



# SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

WITH DR SANDRA WISEMAN

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## Useful free templates and training from LGfL

### 1. Online Safety Policy, AUPs and letters

Updated to reflect the latest guidance and emerging risks (AI, chatbots, financial exploitation). Ready to customise and download: [safepolicies.lgfl.net](https://safepolicies.lgfl.net)

### 2. Training

**Book free training for all schools:** Online Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Prevent, Child Criminal Exploitation, Working with Parents, and Safeguarding for Governors. Details: [safetraining.lgfl.net](https://safetraining.lgfl.net)

### 3. Filtering

New resources for DSLs, SLT and governors, plus self-service 30-minute training. Templates for audits, checks and staff reminders available at: [safefiltering.lgfl.net](https://safefiltering.lgfl.net)

### 4. Monitoring with Senso

Hundreds of schools now use LGfL-Senso monitoring, generating valuable insights to improve safeguarding. More: [monitoring.lgfl.net](https://monitoring.lgfl.net)

### 5. SEND DSL Forum

Half-termly forum for DSLs working with SEND pupils, focusing on safeguarding for disabled children. Book at: [sendforum.lgfl.net](https://sendforum.lgfl.net)

### 6. Safeguarding Posters

Free posters to refresh displays, spark conversations and signpost support: [safeposters.lgfl.net](https://safeposters.lgfl.net)

#### For more information:

[https://lgfl.net/safeguarding?\\_hsmi=378158803](https://lgfl.net/safeguarding?_hsmi=378158803)

## What schools should know: Children's exposure to pornography online

A new report from the Children's Commissioner reveals that many children, some still in primary school are accidentally exposed to violent and degrading pornography through social media and online platforms, often before they even understand what they're seeing.

### Key takeaways for schools

- **Early exposure is common and harmful** - Children no longer seek out pornography as a curiosity instead, they encounter it inadvertently, sometimes at a distressingly young age.
- **Platform design plays a significant role** - Algorithms, autoplay features, disappearing content, and recommendation systems are contributing to these accidental exposures by pushing harmful content to vulnerable users.
- **Recent legislation is a critical step** - **The Online Safety Act, which came into force on 25th July 2025**, introduces protections that could prevent these exposures. Schools should stay informed about its implementation and collaborate with families to reinforce safe digital practices.

### What schools can do

- **Promote digital literacy and resilience** - Incorporate lessons that help pupils recognise inappropriate content, understand its impact, and know how to respond or report it.
- **Engage parents and carers** - Encourage open conversations at home about safe online behaviour and how to handle accidental exposure.
- **Align with policy changes** - Stay updated with Ofcom's regulations and policy shifts under the Online Safety Act to safeguard pupils within school environments and beyond.

#### Read:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/sex-is-kind-of-broken-now-children-and-pornography/>

## What schools should know: Social media still recommends harmful content to teens

New analysis from the Molly Rose Foundation shows that even after the UK's Online Safety Act came into effect, TikTok and Instagram continue to expose teens to large volumes of harmful content. **Key findings include:**

- **97%** of Instagram Reels and **96%** of TikTok's 'For You' recommendations were harmful when tested on accounts mimicking a 15-year-old user.
- **Over 50%** of harmful TikTok posts contained references to suicide and self-harm ideation; **16%** even referenced suicide methods.
- Some harmful videos achieve massive reach, **one in ten** had over 1 million likes, and a fifth of harmful Reels had 250,000+ likes.

### Action points for schools

1. **Update digital safety education** - Reinforce lessons on critical digital literacy: teach pupils how to recognise and respond to distressing online content, and emphasise the dangers of algorithm-driven "rabbit holes."
2. **Engage parents and carers** - Encourage open conversations about online experiences, set realistic expectations about algorithmic risks, and promote safe supervision strategies.
3. **Enhance safeguarding support** - Ensure pastoral and mental health teams are aware of these risks and are prepared to support pupils exposed to distressing content. Use reporting systems that allow pupils to report what they see online.

