**Understanding the updates to KCSIE – September 2018**

An updated version of 'Keeping children safe in education' comes into effect this month. **Here are the five main changes that have come into effect from September 2018.**

Back in May, the DfE published a new iteration of the safeguarding statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE). This includes additional information for all staff and clarification on issues such as peer-on-peer abuse, the use of reasonable force and the single central record. The new version of the guidance takes effect from 3 September, and it’s worth summarising some of the main changes.

**1. Peer-on-peer abuse**

Peer-on-peer abuse could manifest as bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence or harassment, sexting, and initiation-type violence or rituals. The updated guidance includes a new section on this complex and often challenging safeguarding issue, which summarises previous guidance as set out in a separate DfE advice note last year. It states that every member of staff should know what the school does to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse and deal with any allegations.

**Tip**: Even if you have not yet had any incidents involving peer-on-peer abuse, make sure the school’s procedure is set out clearly in your child protection and safeguarding policy.

**2. DSLs and file transfer**

The updated guidance elaborates on the designated safeguarding lead’s responsibilities when transferring safeguarding information. When a pupil’s safeguarding file is transferred to a new school, ‘key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs’ need to know about it. It may also be appropriate to share information with the receiving school in advance of the pupil leaving. For example, information that will allow the new school to continue supporting a victim of abuse. Doing so will allow safeguarding procedures to flow smoothly during the pupil’s transition.

**Tip**: Have a conversation with the receiving school’s DSL to make sure they are up-to-date on any safeguarding concerns.

**3. Use of reasonable force**

The inclusion of three paragraphs on reasonable force has not added anything that had not been set out in previous guidance, but it reaffirms the main message: schools have the power to use reasonable force when they need to. There are circumstances when it would be appropriate to ‘use no more force than is needed’ to keep your pupils safe, particularly in high-pressure safeguarding situations such as school fights. Be wary of relying on a ‘no contact’ policy. The decision to make appropriate physical contact should always depend on individual circumstances.

**Tip**: Positive behaviour leadership will reduce the need to use reasonable force.

**4. Volunteers and regulated activity**

The DfE has offered a note of clarity on whether you would be expected to carry out criminal record and barred list checks for volunteers in school.

If the volunteer is engaged in regulated activity and *unsupervised*, you should obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list check. If the volunteer is engaged in regulated activity and *supervised*, you are not legally obliged but may choose to obtain an enhanced DBS check (but not a barred list check) in certain circumstances. For more information on supervision in relation to regulated activity, refer to Annex F in the guidance and the separate DBS workforce guides (April 2016).

**5. Host families**

The updated guidance offers more information and greater clarity on the arrangements a school makes for a pupil to stay with a host family in the UK or abroad.

To help assess the suitability of the families who will be responsible for looking after that pupil, you should obtain an enhanced DBS with barred list check. This is applicable to the individuals responsible for the child, but not necessarily to other adults in the household if they do not exercise control or influence over the child. Annex E of the updated guidance also includes a short section setting out the simple safeguarding steps you should take during the visit, and recommendations to help you assess the suitability of host families abroad.

**What to do now**

* Update your child protection and safeguarding policy if you haven’t already. If your school is part of a multi-academy trust, make sure that the policy reflects your local circumstances.
* Ensure that all staff know how to recognise peer-on-peer abuse and how the school will deal with incidents.
* Check that all staff know to speak to the DSL immediately if they identify a safeguarding concern.

**Child Protection in Education**

For more information and the opportunity to bring your safeguarding practice in line with the updated guidance, find out about our [*Child Protection in Education*](http://my.optimus-education.com/conferences/child-protection-education-2018-london) conferences taking place 11th September in London, 18th September in Bristol and the 4th October in Manchester.