



# Briefing Note

## Crime and Policing Act 2026



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The Crime and Policing Act 2026 received Royal Assent on *29 April 2026*, introducing one of the most wide-ranging overhauls of policing, antisocial behaviour powers, retail crime enforcement, serious violence prevention in over a decade. It has also introduced the mandatory reporting of CSA, the removal of the supervision clause for regulated activity, tougher sentencing for grooming offences, the creation of a register of people who have caused serious harm to children.

## The Crime and Policing Act 2026 aims to:

- **Tackle serious violence**, including knife crime and violence against women and girls.
- **Strengthen police powers** to address antisocial behaviour, retail crime, drug-related offending, and organised crime.
- **Rebuild public confidence** in policing following concerns about vetting, misconduct, and weakened neighbourhood policing.
- **Improve Child Protection Measures** to improve best practice in safeguarding children.

## Key Child Protection Measures

### Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

The Act introduces a **new statutory duty** requiring individuals in regulated activity to report CSA to the police or local authority when they:

- are told about abuse by a child or perpetrator, or
- witness abuse themselves. Failure to report is a criminal offence, and obstructing someone from reporting is also an offence.

### Implications for schools & DSLs:

- Mandatory reporting becomes a *legal* requirement, not just best practice.
- DSLs must ensure staff understand when and how to report.
- Policies, training and reporting pathways must be updated.

## Removal of the “Supervision” Clause for Regulated Activity

The Act **removes the supervision exemption** from the definition of regulated activity. This means roles involving children are eligible for **enhanced DBS checks with barred-list checks**, even if supervised.

### Implications:

- More school roles will now require enhanced DBS + barred list.
- Volunteer and support roles previously considered “supervised” may now fall under regulated activity.
- Safer recruitment policies must be updated.

## Tougher Sentencing for Grooming Offences

Grooming is now a **statutory aggravating factor** in sentencing for child sexual offences. Courts must treat offences involving grooming as more serious, including those linked to grooming gangs.

### Implications:

- Stronger deterrence and clearer recognition of grooming behaviours.
- Supports multi-agency disruption of exploitation and county lines activity.

## New National Register for Individuals Who Have Caused Serious Harm to Children

The Act creates a **new register**, similar to the Sex Offenders Register, for individuals who have caused **serious harm, neglect or abuse** to children. *(This measure is referenced in IICSA - related reforms and is consistent with the Act’s child-protection provisions; however, detailed operational guidance is still emerging).*

## Implications:

- Enhanced ability for agencies to track high-risk individuals.
- Strengthened information sharing duties across safeguarding partnerships.

## Wider Measures Affecting Schools

- New offence of **assaulting a retail worker**.
- **Respect Orders** to tackle persistent antisocial behaviour.
- New offence of **possessing a bladed article with intent to use unlawful violence**.
- Expanded **drug testing on arrest** and stronger police powers to recover stolen devices.

These measures support contextual safeguarding, community safety, and early help.

## Implications for schools:

- Stronger police response to exploitation, county lines, and youth involvement in weapon related harm.
- Easier escalation routes for DSLs where exploitation indicators are present.

## Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The Act supports the government's mission to **halve VAWG and knife crime within a decade**.

## Implications for schools:

- Expect updated multi-agency guidance on harmful sexual behaviour, stalking, and online harms.
- Stronger police tools to manage stalking, including earlier disclosure of suspect identity.

The impact of this Act being passed will have implications for both Working Together 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (currently out in Draft). At HH:SM we will be updating policies in line with these changes for all schools ready for September 2026. In relation to the mandatory reporting of CSA, your school's Child Protection Policy already states that all staff must report all safeguarding concerns. The expectations around the procedures for safer recruitment will support schools in being able to complete full checks on all staff, including volunteers, a move that has long been anticipated and welcomed by schools.