children Missing Education

We have [guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education](#). It includes a toolkit.

## Looked-after Children

Every governing body **must** have a designated member for children who are looked after. If there is a concern, this governor **must**:

- speak to the DSP
- involve the schools lead person for looked-after children.

There is more information at [Making a difference: A guide for the designated person for looked after children in schools](#).

## Substance misuse

School and community-based counselling services can provide support.

There is guidance and advice at:

- [All Wales Schools Liaison Programme](#)
- [The Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline: DAN 24/7](#).

## Suicide and self-harm

We have produced guidance: [Responding to issues of self-harm and thoughts of suicide in young people](#).



## Physical contact with pupils, including restraint

A teacher or member of staff may have to use reasonable force to stop a child hurting themselves or someone else.

There is guidance and advice at:

- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission framework for restraint](#)
- [Safe and effective intervention: The use of reasonable force](#)
- [Inclusion and Pupil Support](#)
- [Guide to good practice with 'appropriate touch', handling and restraint](#)
- [EWC code of conduct and practice](#).

# Domestic abuse, gender-based violence, sexual violence and harmful cultural practices

## Domestic abuse

We have a [National Strategy and Cross-Government Delivery Framework](#).

But there is also:

- [Good Practice Guide: A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales](#)
- [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse And Sexual Violence – Guidance For Governors](#).

Talking about these issues helps children recognise inappropriate behaviour. [Operation Encompass](#) supports children experiencing domestic abuse. This is being rolled out across Wales.

If teachers or school staff have a concern, they should tell the DSP. There is advice and guidance at: [gov.wales/live-fear-free](http://gov.wales/live-fear-free).

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Teachers and staff should:

- be aware that girls may be taken abroad for FGM
- know the signs of FGM.

There is guidance at:

- [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information](#).

## Forced Marriage

[Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage](#) has step-by-step advice.







## Keeping children safe online

[Keeping safe online](#) area of Hwb has online tools and resources to help schools and colleges keep children and young people safe online.

- [Online safety action plan for children and young people in Wales](#) – this document summarises the Welsh Government promises for keeping children and young people safe online
- [360degree safe Cymru](#) – an interactive tool on Hwb for schools to track the work they are doing around online safety.

### Live-streaming lessons

Protection of children and young people is essential when live-streaming lessons. There is advice and guidance for schools and colleges at:

- [Live-streaming and video-conferencing: safeguarding principles and practice.](#)

### Sharing images

Sharing images can expose people to embarrassment, bullying and exploitation. There is guidance and advice at:

- [Sexting: Responding to incidents and safeguarding learners](#)
- [Online Safety: Five key question for governing bodies](#)
- [Report Harmful Content](#)
- [Professionals Online Safety Helpline \(POSH\)](#)
- [Keeping safe online on Hwb.](#)

Childline has developed a [report and remove tool](#) which allows young people to report an image and get it removed from the internet.

# Community Cohesion

## Stopping radicalisation

There are many factors that influence a vulnerable child's interests. Schools and colleges should be aware of changes in behaviours, consider factors contributing to the behaviour and interest such as personal inabilities, isolation etc. Where ideologies are apparent the DSP should be contacted.

Schools' and colleges' safeguarding procedures **must** cover radicalisation and extremism. There is guidance and advice at:

- [Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales for specified public bodies, including education providers](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales](#)
- [Respect and resilience: Developing community cohesion – a common understanding for schools and their communities](#)
- [Creating Safe Learning Communities.](#)

## The Referral Form

If the DSP thinks a child is at risk of radicalisation, they should use the [All Wales Partners Prevent Referral Form](#).



# Safer staff recruitment practice

All teaching and support staff **must** be registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) if they are in one of the registration categories. Schools and colleges **must** check the register before they employ anyone.

The EWC has:

- [Guidance on the registration of school teachers and school learning support workers](#)
- [Guidance on the registration of FE lecturers and FE learning support workers.](#)

## Supply cover

There are different ways to find teaching cover:

- appoint directly
- use local authority supply lists
- use a commercial supply agency.

