**Annex 3: Safeguarding audit tool**

The purpose of this safeguarding audit tool is to support all education settings to review their safeguarding arrangements. The audit tool is intended to help education settings to identify strengths and weaknesses in their safeguarding arrangements and to ensure they are exercising their legal safeguarding obligations in line with the *Keeping learners safe* statutory guidance. This tool can be adapted for different types of education setting as appropriate, and work-based learning (WBL) providers may find the WBL toolkit more suitable.

**What is safeguarding and child protection?**

In the context of this audit tool, safeguarding is the action taken to promote the well-being of children. Safeguarding means:

* protecting children from abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
* preventing harm to children’s health or development
* ensuring children are provided with safe and effective care
* taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of a safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering, or likely to suffer abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

All education settings have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the

well-being of learners. When reviewing safeguarding arrangements education settings should consider how effective they are in the following:

* creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for learners
* identifying where there are well-being concerns and taking action to address these, where appropriate, in partnership with other agencies
* the development of learner’s understanding, awareness, and resilience through the curriculum.

Achieving this objective requires systems designed to robustly:

* prevent unsuitable people from working with learners
* promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice
* identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a learner’s well-being arising from home, community, school or college, and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe
* contribute to effective partnership-working between all those involved with providing services for learners.

**How to use this audit tool**

The audit tool **should not** be used as a checklist, but rather to support a whole-setting approach to safeguarding and provide a benchmark against which to work to continually develop and improve. Effective safeguarding arrangements must be about the ethos, character and culture of an education setting, rather than any finite set of actions or policies. The audit tool encourages education settings to go beyond checking that a policy is in place, for example, to reviewing what impact that policy is having. The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) for child protection should support the education setting’s safeguarding approach. Everyone working in an education setting, whether employed by the local authority or otherwise, who comes into contact with children and their families has a role in safeguarding children. They form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent issues from escalating. This audit tool seeks to help education settings to promote this ethos.

The audit tool is intended as an exemplar, against which to review current safeguarding arrangements in education settings. Your education setting may have a current assessment tool that enhances and supports this work and that helps in how you audit the education setting‘s approach. There is currently no expectation that you should duplicate your assessment or that this tool takes precedence over your existing approach. It simply provides you with a robust option that has been widely tested and aligns with the pre-inspection expectations of Estyn.

The tool has been developed with input from Estyn and meets the requirements expected by Estyn, but is not designed to be completed for inspection purposes only. The tool should be a continuous assessment of the effectiveness of an education setting’s safeguarding arrangements.

The audit tool requires a process of evidence-gathering, including talking with learners and their families, discussing safeguarding with staff in the education setting and reviewing safeguarding incidents to learn what is working well and what needs development. This should be an ongoing process, so that there is a constant reflection, learning and updating of processes. You can use this audit tool either as part of a peer-review process, or for self-assessment. The tool encourages a peer-review approach, where settings offer ‘critical friend’ support to each other. Having someone from outside the education setting come in and go through the audit tool provides a valuable independent perspective that can enhance effective practice and highlight gaps.

As well as checking on whether you have robust safeguarding policies and practices in place, the tool asks you to make professional judgements on how effective and comprehensive they are. In order to make those judgements you will need to collect evidence, including talking to learners, colleagues, governors and parents/carers.

The summary sheet at the beginning is intended to allow you to provide a quick overview for staff, learners, parents/carers and governors on the strengths and weaknesses of the education setting in relation to safeguarding; the actions page will show them what steps are being taken to build on the strengths and address the weaknesses.

**The guidance notes below have been written in line with *Keeping learners safe*.**

1. **How safe do learners feel?**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out that children have a right to be safe and protected from harm, and have the right to express their opinions and participate in decision-making. In accordance with the UNCRC, the best way to understand how safe an education setting feels to learners is to ask them and observe how they and staff interact. A positive learner–staff relationship provides evidence that staff are friendly and positive about the education setting, and that learners are listened to and able to speak with confidence in the education setting.

