

Additional Safeguarding Considerations for Boarding Schools

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Sept 2026), the *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools* (April 2026) and other relevant statutory safeguarding guidance the school recognises the unique safeguarding responsibilities associated with residential settings. This appendix for the boarding context requires enhanced consideration in the areas listed below.

1. Sexual Relationships Between Pupils

Boarding schools present an environment where pupils may have more private, unsupervised time than in day settings. As such:

- Sexual activity between pupils is not permitted. Pupils under 16 engaging in sexual activity are, by law, considered at risk of harm, and appropriate safeguarding measures will be implemented.
- Any such incidents will be managed as potential child protection concerns, especially where there are power imbalances, coercion, exploitation, or significant age differences.
- Pupils are regularly educated through PSHE and boarding house discussions on the importance of healthy relationships, consent, and personal boundaries.
- Clear rules regarding privacy and conduct within boarding houses are communicated to pupils and parents.

2. Child-on-Child Abuse in a Residential Setting

The risks of child-on-child abuse can be heightened in boarding due to shared accommodation and overnight stays. The school ensures that:

- Staff supervision, particularly overnight and during unstructured time, is carefully managed and regularly reviewed.
- Pupils are encouraged and empowered to report concerns, and they are assured they will be taken seriously and supported.
- Allegations of abuse between pupils are addressed in line with the school's child protection procedures, with a focus on safety, separation (where necessary), and support for both victim and alleged perpetrator.
- All incidents are logged, investigated, and, where appropriate, escalated to external safeguarding partners.

3. Gender Imbalance Risks

Where a significant gender imbalance exists (e.g., predominantly male or female boarding population), the School will:

- Assess and monitor how this may affect peer dynamics, relationships, and potential safeguarding risks.
- Ensure staff are trained to identify gender-related vulnerability or behaviour, including sexist, sexualised, or exclusionary conduct.
- Provide targeted education and pastoral support to promote equality, inclusion, and respect across the school community.

4. Online Safety and Management of Personal Devices

Boarders may bring personal devices to school, creating additional safeguarding considerations. The school's approach includes:

- Clear Acceptable Use Agreements outlining when, where, and how devices may be used.
- Restrictions on overnight or unsupervised use, with potential confiscation if rules are breached or safeguarding concerns arise.
- Regular education on the risks of harmful content, including pornography, radicalisation, self-harm materials, and peer exploitation.
- Acknowledgement that mobile data (e.g., 3G/4G/5G) can bypass school filtering and monitoring systems. As such:
 - Pupils are taught digital responsibility and supported to report harmful content they may access or receive.
 - Staff understand the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements, their limitations, and the circumstances in which pupils may access the internet through personal mobile networks or other unfiltered connections. Concerns arising from online activity are shared promptly with the DSL.
 - Staff are trained to recognise the signs of online harm and respond in line with the child protection policy.
- Staff recognise emerging online risks including AI-generated content, online coercion, sextortion, image-based abuse, anonymous messaging platforms, livestreaming and online exploitation.
- Staff remain vigilant to changes in pupils' online behaviour, including excessive secrecy around devices, multiple online identities or indicators of online grooming.

5. Low-Level Concerns about Adults

- Staff are reminded that professional boundaries must be maintained at all times, including during evening activities, overnight supervision, transport, educational visits and electronic communication. Any low-level concerns relating to adults working within boarding are managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

6. Mental Health and Wellbeing Concerns

- Staff are well placed to identify changes in a pupil's presentation, behaviour or emotional wellbeing. Concerns relating to mental health, self-harm, eating disorders or suicidal ideation are shared promptly with the DSL and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

7. Missing from Boarding

- The school has appropriate procedures for responding where a boarder is missing or absent unexpectedly. Any such incident will be treated as a safeguarding concern, with appropriate searches, notifications and referrals undertaken where necessary. Incidents are reviewed to identify learning and reduce future risk.

8. Boarding culture

- Older pupils, prefects, mentors and boarding leaders must not misuse positions of responsibility over younger pupils. Staff remain alert to inappropriate power imbalances within boarding communities and to behaviours that may become normalised within residential communities, including inappropriate initiation practices, discriminatory language, sexualised behaviour, coercion, exclusion or abuse disguised as banter or tradition.
- Staff recognise that boarders may spend significantly more time with staff than day pupils and that subtle changes in behaviour may indicate safeguarding concerns. These would be shared promptly with the DSL and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

9. Professional Curiosity and Boarding oversight

- Boarding staff recognise that living alongside pupils provides unique opportunities to notice changes in behaviour, presentation, relationships, attendance, routines or emotional wellbeing.
 - Staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity, record concerns promptly and share information with the DSL where patterns or emerging concerns are identified, even where individual incidents appear low level.
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These provisions are in addition to, and not separate from, the school's overarching safeguarding policy. The DSL, Deputy DSLs and Boarding House Staff work in close collaboration to ensure that safeguarding is consistent, proactive and adapted to the boarding environment. Through effective information sharing, professional curiosity and ongoing review of emerging risks, the school seeks to identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide timely support. The views and experiences of boarders inform the continual development of safeguarding practice, helping to ensure that boarding remains a safe, supportive and inclusive environment