

Headteacher Briefing

Early Years Foundation Stage: 2025 changes



Coventry City Council

coventry.gov.uk

EYFS Safeguarding requirements, from September 2025



Department
for Education

Changes to the EYFS safeguarding requirements from September 2025



[EYFS safeguarding consultation - Summary of proposed changes](#)

Updates: Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding requirements

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Setting the standards for learning,
development and care for children from
birth to five

1st September 2025 significant updates to EYFS safeguarding requirements come into effect.

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)



1. Safeguarding: Policies and Procedures 3.4

Policy Updates: Safeguarding policies **must** include:

- The action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child.
- The action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against the [the member of staff
- How mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting.
- Procedures to follow to check the suitability of new recruits.
- Safeguarding policies **must** detail how training is delivered and how practitioners are supported in implementation.

Why This Matters

- More explicit requirements reduces ambiguity and ensures **swift, consistent responses**, which is critical for keeping children safe
- Clarity around how practitioners are supported to implement safeguarding training

How to Implement

- ✓ Update training policies to **align with new annex requirements**.
 - ✓ Provide **regular refresher training** on safeguarding and child protection.
 - ✓ Ensure staff **know their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and how to escalate concerns
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2. Child Absence Monitoring: Safeguarding Policies and Procedures 3.4

Follow-Up Procedures

- Providers are required to follow up on prolonged and unexplained child absences to ensure the child's safety and well-being

Emergency Contact Details

- Maintaining additional emergency contact information for each child is now mandatory.
- **Providers must keep additional emergency contact details** for every child.

Why This Matters

- Helps detect safeguarding concerns such as neglect, domestic abuse, or trafficking.
- Supports **early intervention** for vulnerable children.
- Children missing in Early Years Education should be approached in the same way as children of statutory school age. September 2025, new Coventry EY guidance for CME in Early Years

How to Implement

- ✓ Create a **clear absence tracking system** (daily registers, phone calls to absent families).
- ✓ Maintain **at least two emergency contacts** for each child.
- ✓ Train staff to **identify warning signs** (repeated unexplained absences).

Consider: How are absences followed up for children in Nursery /2 year old provision where attendance is not statutory?

3. Safer Recruitment Practices: Suitable People: 3.13

- Providers **must** record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks, vetting processes and references that have been completed (including the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and details of who obtained it).
- Providers **must** obtain references prior to employment, ensuring that only suitable individuals are recruited. Employers **must not allow** staff to start work while waiting for checks


Policy Updates

- Within safeguarding policies procedures must explicitly outline how references are gathered, verified, evaluated and stored.

Why This Matters

- Strengthens safeguarding by ensuring that unsuitable individuals do not work with children.
- Reduces the risk of **staff with concerning histories** slipping through the recruitment process.

How to Implement

- ✓ Update recruitment policies to include a step-by-step reference-checking procedure.
 - ✓ Ensure **at least two professional references** are received before a new employee starts.
 - ✓ Train leaders on **spotting red flags** in references
 - ✓ Ensure qualifications held by candidates are on the DfE Qualifications Tracker
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4. Safeguarding Training 3.30, 3.1 and 3.32

3.30:

- Providers **must** ensure that all practitioners are trained in line with the criteria set out in **Annex C**.
- Providers **must** ensure that practitioners are supported and confident to implement the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures on an ongoing basis.
- Providers should read 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'. [*'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'*](#)

3.31: The DSL **must provide support, advice and guidance** to all practitioners on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required. The DSL must attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C.

3.32: **Training must be renewed every two years.** Providers may consider whether any staff need to undertake annual refresher training during any two-year period to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to safeguarding procedures or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur in the setting.

Annex C. 3.0 The DSL **must** attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C, designed for staff caring for 0-5 year olds and is appropriate to the age of the children being cared for.

Consider: are these expectations communicated in the school's policy and procedures ?