The general atmosphere of the education setting is also a good indicator of how safe people feel. The kind of evidence that can help form your judgements include the physical environment and protocols for visitors but these measures alone are not enough to justify the feeling of safety. Reviewers should consider how the ethos and atmosphere of the education setting demonstrates a safeguarding culture and a level of care for each learner.

Equally, education settings should not assume that their learners are able to keep themselves and others safe. Appropriate site security measures should be taken to ensure the site feels safe and that parents/carers feel confident that appropriate measures have been taken.

1. **How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?**

Effective communication is, in essence, an exchange of information that allows all involved to listen to and learn about each other. Therefore, it involves more than knowing that staff have access to, or have read, policies. It is important to check that learners, and those who come into contact with them, understand the purpose of information-sharing in order to safeguard and promote learners’ well-being. It is also useful to assess how comfortable they feel about sharing information by reviewing, for example, recent communications.

It is important that all learners, parents, agency staff, support staff and governors are aware of the education setting’s safeguarding policy, and that the policy sets out safe practices for all involved with the education setting. An indicator of effective communication is that learners, parents, carers and staff all understand what constitutes an unsafe situation and are aware of what they would need to do to keep themselves and others safe, and what to do if they have a concern. Checking that information is in a format and language that can be easily accessed and understood by all of the education setting’s users is important, as is the regular review and updating of relevant information.

Education settings can also enable stakeholders, including children and young people, to participate in the development of policies through consultation approaches in line with the National Participation Standards (see [www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/participation/participation-standards/](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/participation/participation-standards/)). The whole community should also be aware of the human rights of children as laid out in the UNCRC.

1. **How effective is your approach to safeguarding?**

This section requires a review of the education setting’s approach to safeguarding and its ability to effectively manage a safeguarding concern. This involves reviewing the extent to which staff members are confident about recognising signs of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm, and their understanding of the steps to take in response and the need to act quickly. This should not be a matter of going through a checklist of issues and symptoms, but rather of assessing how confident people are about safeguarding learners, how alert they are to what is happening to individual learners and how open communication channels are. Reviewing recent incidents can help, looking at how long it took before a concern was raised, what happened, what action was taken and how quickly, and what the outcome was.

Incidents should be collected and recorded systematically so that the process is easily accessible to all staff, including a record of concerns (allowing, for example, people to spot multiple concerns about an individual), action taken and the outcomes. There should be a consistency of approach throughout the education setting for identifying and managing incidents. In particular, records for children identified as at risk should be up to date and of a high quality.

Check for a coordinated approach across the education setting around planning and delivering personal and social education (PSE) and relationships and sexuality education (RSE). The approach to RSE should be proactive in supporting learners to be aware of risks to their well-being and safety. The curriculum should support existing policy within the education setting on important issues and provide sufficient information on managing risk, e.g. in: sex and relationships; drug, alcohol and tobacco education; accident prevention; anti-bullying; online safety; extremism and radicalisation. Gathering evidence on how these issues are explored will help in assessing the effectiveness of the education setting‘s approach to safeguarding. It is also important to review the education setting’s approach to physical intervention.

1. **How robust are your safeguarding practices?**

Robust safeguarding practices involve both whole-setting approaches that make safeguarding everyone’s concern, and the specific focus of named people responsible for ensuring safeguarding policies and practices are being carried out. There should be a DSP with responsibility for safeguarding in the education setting whom everyone is aware of.

All staff should be competent and feel confident about implementing the protocols for securely managing incidences and dealing with disclosures. Safeguarding procedures should form a part of supervision and management processes. Staff should feel supported in taking responsibility for safeguarding, knowing that any concerns they raise will be taken seriously, and that senior managers will back them up if needed.

The DSP should be aware of appropriate training and be given the time to attend training. All staff working with learners (including temporary, peripatetic and agency staff) should be aware of safeguarding procedures and have child protection training and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Any training and assessment of staff should be appropriately recorded and updated. It is also important that governors or board members know enough about safeguarding to be able to sufficiently challenge the education setting’s safeguarding practices and satisfy themselves that safeguarding procedures are robust, particularly with regard to taking action and recruitment.