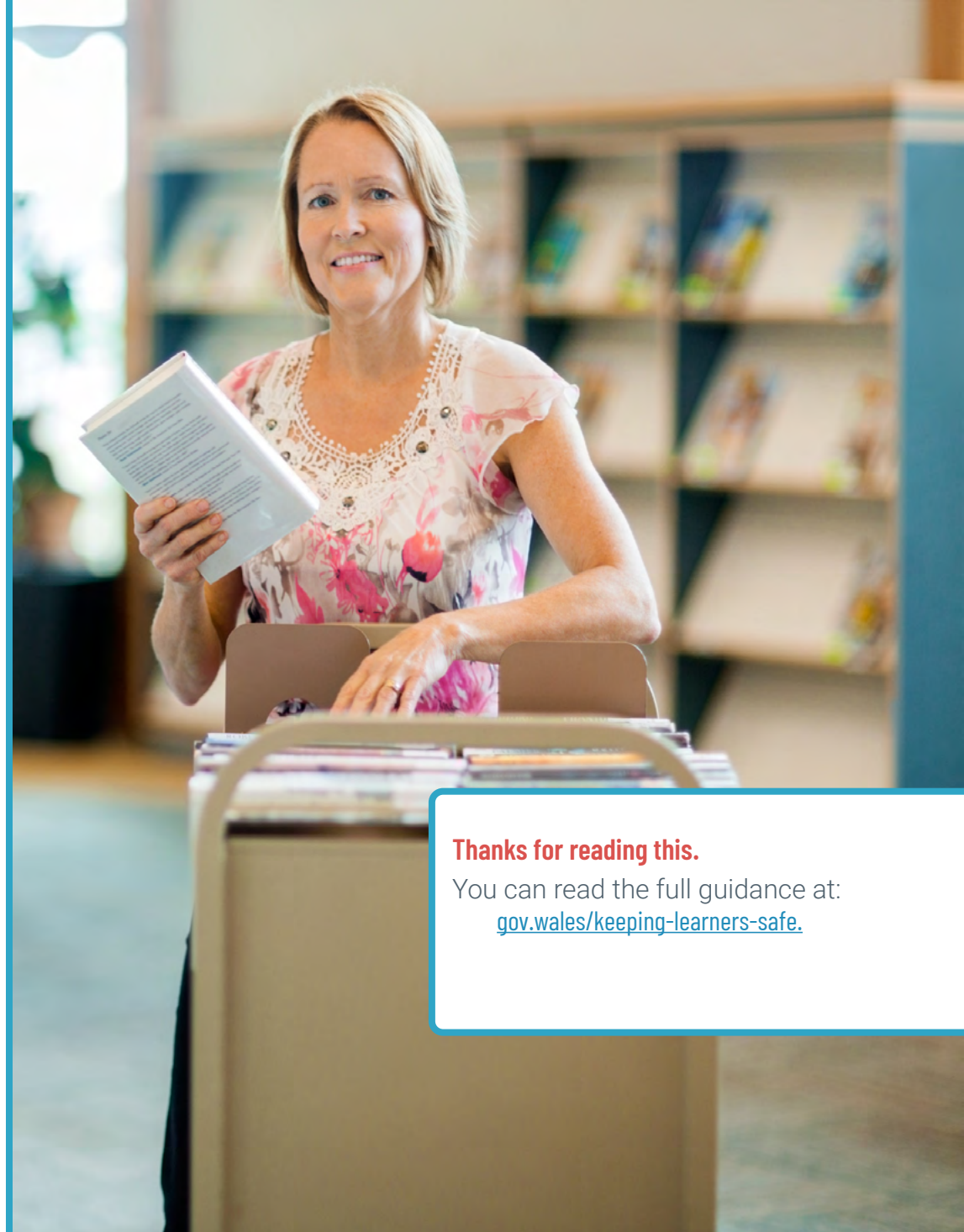
Schools and colleges should use supply agencies on the [National Procurement Service framework](#).

Both the agency and the school or college **must** check the DBS status of supply teachers. Neither should presume the check has been done. Supply staff **must** also be registered with the EWC.

## Whistleblowing

Governing bodies should have a whistleblowing procedure. There is guidance and advice at:

- [Procedures for Whistleblowing in schools and Model Policy](#)
- [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.](#)



**Thanks for reading this.**

You can read the full guidance at:

[gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe](https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe).