



SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

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Allergy safety in schools – A start-of-year reminder

As pupils and staff return for the new academic year, this is a timely reminder for schools to review their arrangements for allergy safety and ensure that procedures are understood and working effectively in practice.

In July 2026, the Department for Education published statutory guidance on Allergy Safety in Schools, following changes introduced through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

With the new school year now underway, leaders and governors should take the opportunity to check that the requirements within the guidance are fully embedded, particularly where new pupils have joined the school, medical information has changed or new members of staff have been appointed.

This isn't simply about having the right policy in place. Schools should be confident that staff understand which pupils may be at risk, how exposure to allergens can be reduced, how to recognise an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, and exactly what to do in an emergency.

What should schools be checking this September?

At the start of the academic year, schools should ensure that:

- **their dedicated allergy safety policy is current, published and reflects the statutory guidance**
- **a named senior leader has responsibility for allergy safety**
- **information about pupils' allergies and medical needs is up to date and communicated appropriately to relevant staff**
- **Individual Healthcare Plans and Allergy Action Plans have been reviewed where necessary**
- **staff have received appropriate allergy awareness and emergency response training**
- **prescribed and, where applicable, spare adrenaline devices can be accessed quickly in an emergency**
- **arrangements extend beyond the dining hall to include classrooms, wraparound provision, clubs, trips, educational visits and school events**
- **procedures are in place for recording and learning from allergy-related incidents and near misses**
- **pupils with allergies are supported to participate fully in school life and consideration is given to their wellbeing, inclusion and any allergy-related bullying**

A useful question for leaders and governors

If a pupil experienced a severe allergic reaction today, would staff know immediately what to do, where the child's medication was and how to access it?

If the answer isn't an unequivocal yes, this is an important area to address at the start of the academic year.

The key message for September: allergy safety is a whole-school responsibility. Policies are important, but effective practice depends on staff being informed, trained and confident to act quickly when a child needs help.

Read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allergy-safety-in-schools>

Regulated activity with children: September 2026 changes – What schools need to know

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has published a helpful "myth-busting" update to clarify some of the misconceptions surrounding the removal of the supervision exemption for regulated activity with children, which came into force on 1st September 2026.

This is particularly important for schools reviewing their arrangements for volunteers and other adults working with children at the beginning of the new academic year.

What changed on 1st September 2026?

Previously, certain activities involving children, such as teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising them, could fall outside the definition of regulated activity where the individual was sufficiently supervised by someone already undertaking regulated activity. From 1st September 2026, that supervision exemption has been removed.

This means that where an individual carries out the relevant activity frequently or overnight, the fact that they are supervised no longer prevents the activity from being regulated activity. For these purposes, the frequency or "period condition" is met where the activity takes place on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight.

A typical school example

Consider a parent who comes into school every Monday morning to listen to children read. Previously, if the parent was sufficiently supervised by a teacher, the school may have determined that they were not undertaking regulated activity and obtained an Enhanced DBS check without Children's Barred List information.

From 1st September 2026, because the parent is undertaking the relevant activity frequently, supervision no longer removes the activity from regulated activity. The role therefore falls within regulated activity and the school should consider the appropriate Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information in accordance with the relevant guidance.

Myth: "Every volunteer now needs an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check"

Not necessarily.

The removal of the supervision exemption does not mean that every person who volunteers or works with children automatically undertakes regulated activity.

Schools must still consider:

- what activity the individual is undertaking
- how frequently it takes place

- whether it meets the overnight condition
- and the other relevant regulated activity criteria.

The DBS specifically warns against assuming that every role involving children has automatically become regulated activity.

What about occasional volunteers?

This is an important distinction.

A person who helps at one isolated event, for example, is not automatically undertaking regulated activity simply because they have contact with children.

Schools still need to assess the nature and frequency of the activity and follow KCSIE 2026 when deciding what checks and supervision arrangements are appropriate. Therefore, schools should avoid adopting a blanket rule that says either "all volunteers require a barred list check" or "occasional volunteers never require checks." The circumstances of the role matter.

Important: Volunteers working within EYFS provision

KCSIE 2026 sets out specific requirements for volunteers working in EYFS provision. Where a school is subject to the EYFS framework, **a volunteer must not begin working** within Nursery or Reception until the school has received their Enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information.

What does this mean in practice?

The rules for EYFS volunteers are different from those for occasional volunteers elsewhere in school.

Within EYFS:

Even if someone is volunteering for just one day or one morning, and will be supervised, the required Enhanced DBS check, including children's barred list information, **must be received before they start.**

Outside EYFS:

A one-off or occasional volunteer does not automatically require an Enhanced DBS check with barred list information. Schools should consider what the person will be doing and how often, in line with KCSIE 2026 and the regulated activity rules.

For example, a parent attending a one-off school trip and supervising only their own child would not normally be considered a school volunteer undertaking regulated activity. If they are asked to supervise other children, the school must consider what checks are required.

However, if the trip involves EYFS children and the parent is volunteering to supervise or take responsibility for children other than their own, the specific EYFS requirements apply. The school must have received the parent's Enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information, before they can volunteer, **even if it is only for that one trip and they will be supervised.** If the parent is simply accompanying and supervising their own child, they are not acting as an EYFS volunteer.

Key message

Nursery or Reception volunteer, even for one day: **Enhanced DBS with children's barred list information must be received before they start.**

One-off volunteer elsewhere in school: **Consider the activity and frequency to determine whether it is regulated activity and what checks are required.**

The important distinction is that schools should not apply the usual "occasional volunteer" approach to volunteers working within EYFS provision.

Read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulated-activity-with-children-common-misconceptions-about-the-sept-2026-supervision-exemption-changes>

Safeguarding Network Meeting - Thursday 22nd October, 3:45pm - 5pm

This free Safeguarding Network Meeting will provide an opportunity for Designated Safeguarding Leads, Deputy DSLs and senior leaders to reflect on how the changes are working in practice, discuss emerging issues and ask any questions that have arisen. The session will be practical, interactive and discussion-based, and will include:

- **✓ KCSIE 2026 – Frequently asked questions**
- **✓ Interactive safeguarding scenarios based on real-life situations schools are facing**
- **✓ Discussion around professional curiosity, online safety and AI, Family Help, child-on-child abuse, information sharing, record keeping and decision making**
- **✓ Sharing safeguarding challenges, ideas and good practice with colleagues from across our schools**

Free to schools subscribing to our Safeguarding SLA. I hope you can join us.

Forthcoming free safeguarding webinars for Autumn term 1 2026

Online safety - Tuesday 8th September

Pupils mental health - Tuesday 15th September

Depression - Tuesday 22nd September

Anxiety - Tuesday 29th September

Self harm and suicidal ideation - Tuesday 6th October

Anti-bullying - Tuesday 13th October

Domestic abuse - Tuesday 20th October

Everything You Need for September 2026 – including the latest KCSIE 2026 updates, 'Further changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' powerpoint and revised Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:

<https://www.services4schools.org.uk/cpd-zone/safeguarding/safeguarding-everything-you-need-for-september-2026>

The final version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

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