
RESOURCE PACK

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD



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WHAT IS A DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD?



INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is vital for everyone who works with children and young people, whether it's in a school, college, charity, place of worship, healthcare practice, or other type of premises. It requires full commitment from all staff in the organisation – as it's everyone's duty to look after children – particularly the designated safeguarding lead.

It's crucial for organisations who work with children to have a designated safeguarding lead (previously known as a designated safeguarding officer or DSO). They must be well-equipped and prepared for the responsibility that comes with being a designated safeguarding lead (DSL), as they will coordinate and oversee safeguarding procedures, as well as act as a first point of contact for anyone with concerns.

In this article, we will provide an overview of what the DSL's role involves and how to prepare for it. Understanding this will help you to ensure that children are protected and have a fulfilling, safe experience in your setting.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD?

The designated safeguarding lead has overarching responsibilities regarding safeguarding in their organisation. They will have an in-depth knowledge of safeguarding guidance (such as Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children) and related pieces of legislation (e.g. the Children Act 1989) that their workplace must follow.

They will apply this knowledge to help implement and maintain safeguarding procedures and policies, as well as be alert to safeguarding issues on a day-to-day basis. This includes ensuring that staff have received appropriate training, that their own training is up to date, safe recruitment practices are sufficient, and all actions are within the best interest of safeguarding children.

If the DSL identifies any concerns or another member of staff raises them, they will coordinate with the child's primary caregiver(s) if suitable and the necessary external bodies to pursue a course of action.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD?

The DSL has a number of important responsibilities to fulfil on an ongoing basis. As the lead, it's also part of their duty to ensure others in the organisation understand and follow safeguarding procedures. They will also work closely with any other senior individuals to coordinate safeguarding duties, such as the headteacher and Governing Body's nominated governor.

The responsibilities of a designated safeguarding lead include:

- Being available for all staff to discuss any safeguarding issues or concerns. They should ensure that all staff are aware of the DSL and deputy contact details.
- Ensuring that cases of suspected or actual child protection or safeguarding concerns are referred to the appropriate agencies. The DSL will gather further information and evidence if needed.

- Ensuring that all staff are fully trained in safeguarding and know how to spot and raise concerns. They will also help to maintain an effective staff supervision programme.
- Undergoing regular refresher training themselves to ensure their safeguarding knowledge is as up to date as possible and in line with new guidance.
- Ensuring that adequate reporting and recording systems are in place for safeguarding procedures, and that there are appropriate transferal procedures for records if students move.
- Ensuring that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date with the most recent statutory guidance, and that everyone who has safeguarding duties are familiar with any updates.
- Communicating with families on the school's policies and procedures, as well as any concerns or referrals where appropriate.
- Complying with any Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) requirements.
- Ensuring their organisation has sufficient safer recruitment procedures.
- Being aware of any children who may require specific safeguarding needs and have specific vulnerabilities.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it covers the main responsibilities that may be included in a DSL's job description, and that you'll be expected to fulfil if you're looking to become a DSL.

DO I NEED TRAINING TO BECOME A DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD?

The designated safeguarding lead in an organisation will be someone with the necessary knowledge, experience, and training to fulfil their role. This means that you will need to have some prior experience with safeguarding to advance to a DSL level. Overseeing safeguarding is a crucial responsibility, so being suitably prepared is a necessary step to becoming a DSL.

As the NSPCC states, the designated safeguarding lead must be trained in:

- The law and guidance on safeguarding.
- Types of abuse and the signs and indicators to look for.
- How to build a safe culture so that people are safe and willing to share concerns.
- Barriers to disclosure and recognition of safeguarding issues.
- Safer recruitment.
- Listening to and supporting those who have concerns.

Training must be refreshed regularly in line with any updates or changes to guidance. DSLs are generally recommended to receive accredited, enhanced training each year as required to keep their knowledge up to date. This is especially important as the Department for Education often update their guidance, i.e. Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS IN SCHOOLS



INTRODUCTION

If you work with children, or with their families, you must know how to safeguard them from harm. Keeping children safe is the responsibility of everyone, regardless of profession, but it is particularly important if you work in a school or other educational setting.

WHY DO SCHOOLS NEED DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS?

Other than the child's own family, employees of the education sector are likely to spend the most time with the child. Therefore, you are well placed to identify signs and support children who are experiencing abuse. Recognising the signs of this early on is crucial to prevent children from coming to further harm.

As a result of these circumstances, all schools are expected to have a Designated Safeguarding Lead. This person has chief responsibility for listening to concerns, referring them at a higher level, supporting staff and raising awareness of child protection procedures. They should be someone who holds a position of authority within the school and who has the ability to carry out the required duties.

If this is your responsibility, it is essential that you have a thorough understanding of your duties and the statutory guidance that is in place to protect children.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN STATUTORY GUIDANCE AND REGULATIONS

In the UK there is not just one piece of legislation that covers the safeguarding of children. Rather, there are a number of Acts and statutory guidance documents, and the documents in particular are constantly being amended or updated. These guide the formation of safeguarding children policies and procedures.

As a Designated Safeguarding Lead, it is important that you are aware of these, especially if you are partly or fully responsible for creating the safeguarding policy for your school.

You must have an awareness of the following:

- **The Children Act 1989** allocates the responsibility of care to local authorities, courts, other agencies and families to keep children safe. It introduced the concept of child-centred work and promoted the upbringing of children by their families, if possible. It also established the concepts of 'children in need' and 'children at risk of significant harm'.
- **The Children Act 2004** is an amendment to the Children Act 1989 following the Victoria Climbié inquiry. The law was updated to include key recommendations as a result of the inquiry. This included making it a requirement that all those who work with children must know how to safeguard them.
- **The Education Act 2002** outlines the duties and responsibilities for schools in regards to teachers, teaching methods and the curriculum.