Why This Matters

- Ensures EY specific knowledge is included in safeguarding training to raise awareness and improve practice. This moves beyond "tick-box" training toward creating a **culture of ongoing safeguarding awareness** and competence

How to Implement

- ✓ Update training policies to **align with new annex requirements**.
- ✓ Provide **regular refresher training** on safeguarding and child protection and ensure the DSL has time to support staff
- ✓ Ensure staff **know their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and how to escalate concerns

Annexe C: Criteria for effective safeguarding training: All staff

1. Training is designed for **staff caring for 0–5-year-olds** and is appropriate to the age of the children being cared for. Coventry Schools DSL Training will cover scenarios suitable for the EYFS age range and the content below

DSL's may also attend Coventry Early Years DSL training for more in depth knowledge related to birth to five


2. The safeguarding training for all practitioners must cover the following areas:

- What is meant by the term safeguarding
- The factors, situation and actions that could lead or contribute to abuse,
- The main categories of abuse, harm and neglect
- harm or neglect
- How to work in ways that safeguard children from abuse, harm and neglect
- How to identify signs of possible abuse, harm and neglect at the earliest opportunity: These may include:
 - *Significant changes in children's behaviour.*
 - *A decline in children's general well-being.*
 - *Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.*
 - *Concerning comments or behaviour from children*
- The setting's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Legislation, national policies, codes of conduct and professional practice in relation to safeguarding
- Inappropriate behaviour from practitioners, or any other person working with the children. This could include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond what is required through their role; or inappropriate sharing of images
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home or that a child may experience emotional abuse or physical abuse because of witnessing domestic abuse or coercive control or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation
- How to respond, record and effectively refer concerns or allegations related to safeguarding in a timely and appropriate way.
- Roles and responsibilities of practitioners and other relevant professionals involved in safeguarding.

Before/after school care and holiday provision 3.57

- Where the provision is solely before/after school care or holiday provision for children who normally attend reception class (or older) during the school day, there must be sufficient staff as for a class of 30 children.
- It is for providers to determine how many staff are needed to ensure the safety and welfare of children, bearing in mind the type(s) of activity and the age and needs of the children. It is also for providers to determine what qualifications, if any, the manager and/or staff should have.
- See details on page 8 for the learning and development requirements for providers offering care exclusively before/after school or during the school holidays.

DSL requirements

- There should be a designated safeguarding lead with oversight of the provision
 - They do not have to be present, but they must be contactable / available when needed.
 - There should be a deputy DSL to cover in the event of the DSL's absence
 - Training provision for the DSL role should follow Annex C
 - Out of school providers are supported by non statutory guidance: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/After-school_clubs_community_activities_and_tuition_safeguarding_guidance_for_providers.pdf
 - Guidance for schools: [Wraparound childcare: guidance for schools and trusts in England](#)
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4. First Aid Requirements: 3.36

PFA training footnote

- Providers are responsible for identifying and selecting a competent training provider to deliver their PFA training

Student and Trainee inclusion in ratios

- Suitable students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios at the level below their level of study, if the provider is satisfied that they are **competent and responsible** and **if they hold a valid and current PFA qualification**

Consider: Do you have a clear view of what constitutes ‘competent and responsible’.

Why This Matters

- Enhances child safety by ensuring all adults in the setting can respond to medical emergencies.
- Reduces reliance on only a few trained staff members.

How to Implement

- ✓ Ensure that all trainees complete Paediatric First Aid training before being counted in ratios.
- ✓ Offer funded or supported first aid courses for students and apprentices.
- ✓ Regularly review first aid procedures to ensure compliance.

5. Whistleblowing Support 3.7

Policy Requirements

- Providers **must** put appropriate whistleblowing procedures in place for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the setting's safeguarding provision. This must include when and how to report concerns and the process that will be followed after staff report concerns.
- Providers **must** ensure staff are aware of the setting's whistleblowing procedures and must ensure all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

Why This Matters:

- Protects children by **encouraging staff to speak up** about unsafe practices.
- Prevents **institutional cover-ups** of safeguarding failures.
- Strengthens culture of safeguarding within the school/setting

• How to Implement

- ✓ Update **whistleblowing policies** with clear reporting steps / provide concise summaries
 - ✓ Provide **anonymous reporting channels** where needed. – e.g. NSPCC
 - ✓ Train staff on **how to report safeguarding concerns** internally and externally (Ofsted, local authorities).
 - ✓ Provide information on how to **escalate concerns** internally and externally.
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6. Safer Eating Practices: Food and drink facilities: 3.63

New Requirements

- Providers must implement measures to ensure safer eating environments for children.
- Providers **must** implement additional measures to prevent choking and other eating-related incidents.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, providers should sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- **Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate**

Why This Matters:

- Reduces the risk of **choking incidents** in early years settings.
- Ensures children with **dietary restrictions, allergies, and swallowing difficulties** are better protected.

