



SAFEGUARDING UPDATE - WHAT DO PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

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What parents need to know: Volunteering in school – DBS changes from 1st September 2026

Many schools rely on the valuable support of parents, carers and other volunteers, whether that's listening to children read, helping with activities or supporting school trips.

From 1st September 2026, the rules around what is classed as regulated activity with children have changed. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has recently issued further guidance to help explain what these changes mean in practice.

What has changed?

Previously, some people working or volunteering regularly with children were not considered to be carrying out regulated activity if they were supervised by someone else.

From 1st September 2026, this supervision exemption has been removed.

This means that being supervised no longer automatically takes a role outside regulated activity. Schools must consider what the volunteer will be doing, how often they will be doing it and whether the role meets the regulated activity criteria.

This does not mean that every parent who helps at school now needs an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check (except in EYFS).

What might this look like for parents?

🏠 Example 1 – Regular volunteering in school

A parent volunteers every Monday morning to listen to children read. Because this is a regular arrangement and involves working directly with children, the school will need to consider whether the role is regulated activity and ensure that the appropriate safeguarding checks are completed.

Importantly, the fact that the parent is supervised by a teacher no longer automatically means that the role falls outside regulated activity.

🚌 Example 2 – A one-off school trip

A parent attends a one-off daytime school trip and is responsible only for their own child. They would not normally be considered a school volunteer undertaking regulated activity simply because they are attending the trip.

If, however, the school asks the parent to supervise or take responsibility for other children, they are acting as a volunteer. The school will consider what safeguarding checks are required based on the role and circumstances.

👶 Example 3 – Volunteering in Nursery or Reception (EYFS)

There are specific requirements for volunteers working within provision covered by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

For example:

A parent offers to help in Reception for one morning. Even though they are volunteering for just one morning and will be supervised by school staff, the specific EYFS requirements apply. The school must have received the required Enhanced DBS certificate, including Children's Barred List information, before the parent can begin volunteering within the EYFS provision.

🏠 Example 4 – An EYFS school trip

A Reception parent accompanies a school trip and is asked to supervise a small group of Reception children.

Because the parent is volunteering and taking responsibility for children within the school's EYFS provision, the specific EYFS requirements apply.

The required Enhanced DBS certificate, including Children's Barred List information, must have been received by the school before they can undertake the volunteering role, even if it is only for that one trip and they will be alongside school staff.

If a parent is simply accompanying the trip and only supervising their own child, they are not acting as a volunteer responsible for other children.

Why are the rules different for EYFS?

Schools and maintained nursery schools that are subject to the EYFS framework have specific safeguarding requirements for volunteers working within their EYFS provision.

This means schools cannot simply apply the usual approach to an occasional or one-off volunteer when someone is volunteering within Nursery or Reception.

What does this mean for parents?

If you volunteer at your child's school, you may therefore be asked to complete additional safeguarding checks depending on where you are volunteering, what you will be doing and how regularly you will be helping.

The important thing to remember is:

Regular volunteering: The school will consider whether your role meets the definition of regulated activity and what checks are required.

One-off volunteering outside EYFS: This does not automatically mean you need an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information. The school will consider the nature of your role.

Volunteering within EYFS: If you are volunteering within Nursery or Reception provision, including on a one-off basis, the specific EYFS safeguarding requirements apply.

Remember – these checks aren't intended to discourage parents from volunteering. Parents and carers make an important contribution to school life. The changes are about ensuring that schools have the right safeguarding arrangements in place for adults working

with children, while continuing to welcome appropriate opportunities for families to become involved in their child's education.

Read:

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

What parents need to know: Allergy safety in schools

Does your child have an allergy?

New statutory guidance on allergy safety in schools was published by the Department for Education in July 2026. It strengthens how schools identify, reduce and respond to allergy-related risks and requires schools to have a dedicated allergy safety policy.

For parents and carers, one of the most important messages is simple:

Please make sure your child's school knows about their allergy.

Schools need accurate and up-to-date information to help keep children safe.

What should parents tell school?

If your child has an allergy, make sure the school knows:

- **What they are allergic to, this could include food, medication, insect stings, contact or airborne allergens**
- **What happens when they have a reaction, including the symptoms they may experience**
- **How serious their allergy is and whether they are at risk of anaphylaxis**
- **What medication they need, including whether they have been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI)**
- **If anything changes, don't wait until the school's next annual update if your child's allergy, medication or treatment changes**

The guidance expects schools to have arrangements for identifying pupils with allergies and reducing their risk of exposure to known allergens.

How can parents help?

Parents and schools working together is really important.

You can help by:

- **Keeping information up to date, tell school promptly about any new diagnosis, reaction or change in treatment**
- **Providing prescribed medication requested by the school and checking that it is in date**
- **Sharing your child's Allergy Action Plan, Asthma Plan or other relevant clinical information with school**
- **Working with school on an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) if your child needs specific arrangements to manage their allergy safely**
- **Talking to your child about their allergy in an age-appropriate way and encouraging them to tell an adult immediately if they feel unwell**
- **Speaking to school before trips, residential or special activities if you have any concerns about how your child's allergy will be managed**

The guidance makes clear that children with allergies should be supported to participate safely in school trips and activities and that their wellbeing and inclusion should be considered alongside their physical safety.

What should you expect from school?

Schools should have clear arrangements for allergy safety, including staff allergy awareness and emergency response training, access to prescribed adrenaline devices where needed, appropriate Individual Healthcare Plans and procedures for responding to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

Schools should also learn from any allergy-related serious incidents or "near misses" to help prevent them happening again.

Remember

Please don't assume that school already knows about your child's allergy.

If your child has an allergy, even if they have never experienced a severe reaction, make sure the school has current information and knows what support your child may need.

Good communication between home and school can make a significant difference in keeping children with allergies safe, included and confident at school.

Read:

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

Recommended free courses and workshops for parents/carers

1. NSPCC – Keeping Children Safe Online

It is specifically aimed at parents and carers, is only around 40 minutes, and comes directly from the NSPCC.

NSPCC – Free Keeping Children Safe Online workshop for parents and carers

It covers:

- online bullying
- social media
- children's mental health and online experiences
- practical ways parents can support their child
- where to find further help

Link:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/free-online-safety-group-workshops/>