



Briefing Note:

EYFS Framework

September 2025



**HELEN HOGAN:
SAFEGUARDING
MATTERS**

Ahead of this term's DSL Update session please find a short briefing on the changes to the EYFS Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (Department for Education (DfE) 2025) is mandatory guidance for all early years' childminders and group and school-based early years providers in England.

This briefing summarises the key points which apply across all school based early years settings. The framework is divided into three sections

Section 1 – The learning and development requirements set out what school-based providers must do to promote the learning and development of all children in their care.

Section 2 – Assessment sets out the assessment requirements school-based providers must meet as well as guidance on assessment.

Section 3 – Safeguarding and welfare requirements sets out the necessary steps providers must take to create a setting where children can enjoy learning, grow in confidence and be safe and well.

This update details the implications of the changes to Section 3, the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Ultimately the guidance is heavily aligning with the expectations already set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and your updated Child Protection Policy 2025 (Helen Hogan Safeguarding Matters Policy).

Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Designated practitioners in early years settings, should take lead responsibility for safeguarding children. The lead practitioner is responsible for contacting local statutory children's services agencies and the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP). All practitioners must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. All providers of early years care must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Partner (LSP).

Safeguarding policies must include:

- what to do when there are safeguarding concerns about a child
- what actions are needed when an allegation is made against a member of staff

- how electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting
- procedures to follow to check the suitability of new recruits
- how safeguarding training is delivered and put into practice.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing procedures must be in place to ensure staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Everyone working or volunteering at the setting needs to be aware of these procedures, feel safe raising concerns and know that any concerns will be taken seriously. The procedures must include when and how to report concerns and the process that will be followed after a concern is reported.

Concerns about children's safety and welfare

If there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, the local authority children's social care team needs to be notified immediately. In emergencies, the police should also be notified. Providers must inform Ofsted of any allegation of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises. The government's statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023), Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (Home Office, 2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025) should also be considered.

If you are part of HH: Safeguarding Matters Support Package – our updated CP Policy and Whistleblowing Policy covers all of these areas.

Child absences

Settings must have an Attendance Policy that is shared with parents and carers. This must include expectations for reporting child absences and the actions that will be taken if a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period of time. Settings should consider patterns and trends in a child's absence when deciding whether an absence is prolonged. Absences must be followed up in a timely manner and any concerns must be referred to local children's social care services. Settings may also request a police welfare check.

This will be covered in your school's Attendance Policy and Children Missing from Education Policy

Suitable People

Safer recruitment procedures should be followed. All practitioners must have the relevant qualifications and training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Anyone whose suitability has not been checked must not have unsupervised contact with children. A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) must be made if a person looking after the children leaves or is dismissed because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

References

References must be obtained for any person working or volunteering at the setting before they are recruited. References should be obtained directly from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and come from a senior person with appropriate authority. Applicants should not supply their own references. When asked to provide references for a departing employee, settings should confirm the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any safeguarding concerns.

Disqualification

If someone is disqualified from working in the early years, they must not continue as an early years provider or assistant, or be directly involved in the management of any early years provision. If there's information that may lead to someone being disqualified, appropriate action must be taken to ensure the safety of children.

This will be covered in your Safer Recruitment Procedures and through Safer Recruitment Training.

Staff Taking Medication or Other Substances

People working with children must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children. All medication must be stored securely, and out of reach of children at all times. Smoking in or on the premises when children are present or about to be present must not be allowed. Vapes or e-cigarettes should not be used when children are present.

Qualifications, Training, Support and Skills

Legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 must be followed. Safeguarding training: The lead practitioner (for group and school-based providers) must attend a child protection training course that enables them to identify and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect. The criteria for effective safeguarding training are set out in Annex C of the framework.

Supervision, Training and Skills

Induction training should include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety issues. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families.

This will be covered in your Keeping Children Safe in Education Training/Child Protection Training and Staff Handbook/Staff Behaviour Policy and Supervision Policy.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one person with a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings.

English Language Skills

Those providing early years care must have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care.

Key Person

Each child must be assigned a key person to:

- help ensure care is tailored to meet their individual needs
- help the child become familiar with the setting
- offer a settled relationship for the child
- build a relationship with their parents or carers
- help families engage with more specialist support if needed.

Staff: Child Ratios

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of children and ensure their safety. Staff: child ratios depend on the age of the children and type of provision. Some key supervision principles apply across settings:

- Children must USUALLY be within sight AND hearing and ALWAYS within sight OR hearing.
- Parents and carers should be informed about how staff and assistants are organised.

- Providers must not include anyone aged under 17 in ratios, except apprentices who may be included in ratios from the age of 16. Providers must not allow anyone aged under 17 to care for children unsupervised at any time. Providers may count students and long-term volunteers (aged 17 or over) and apprentices (aged 16 or over) in ratios at the level below their level of study but only if the provider is satisfied they are suitable and responsible, and they hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification.

Medicines

- Health Settings should promote the good health, including the oral health, of the children they look after. There should be a procedure for taking appropriate action if children are ill or infectious which covers the steps needed to prevent the spread of infection.
- There should be a policy and procedures for administering medicines. Staff must have training if medical or technical knowledge is required.
- Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist.
- Medicine must only be administered to a child where written permission has been obtained from the child's parent or carer.
- Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day the medicine has been taken, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Food and Drink

- Meals, snacks and drinks must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- Fresh drinking water must always be available and accessible to children.
- There must be an area adequately equipped to provide food and drinks for children and suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food.
- Settings must notify their relevant registered agency about any food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident.

Safer Eating

- Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- Settings must gather, record and act on information about special dietary or health requirements, preferences and food allergies children have. All staff must be aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Food should be prepared in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs.

- Food must be prepared in a way to prevent choking.
- When there is a choking incident that requires intervention, providers should record where and how the child choked and inform parents or carers. Records should also be reviewed periodically and appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.
- Where possible, staff should sit facing children while they eat to make sure children are eating safely, prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating.

Supporting and Understanding Children's Behaviour

Settings are responsible for supporting, understanding and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way. Reasonable steps should be taken to make sure that no child experiences or is threatened with corporal punishment by anyone who is caring for or is in regular contact with a child, or by anyone living or working in the premises where care is provided. Any early years provider who does not meet these requirements commits an offence. A person will not be considered to have used corporal punishment if physical intervention was taken to avert immediate danger of personal injury. There must be a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used and parents and carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practical.

Special Educational Needs

Arrangements should be in place to support children who have Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). A person should be identified to act as a SEND coordinator (SENCO).

This information should be part of your Safer Recruitment Procedures, Induction Process and Staff Handbook/Code of Conduct, Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessments, Medication Policy and Food and Drink/Eating Policy. You WILL need to make some amendments to ensure all expectations are covered within your policies.

Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Accident or Injury

- There should always be an accessible first aid box for use on children.

- A written record must be kept of accidents or injuries and first aid treatment. Parents/carers should be informed on the same day.
- OFSTED and the local child protection agency must be notified of any serious accident, illness, injury to, or death of, any child while in a setting's care and also the actions taken. This must be done as soon as is reasonably practical or within 14 days of the incident occurring.

Safety of Premises

Premises should be fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided. Health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements, need to be followed and there should be an emergency evacuation procedure.

Indoor Space Requirements and Outdoor Access

Premises and equipment must be organised in a way that meets the needs of children. There must be access to an outdoor play area or outdoor activities on a daily basis.

Sleeping Arrangements

Sleeping children must be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. This includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition, suited to the age of the child, and that babies are placed down to sleep safely.

Toilets and Intimate Hygiene

There should be:

- an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available
- separate toilet facilities for adults
- suitable hygienic changing facilities
- a consideration of children's privacy when changing nappies
- an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels and any other necessary items.

Organising Premises for Confidentiality and Safeguarding

There should be an area where staff can talk to parents or carers confidentially on site. Children should not leave the premises unsupervised and should only be released into the care of individuals explicitly named by the parent or carer.

There should be an agreed procedure to check the identity of visitors and to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises.

Insurance

Settings must have appropriate insurance for all premises they provide childcare from.

Safety on outings

Potential risks or hazards, including vehicles transporting children, must be assessed. The steps needed to remove, minimise, and manage those risks and hazards must be identified. The assessment must include consideration of adult child ratios.

Risk assessment

Providers and childminders should take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children are not exposed to risks. They must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks.

This will be part of your Health and Safety Audit, Building and Premises checks and Risk Assessments will be in place for all areas. You WILL need to make some amendments to these policies.

Information and Record Keeping

Settings must maintain records and obtain and share relevant information. Records must be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records about staff and children must be held securely. They should only be accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them. Relevant information should be collected about children and shared with parents and carers. A record should also be kept of any complaints received and the outcome.

This will be part of your Information Sharing Protocols and Record Keeping Policy

Inspections and Quality Assurance Visits

Parents and carers need to be notified of upcoming inspections by Ofsted or quality assurance visits by the childminder's agency (CMA). A copy of the report must be shared with the parents and carers.

Changes That Must Be Notified to Ofsted

- Changes to the name, address or contact information of the provider, manager or childminder, or a change in the address of the premises.
- Changes which affect the space available to children and the quality of childcare available.
- Any significant events which affect suitability of any person who cares for or is in regular contact with children on the premises.
- Changes to hours of childcare provision which would result in overnight care.

Other legal duties

- The EYFS requirements sit alongside other legal obligations and do not supersede or replace any other legislation which must still be met.

This briefing note will be covered in more detail at the DSL Update Events in Autumn Term 2025.