



Royal Assent of Children's Wellbeing & Schools Act 2026

Briefing Note

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The Children's Wellbeing and School's Act was given Royal Assent on Wednesday 29th April. Here is a reminder of the implications for safeguarding and schools.

Key Safeguarding Relevant Changes

Stronger Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

The Act strengthens how education partners work with children's social care, including:

- **Formalising education's role in safeguarding partnerships**, ensuring schools are fully integrated into early identification and intervention processes.
- **Establishing multi-agency child protection teams**, improving consistency and speed of decision-making.
- **Improved information-sharing duties**, including consistent identifiers to reduce the risk of children "falling through the cracks."

Implication for DSLs: The statutory guidance (KCSIE 2026) will reflect these duties and are already highlighted in the draft which is currently out for consultation. The implications are clearer expectations around attendance at multi-agency meetings, data sharing, and oversight of vulnerable pupils.

Children Not in School (CNIS) Register

The Act introduces a **national register of children not in school**, requiring local authorities to maintain accurate records and strengthening oversight of elective home education.

Implication for schools:

- New duties to share information with the LA when a child is removed from roll.
- DSLs will need to monitor off-roll risks and ensure safeguarding checks are completed before deletions from roll.

Regulation of Independent Educational Settings

The Act expands Ofsted's powers, including:

- **Enhanced due diligence and safeguarding standards** for independent providers ([Independent School Standards Guidance](#))
- **Powers of entry and investigation**, and the ability to suspend or deregister settings where safeguarding concerns arise.

Implication for DSLs: Greater scrutiny of alternative provision and unregistered settings - schools must ensure robust checks before placing pupils off-site.

Strengthened Support for Children in Care and Care Leavers

Measures include:

- A **kinship care legal framework**,
- **Staying close** and improved local offers,
- Stronger corporate parenting duties.

Implication for DSLs: Clearer responsibilities around PEP quality, transitions, and multi-agency planning.

School-Level Reforms with Safeguarding Impact

- **Free breakfast clubs** in all state primary schools, supporting attendance and wellbeing.
- **Limits on branded school uniform items**, reducing financial barriers.
- **Teacher qualification and misconduct reforms**, including strengthened oversight and consistent expectations across all school types.
- **Mobile Phone Policy** (See HH:SM Mobile Phone Policy)
- **MAT dedicated inspections**

Implication for DSLs: Improved attendance and reduced hardship are expected to support early help and reduce vulnerability.

What Schools and DSLs Should Do Next

Immediate actions

- Review internal safeguarding procedures in anticipation of updated KCSIE 2026 (full details to be shared on this term's DSL termly briefing sessions).
- Strengthen information-sharing protocols with LAs and partner agencies.
- Audit alternative provision arrangements and ensure due diligence aligns with new Ofsted powers. (See HH:SM audit tool for APs)
- Prepare for CNIS reporting requirements and ensure roll-management processes are compliant.

A comment from Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education

“For schools, the Act brings greater consistency and clarity. The government has been clear that phones have no place in schools. Now guidance is clear that schools are expected to implement and consistently enforce policies, supporting teachers to maintain calm, focused classrooms. Multi-academy trusts will receive dedicated inspections for the first time, and all schools will follow both the national curriculum and at least the national minimum pay levels. All new teachers in state schools will be required to have, or be working towards, Qualified Teacher Status. These are not changes for their own sake. They are about fairness and a shared commitment to high

standards for every child, in every classroom, in every school – to make sure that every student can benefit from focused teaching and better outcomes.”

At HH:SM we will continue to support DSL’s in their role in light of the new changes.