1. **How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children?**

Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (see [www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/part/7](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/part/7)) includes provisions aimed to help promote more effective leadership and inter-agency collaboration, as well as ensure all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (see <https://safeguarding.wales/>) also emphasise that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and that the effective protection of children cannot be achieved by a single agency acting in isolation. The procedures clarify how individuals and agencies should communicate and work together in partnership to identify and keep children safe.

The education setting should be able to show clear records with the names of any staff or external agencies that the DSP has shared information with, what information was shared and the rationale for this. The DSP needs to ensure that parents/carers understand the education setting’s need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child’s well-being.

When commissioning a service from another organisation, there should be robust mechanisms in place to ensure that these organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children and child protection.

**Gathering evidence to inform your judgements**

This section provides some examples of how you might form your judgements and the evidence you can collect to underpin them. It is not intended to be ticked off; but rather as a prompt to recognise what you do, and what more you could do.

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 1** |
| **How safe does the education setting feel?**  **Evidence includes:**   * learner/parent/carer questionnaires, discussions, suggestion boxes, school/student council sessions, NUS * site security checklist and how it is used (e.g. do all visitors sign in and out and wear a visitor badge? Is proof of identity secured through photo ID?) * listening education to break and lunchtime supervisors * monitoring and evaluation systems to gauge the extent to which learners keep safe, adopt safe and responsible practices and deal sensibly with risk * how risk is managed within the education setting (e.g. through discussion, risk assessments, role play and skills rehearsal) and what difference this makes * risk assessments of external provision * peer mediation and/or buddy programmes and their impact * random checks with learners to see if they are confident they know how to access a trusted adult if they have any concerns * reports/records on how the education setting acts on reported concerns raised by learners, parents/carers or other people (including feedback from those who have raised concerns) * face-to-face participatory techniques to find out about children's and young people's experiences, e.g. facilitating a school mapping or community mapping activity with young people to find out where they feel safe and where they perceive risk. |
| **Section 2** |
| **How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?**  **Evidence includes:**   * survey/questions to staff, governors, learners, parents/carers on awareness of safeguarding policy and approach * curriculum content (e.g. in PSE and RSE) * posters displayed relating to safeguarding and child protection themes with helpline numbers (e.g. for external agencies) and how helpful learners think they are * training, advice and guidance given to learners on online exploitation (including commercial and sexual exploitation) and its impact * assemblies, class discussions, etc., where safeguarding-related issues have been addressed, e.g. bullying, LGBT bullying, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, online safety, absence/truanting, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, preventing radicalisation, extremism, etc., and what learners say about them * records of initiatives and promotional and awareness-raising activities and their impact, including lesson plans, assembly notes and circle time records * a clear, accessible reporting and progressing system for raising and acting on safeguarding concerns and how effectively they are used * minutes from staff meetings where safeguarding issues have been discussed * minutes/records from school/student council meetings that have raised safeguarding issues * copies of newsletters/website content * letters/communications with parents/carers * records of parent/carer meetings. |
| **Section 3** |
| **How effective is your approach to safeguarding?**  **Evidence includes:**   * records of concerns raised and how they are acted on * asking learners who they would talk to if they had concerns and what concerns they have/would raise * listening to vulnerable learners (e.g. care-experienced children, those with a care and support plan, young carers, those with additional learning needs) and those who have suffered abuse about how supported they feel * listening to learners about experiences of bullying, harassment, prejudice and discrimination and how the education setting has/could support them * asking staff about who they would talk to if they had concerns (including about colleagues, headteacher/principal, proprietor) * reviews of any concerns raised in the past year, how they were recorded, how they were acted upon and the outcome * behaviour management strategies and their implementation. |
| **Section 4** |
| **How robust are your safeguarding practices?**  **Evidence includes:**   * attendance records kept as evidence * regular audits of training records to ensure all staff members have received safeguarding training (or induction in the case of new staff members) * confirmation from external agencies that appropriate training has been provided, including refresher training * records of the induction new staff received on the education setting’s safeguarding procedures * records on the induction and training that new staff, contracted/temporary staff have received * audit trail of training for staff and governors and of when updates are due * policy and practice on recording and storing child protection and safeguarding concerns, and actions arising * policy and practice relating to transferring records when a learner moves education setting * IT/paper storage safety policy * minutes of governors’ meetings where safeguarding is discussed * a DBS audit * analysis of any complaints and the education setting’s response. |
| **Section 5** |
| **How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children/learners?**    **Evidence includes:**   * referral records to external agencies * records/minutes of multi-agency meetings attended by the DSP or other staff * records of information-sharing * the quality of safeguarding/child protection files and records on vulnerable learners (e.g. up to date; accessible; accurate) * examples of lessons delivered by the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme and their impact * activities undertaken during anti-bullying week and their impact. |

