

Definition of safeguarding

All schools, including independent schools, have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The arrangements that schools have in place need to ensure that:

- reasonable measures are taken to minimise risks of harm to children’s welfare
- appropriate actions are taken to address concerns about the welfare of a child or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned with:

- protecting children from abuse and neglect
- preventing impairment of their health or development
- ensuring that they receive safe and effective care

This is to enable children to have optimum life chances.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults

In respect of safeguarding vulnerable adults, again, there is no statutory definition. Whilst ‘In Safe Hands: implementing Adult Protection Procedures in Wales’ contains no definition of safeguarding of vulnerable adults, it does separately define the concepts of a ‘vulnerable adult’ and ‘significant harm’.

The definition of a ‘Vulnerable Adult’ is set out in section 126 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

An “adult at risk”, for the purposes of this Part, is an adult who -

1. is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
2. has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of

- those needs)
3. as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

Essentially, all vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect, the right to receive proper care and be supported in seeking help in the event that they have been abused.

What is a child?

The Welsh Assembly Government (2007) document 'Safeguarding children: working together under the Children Act 2004' explains that a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout that document. The fact that a child has become sixteen years of age is living independently or is in Further Education, or is a member of the armed forces, or is in hospital, or in prison or a young offenders institution does not change their status or their entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.

Everyone who works in education shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe. When inspecting a provider's safeguarding arrangements inspectors should consider how effective the school is in the following:

- creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people
- identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address these, where appropriate, in partnership with other agencies
- the development of children's understanding, awareness, and resilience through the curriculum

Achieving this objective requires systems designed to:

- prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people
- promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice within the provision
- identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare arising from home, community or school, and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe
- contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children and young people

In all instances, the inspection framework looks beyond a tick list of compliance and instead evaluates a provider's approach to safeguarding, and the degree to which this

promotes and supports a culture of safety and wellbeing within the school community.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity, which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as:

- the safe recruitment, supervision, training and management of staff
- how staff manage pupils' behaviour, including withdrawal provision and the use of restraint
- how well the provider monitors pupil attendance and engagement with the provision, which is able to identify quickly unexplained medical conditions, unusual absences, and disappearances
- pupil health and safety and wellbeing, on and off-site
- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of emotionally damaging or unsafe behaviours, for example grooming, harassment, discrimination, bullying and extremism
- bullying, including cyberbullying
- the provider's record keeping procedures
- arrangements for meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- first aid and the management of medicines
- relationships and sexuality education
- promoting healthy relationships
- child sexual exploitation
- forced marriage
- preventing radicalisation and exploitation
- trafficking
- signposting victims of abuse to appropriate help and support
- mandatory reporting duty for female genital mutilation
- drugs and substance misuse
- online safety Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) relevant to young people aged sixteen and above.

The Welsh Government has issued specific statutory requirements about many of these issues. There may also be other safeguarding issues that are specific to the local area or population.

Where there are statutory requirements, schools should already have in place policies and procedures that satisfy those and comply with any guidance issued by the Welsh Government. Similarly, arrangements about matters on which the Welsh Government

has issued guidance should be evidenced by policies and procedures that are in accordance with that guidance or achieve the same effect.