- **Every Child Matters 2004** is a government guidance document that introduced the 'five key outcomes' for all children in the UK, which should be reflected in all child protection policies. The five key outcomes are: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being. While the content is still relevant, more recent guidance has been published.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children** – A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children.

It's crucial for you to have an awareness of these guidance documents and to update your knowledge when they are amended. The documents are regularly revisited to make sure they are as up to date as possible, so those who work with children can safeguard them to the best of their abilities.

If you'd like to learn more about these key documents and the updates they've received over time, you can read our dedicated article on safeguarding guidance here: [Safeguarding Children Guidance: KCSIE and WTSC Changes](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL'S DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

DSLs for schools should:

- Hold a Level Three Designated Safeguarding Lead Training qualification.
- Complete Safeguarding Children Training (refresher course) every 2 years and have easy access to the relevant resources.
- Ensure that there is an effective child protection policy and staff code of conduct in place. You should provide copies of these to all staff members and make them available for parents and the public to view.
- Ensure that you annually review and update the child protection policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members and help them to understand when it's essential to report their concerns.
- Keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Know how local authorities conduct both child protection case and review conferences. You should be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, including how to contribute towards an inter-agency assessment.
- Work closely with the local authority and other relevant agencies.
- Put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who are often absent from education.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures that the school puts in place to protect them.
- Decide whether to make a referral to Children's Social Care Services when a concern has been made.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead plays an incredibly important role in protecting children from harm. It is essential that you are given the time, funding, training, resources and support to perform these responsibilities successfully.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD QUIZ



INTRODUCTION

As a Designated Safeguarding Lead, you have a responsibility to ensure that everyone within your organisation is following best safeguarding practices and remaining vigilant to any safeguarding concerns. You'll be the first point of contact for anyone who has queries and concerns and so it's essential that you understand what to do, who to report concerns to and how best to respond to children's differing needs.

Test your knowledge of your responsibilities using our quick quiz below.

QUESTIONS

1. What's the name of the guidance document which defines safeguarding, the different types of abuse and the responsibilities of children's services?

- A The Children and Social Work Act
- B The Education Act
- C Working Together to Safeguard Children
- D The Childcare Act

2. If a child discloses information about abuse to you, how should you react?

- A Stay calm, listen and reassure the child that they were right to tell you
- B Show the child how shocked you are about what they've said
- C Promise the child that you'll keep it a secret
- D Ask lots of questions and try to get to the bottom of what happened

3. What is the aim of an Early Help Assessment?

- A To learn whether there is a risk of significant harm
- B To identify what kind of support the child/family needs
- C To help determine the Child Protection Plan
- D To decide whether further assessments are needed

4. If social care chooses not to take further action but you disagree with their decision, what should you do?

- A Abandon your concerns as social care's decision is final
- B Ask the child questions about your concern
- C Continue with the safeguarding process on your own
- D Monitor the case and contact social care again if further concerns arise

5. Which of the following is an example of a low level need?

- A The child is pregnant
- B The child is homeless
- C The child lives in a family unit that is likely to break down
- D The child isn't reaching their developmental milestones

6. Which of the following is an example of an emerging need?

- A The child has poor behaviour at school
- B The child is regularly missing days from school
- C The child appears to be misusing substances
- D The child is a young carer and needs help

7. Which of the following is an example of a complex need?

- A The child has significant health needs
- B The child's family needs help accessing services
- C The child has problematic family circumstances
- D The child discloses that they are being abused

8. Which of the following is an example of a child protection concern?

- A The child's parents need help and support to parent them
- B The child is a young carer
- C The child is at risk of sexual exploitation
- D The child appears to be inadequately clothed

9. If you make a referral to social care about a child deemed to be suffering significant harm, within what time frame will social care assess what needs to be done next?

- A Within 24 hours
- B Within 48 hours
- C Within 72 hours
- D Within one week

10. Which legislation introduced the concepts of 'children in need' and 'significant harm'?

- A The Children Act 1989
- B The Education Act 2002
- C The Children Act 2006
- D The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

ANSWERS

1. C

Working Together to Safeguard Children is a key piece of statutory guidance that defines safeguarding and the responsibilities of children's services.

2. A

If a child discloses abuse to you, you should always stay calm, listen, not push the child, and reassure them that they did the right thing by telling you.

3. B

An Early Help Assessment is an early intervention to identify if a child or family needs support and the kind of support they need.

4. D

If social care decide not to take further action, and you are still concerned about the child, you should monitor the case and contact social care again if you have any further concerns.

5. D

Low level needs are where the needs of the child are relatively minor and services may be able to take quick action to prevent the problem from escalating. An example of a low level need is where a child isn't reaching their developmental milestones.

6. C

Emerging needs are where the child requires a range of services to respond to their needs, such as education, health, housing, or police services. An example of an emerging need would be a child misusing substances.

7. A

Complex needs are where a child could be at risk of significant harm, or their development damaged, if help and services are not provided. An example of a complex need would be where a child has significant health needs.

8. C

Child protection concerns are where there is a reason to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. If a child is at risk of sexual exploitation this would be an example of a child protection concern.

9. A

Social care will assess what needs to be done next to protect the child within 24 hours.

10. A

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concepts of 'children in need' and 'children at risk of significant harm', which are key to ensuring children are appropriately safeguarded and given the level of support relevant to their needs.