**4. Advocate for stronger policies** - Stay informed about evolving regulations, and support calls for more robust safeguards and algorithm reform on platforms commonly used by pupils.

#### Read:

**This work involves sensitive themes including suicide, self-harm, and depression. Please ensure appropriate support is in place for any readers who may find the topic distressing.**

<https://mollyrosefoundation.org/suicide-and-self-harm-content-still-recommended-at-industrial-scale-by-tiktok-and-instagram-eight-years-after-mollys-death/>

## What schools need to know: Supporting children who resist family contact

When a child says they don't want to spend time with a parent, it's usually more complex than it appears and schools can play a vital role in spotting the signs and helping them get the right support.

### 1. Understanding the child's perspective is key

CAFfss advises practitioners and it applies to schools too, to listen to a child's own feelings. Children's views, especially when expressed in emotionally safe environments, reveal much about their wellbeing. A child's reluctance may stem from a range of factors: fear, anxiety, sadness, a preference for one parent's household, or even genuine concern over safety or stability.

### 2. It isn't always 'parental alienation'

Rather than assuming a child is being manipulated (known as "parental alienation"), staff should consider whether the child's resistance is a normal reaction, such as anxiety given separation or a justified response if there has been conflict, domestic abuse, or harmful behaviour by a parent.

### 3. Behavioural patterns matter

Some reasons for a child resisting contact include:

- **Justified fear or abuse:** a valid concern for safety.
- **Post-separation adjustment:** normal distress as routines change.
- **Harmful parental conflict:** ongoing disputes may overwhelm the child.

### 4. Schools can help safeguard children

Teachers and pastoral staff are in a prime position to notice signs of emotional distress, anxiety around transitions, or changes in behaviour. If a teacher suspects that a child's refusal to see a parent could be rooted in harm or even manipulative alienating behaviour, they should flag it to designated safeguarding leads and possibly suggest involving child protection or family support services.

### 5. A Child Impact Assessment Framework (CIAF) exists

CAFfss advises that professionals use its CIAF tool when assessing a child's experiences and the effects of family breakdown. This framework helps identify emotional harm and shapes balanced, child-centered recommendations to family courts.

#### What schools can do: A checklist

- Provide a safe, discreet space for children to share concerns.
- Monitor for emotional or behavioural changes around transitions or contact arrangements.
- Collaborate with parents, social workers, or multi-agency teams if concerning patterns emerge.
- When doubt exists about a child's reluctance, whether fear, manipulation, or stress, think about their safety and escalate appropriately.

#### Read:

<https://www.cafcss.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-07/Understanding%20why%20a%20child%20does%20not%20want%20to%20speak%20family%20time%20with%20a%20parent.pdf>

## Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in schools

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has worked with over 200 schools nationwide to better understand and prevent harmful sexual behaviour. Their Everyone's Safer Report (June 2025) sets out five key recommendations for schools and policymakers.

### On Wednesday 24th September (16:00-17:00),

Dr Emily Setty, school staff and the Foundation team will discuss how these recommendations are being implemented and how schools can access support. This **free event** offers schools practical ideas and examples to apply in their own settings.

#### Book here:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/716d446c-105c-4c7f-a50b-fd9f60ffcc9aad6b4fe9-6137-4dbe-9acd-969b4723df64>

#### Everyone's Safer Report:

<https://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/everyones-safer-schools-project/>

## Forthcoming free safeguarding webinars for Autumn term 2025

**Online safety - Tuesday 9th September**

**Pupils mental health - Tuesday 16th September**

**Depression - Tuesday 23rd September**

**Anxiety - Tuesday 30th September**

**Self harm and suicidal ideation - Tuesday 7th October**

**Anti-bullying - Tuesday 14th October**

**Domestic abuse - Tuesday 21st October**

Just a reminder that all resources will be available in our **Safeguarding CPD Library**, where new recordings will be uploaded each week throughout this term. As we start the new school year, I hope you had a chance to enjoy some well-deserved relaxation.

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