**Policies**

The school or college is likely to have a range of policies that are relevant to its approach to safeguarding and these can all help to provide evidence for the evaluation tool. They may include:

* anti-bullying
* online safety
* behaviour
* use of time out/use of physical restraint
* travel to and from school
* attendance
* inclusion/SEN/ALN
* meeting needs of children with medical conditions
* health and safety
* school equality plan
* safer recruitment
* professional conduct/communication protocols for staff
* dealing with allegations of professional abuse
* whistleblowing

**Safeguarding audit**

**Summary**

**Completing this should be the final stage in the assessment process**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 1** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How safe does the education setting feel?** |  |  |  |
| **Section 2** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?** |  |  |  |
| **Section 3** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How effective is your approach to safeguarding?** |  |  |  |
| **Section 4** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How robust are your safeguarding practices?** |  |  |  |
| **Section 5** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children/learners?** |  |  |  |
| **Actions summary** | **Priority 1** | **Priority 2** | **Priority 3** |
| **Section 1: Making the education setting safe** |  |  |  |
| **Section 2: Improving how we communicate in relation to safeguarding** |  |  |  |
| **Section 3: Developing our approach to safeguarding** |  |  |  |
| **Section 4: Working better to safeguard learners** |  |  |  |
| **Section 5: Working better with others** |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 1** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How safe does the education setting feel?** |  |  |  |
|  | **No – action required in this area** | **We need more evidence to answer question** | **Yes – as shown by evidence we have** |
| Do learners feel safe in the education setting? |  |  |  |
| Are you effective in listening to and acting upon learners’ safety concerns? |  |  |  |
| Do parents/carers have confidence about safety in this education setting? |  |  |  |
| Are there site security measures, including secure entry and exit points that help you feel safe? |  |  |  |
| Are there good measures in place to ensure effective safeguarding for extracurricular activities or off-site provision? |  |  |  |
| Are the identities of all visitors checked, and do they sign in and out? |  |  |  |
| Are visitors made aware of your commitment to safeguarding? |  |  |  |
| Actions: what needs to change? | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 2** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?** |  |  |  |
|  | **No – action required in this area** | **Need more evidence to answer question** | **Yes – as shown by evidence we have** |
| Is your safeguarding policy updated annually? |  |  |  |
| Do you review annually how well your safeguarding policy and procedures work? |  |  |  |
| Has everyone (learners, parents/carers, agency staff, support staff, governors) been given information on what is in the policy? |  |  |  |
| Do the policies set out how, through teaching and pastoral support, staff can help to strengthen safeguarding and prevent abuse and neglect? |  |  |  |
| Is safeguarding treated as a priority issue in the senior management team? |  |  |  |
| Is safeguarding a regular item in staff meetings? |  |  |  |
| Is safeguarding a regular item in student council meetings? |  |  |  |
| Is safeguarding covered regularly in your newsletter? |  |  |  |
| Are you confident that everyone recognises the child protection and safeguarding responsibilities placed upon them by *Keeping learners safe?* |  |  |  |
| Are safeguarding policies and practices easily accessible and explained on your website in a user-friendly way? |  |  |  |
| Actions: what needs to change? | | | |
| **Section 3** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How effective is your approach to safeguarding?** |  |  |  |
|  | **No – action required in this area** | **Need more evidence to answer question** | **Yes – as shown by evidence we have** |
| Are you confident that you are effectively identifying, recording and acting on safeguarding concerns? |  |  |  |
| Are you satisfied with the level of pastoral and additional support available to learners, including any who are at particular risk or vulnerable? |  |  |  |
| Are you confident that enough support is provided to learners who have experienced abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm? |  |  |  |
