



**Eastern Multi-Academy Trust**  
Empower - Motivate - Aspire - Transform

# Safeguarding Matters

Welcome to a new year of Safeguarding Matters.

**Issue 13 October 2023**

We have seen a few major changes in KCSIE this year, with a real focus on keeping children and adults safe online through a secure filtering and monitoring system, as well as Persistent Absence. The next DSL Network meeting will be on Thursday 7th December at 4.00pm, and will as usual, take place via Teams. Please contact me if you have anything for the meeting.

Mark Cresswell

## Mild Illness and School Attendance - UK Government

This year the UK Government is kicking off the school term with a discussion on issues related to mild illness and school attendance. An issue which has been particularly active since the commencement and draw down of the UK Government's response to the COVID-19 period. Many parents are increasingly unsure of how to act when a child reports themselves to be ill. In addition the growing instability of world affairs has translated in increased anxiety among pupils. The UK Government is committing itself to mitigating this rising issue, with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) producing new guidance on medical absences and the Department for Education writing to school leaders on the matter. To read both the letter, and the RCGP guidance, please follow the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance>

<https://bjgplife.com/the-role-of-the-gp-in-maximising-school-attendance/>

## Attendance—linked to Safeguarding

As you all know, attendance and safeguarding are intertwined with each other. We are currently going through a difficult period dealing with high persistent absence in all our academies.

The DfE have put together a Toolkit to support absence—but mainly persistent absence.

It can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance/toolkit-for-schools-communicating-with-families-to-support-attendance>

## Anti-Grooming Resources -

### Not in Our Community

Grooming is an issue which remains highly prevalent in the world of child protection. The objective could be sexual, gang-related or simply coercive in nature, but in all cases involves the gradual formation of intimate connections between typically older individuals and younger ones. With the goal of creating a relationship, to the extent that the subject no longer questions what is being asked of them. A process of psychological normalisation of behaviours is a key tool of grooming. Unfortunately it is a difficult area to counter, as actors utilise the relationship cravings of their targets to build trust. Once established it can be very hard to break that trust, making it hard to investigate and prevent. Nevertheless, it is vital that everyone involved in child protection understands its elements, and how to best approach it when it occurs. Not in Our Community is an organisation dedicated to looking at the phenomena and providing resources, designed to tackle it. To find out more please follow the link below:

<https://notinourcommunity.org/>

## Additional Attachment

Alongside this newsletter this month, I have attached a well put together Online Safety Fact Sheet for both parents and Teachers to use.

This has been issued by Suffolk CC and I thought it was worth sharing with you. Please download it and put a copy in your staffroom, and maybe a link on your website for Parents to access.

## Keeping Children Safe during Community Activities, After-School Clubs and Tuition

The government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings' has now been updated and replaced by new guidance published on 19th September 2023. The new over-arching guidance document is called 'After-Schools clubs, community activities and tuition safeguarding guidance for providers' (Department of Education, September 2023). This is now the latest version of the guidance to be followed by organisations other than schools who work with children and young people. These organisations include (but are not limited to):

- Community activities
- Before and after school clubs
- Holiday clubs
- Supplementary schools
- Private tuition
- Music lessons
- Sports training

Although this guidance is non-statutory, it is to be regarded as best-practice. The Department of Education is encouraging organisations, clubs and tuition providers (known as out-of-school settings) to follow it.

### What schools need to know

Keeping Children Safe in Education says that when schools hire their premises to organisations that work with children, they should check that the guidance in 'After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers' (KCSIE, paragraphs 166 and 167 (DfE, September 2023)) is being followed.

'The governing body or proprietor should...ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any [hire agreement] as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.' (KCSIE 2023, paragraph 166)

'The governing body or proprietor should ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school or college on [safeguarding] matters where appropriate'. (KCSIE 2023, paragraph 166)

Whilst it is incumbent on the provider to have read and acted on the guidance, the relevant person in the school should be aware of this guidance, so that a suitable hire agreement can be drawn up. A checklist summarising the guidance can be found in 'After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition: [Safeguarding guidance for providers](#)' (DfE, 2023), pages 11 and 12. It is important to note that this checklist is only a summary and can only be regarded as a minimum expectation.

### Contact details:

Please pass this newsletter on to other staff.

If you would like to contribute items or resources to future issues, or if you have questions that need a wider audience, please email me at:

mark.cresswell@eastern-mat.co.uk      Work mobile: 07467 959448

If you need advice or a discussion about moving a case forward, please feel free to contact me on either of the above. Stay safe.      Mark Cresswell

## Gun and Knife Crime - Childline

It is a sad truth that in the United Kingdom, there are peaks and troughs of violent crime among teenagers. We are currently going through a peak, with mainly 15 to 17 year olds being both the perpetrators and victims. The effect is felt throughout the under-18 demographic nationally, and due to this nature should be a prime concern of educational establishments. Of these armament categories, that of knife crime is by far the greater danger of the two for pupils. Sometimes these offences are the result of gang activity, and sometimes it's simply a case of out-of-control emotions directed in a manner whose consequences, the perpetrator does not fully understand. In any case, it is an area that educational professionals must be aware of, and be prepared to address in their schools. To help clarify this area, Childline has published a page focusing on gun and knife crime. What it is and its potential consequences, if interested in reading what they have to say please click on the link below:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/crime-law/gun-knife-crime/>

## Extracurricular Safeguarding Guidance - Department of Education

After-school activities are an important part of pupil's experience in education. The benefits of enrolling school aged individuals in a wide-array of extracurricular activities are compelling. From enhanced socialisation opportunities, to introducing them to new areas of interest which will follow them throughout their lives right up to giving them novel valuable skills. However, the extracurricular nature of these activities, means letting in third parties to your educational institution. This opens up a vulnerability window that could be easily exploited. The Department of Education has updated its safeguarding guidance on this area, earlier this month. It is an important part of a school's safeguarding duty, and as such this document is a read of prime importance. Please click on the link below to find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice>

## Senior Mental Health Lead - DfE offers second grants

The DfE has announced that eligible settings can apply for a senior mental health lead training grant to commence training by **31 March 2024**. Relevant schools can also now claim a second grant to train a new person if the senior mental health lead they previously trained left their setting before embedding a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. The grant can be used to cover (or contribute to) the cost of attending a quality assured course, and may also be used to hire supply staff while leads are engaged in learning.

The Department for Education offers grants of £1,200 for eligible state-funded schools and colleges in England to train a senior mental health lead to develop and implement a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. This training is not compulsory, but it is part of the government's commitment to offer this training to all eligible schools and colleges by 2025. Although independent schools are not eligible for a grant, all assured courses are available to their staff.