| Do all staff know about the procedures for reporting absences or exclusions of learners who are looked after, on the child register or who could be at risk? |  |  |  |
| Are you satisfied that the curriculum provides learners with sufficient information about safeguarding? |  |  |  |
| Do you have an anti-bullying policy that is in line with the statutory Rights, Respect, Equality guidance (see [gov.wales/school-bullying](https://gov.wales/school-bullying))? |  |  |  |
| Do you have policies that address how to deal with the range of issues learners may be faced with? |  |  |  |
| Do you have a policy on the use of photography and video recording? Are permissions collected from parents/carers and adhered to, and are images used and stored in accordance with safeguarding advice? |  |  |  |
| Are safeguarding issues embedded into policies and practices that support attendance and behaviour? |  |  |  |
| Are you confident about your processes for addressing abuse, prejudice, discrimination and harassment? |  |  |  |
| Are you confident that your approach to physical intervention and restraint is appropriate? Is this reflected in your behaviour policy or a separate school policy? |  |  |  |
| Actions: what needs to change? | | | |
| **Section 4** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How robust are your safeguarding practices?** |  |  |  |
|  | **No – action required in this area** | **Need more evidence to answer question** | **Yes – as shown by evidence we have** |
| Is there a DSP and a deputy responsible for safeguarding? |  |  |  |
| Do staff/learners/parents/carers and outside agencies know who these people are (e.g. are they named on your website?) |  |  |  |
| Are you confident that all learner’s voices are heard? |  |  |  |
| Are all staff clear about what to do if a child protection disclosure is made and how it must be reported, recorded and monitored? |  |  |  |
| Would all staff know what to do if a concern was raised about a colleague, including about the headteacher/principal? |  |  |  |
| Have all staff and volunteers had child protection and safeguarding training to help them identify signs of abuse? Do they know how to report concerns about abuse, whether it is in the learning setting, in the home or in other education settings? Is this regularly refreshed with suitable training, in line with your policy? |  |  |  |
| Have the DSP and relevant governor(s) had recent safeguarding training that is relevant to their role? |  |  |  |
| Are sufficient arrangements made for staff and volunteers absent during training? |  |  |  |
| Are temporary, peripatetic and agency staff made aware of the education setting’s safeguarding/child protection procedures? |  |  |  |
| Is there a central register that records the safeguarding training that all staff have undertaken, including an assessment of effectiveness and impact with appropriate updates? |  |  |  |
| Are safeguarding concerns shared securely with the DSP? |  |  |  |
| Are records stored securely with controlled access that protects confidentiality? |  |  |  |
| How well do staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping referrals confidential? |  |  |  |
| Are all staff clear about how to discuss a safeguarding concern or issue with a learner? |  |  |  |
| Do all staff (including temporary staff and unsupervised volunteers) have DBS checks, and are these updated as required by your policy? |  |  |  |
| Is there a record that all staff appointed after 2002 have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)/DBS check and at the appropriate level? |  |  |  |
| Are you confident that governors have sufficient knowledge to question and challenge safeguarding provision in the school? |  |  |  |
| * Actions: what need to change? | | | |
| **Section 5** | **Red (action needed)** | **Amber (some action needed)** | **Green (no action needed)** |
| **How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children/learners?** |  |  |  |
|  | **No – action required in this area** | **Need more evidence to answer question** | **Yes – as shown by evidence we have** |
| Do you inform parents/carers and learners of the support available within your education setting and via other services or community links? |  |  |  |
| Have parents/carers and learners been informed of the education setting’s need to share information with other agencies if necessary? |  |  |  |
| Do you work with outside agencies to develop learners’ awareness of safeguarding issues? |  |  |  |
| Have relevant staff had training on working with other agencies in line with your policy? |  |  |  |
| Are you confident that your education setting works effectively with other agencies in regard to child protection concerns? |  |  |  |
| Actions: what needs to change? | | | |