How to Implement:

- ✓ Train staff in **safe food preparation and choking response**.
- ✓ Implement **supervised meal and snack times** with appropriate food textures for different age groups.
- ✓ Ensure children are **seated while eating and drinking**, with proper monitoring.
- ✓ Adequate staff are needed to supervise eating at school, as set out above. This includes school lunch times.

*Consideration should be given to snack arrangements, lunchtimes, food tasting and the staff present at these times.
Consider physical layout of eating spaces so all children can be seen easily*

6. Safer Eating Practices: Food and drink facilities: 3.63

Before a child is admitted to the setting the [provider/childminder] **must** obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information **must** be shared by the [provider/childminder] with **all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food**. At each mealtime and snack time [providers/childminders] **must** be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

Consider: When children are admitted after September, staff changes and supply/cover staff.

The allergy section/requirements includes a link to an action plan -

[BSACIAllergyActionPlan2018NoAAI2981-2.pdf](#)

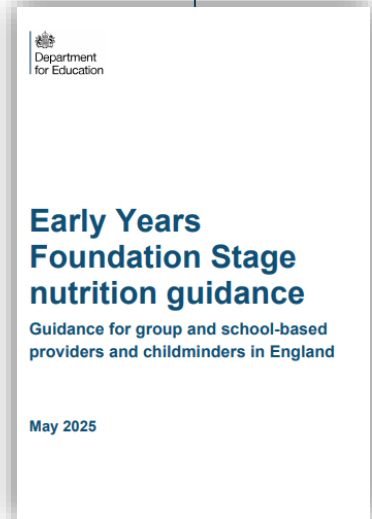
Providers must ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time.

Consider if all staff are aware of these things and how new/cover staff are updated as part of their induction.



Whilst the nutritional requirements of the SFS must be followed in maintained schools, academies, free schools, maintained nurseries and nursery units within primary schools, there are other requirements in the EYFS that go beyond the specific food groups that must be served. Early Years settings that must follow the SFS must also take into account the EYFS nutrition guidance, especially:

- Portion size for children aged 1 to 5 years
- Considering dietary requirements in early years
- Communicating with parents and/or carers
- Developing a food and nutrition policy
- Food brought in from home
- Cost-effective healthy food
- Planning food activities
- Meeting the needs of all children, including children with additional support needs and other special diets
- Allergies, intolerances, and coeliac disease
- Food for religious faith and beliefs and
- Safely managing special dietary requirements



https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf

7. Toileting and Privacy: Toilets and Intimate hygiene 3.86

New Wording:

Providers must ensure:

- Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting.

Why This Matters:

Children's safeguarding needs to be balanced with their privacy. When children are having their nappies changed, or are learning to use the toilet, a member of staff has to be present. However, consideration needs to be given to who else is present and what can be seen. It is important to respect children's privacy wherever this is possible, without compromising on safeguarding.

How to Implement:

- ✓ Review intimate care/toileting policy.
 - ✓ Consider how children are given privacy during intimate care.
 - ✓ Consider how new staff are inducted and how cover staff are informed of policy and procedures.
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Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse

The Proposed Legal Duty to Report Child Abuse

In January 2025, the House of Commons library published research on the [proposed introduction of a duty to report child abuse in England](#) and the Home Secretary announced [the government would “make it mandatory to report abuse”](#) through measures in the Crime and Policing Bill, to be introduced to Parliament in the spring.

Currently there is no statutory duty to report abuse.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to investigate allegations, Section 47. Ofsted may undertake an assessment to gather evidence in situations where there is an allegation against an adult.

Individuals such as teachers and health care workers may be required in their job description or contract to report safeguarding concerns.

The Crime and Policing Bill is currently in the House of Lords awaiting a scheduled date for general debate.



Wider updates

Climate Change

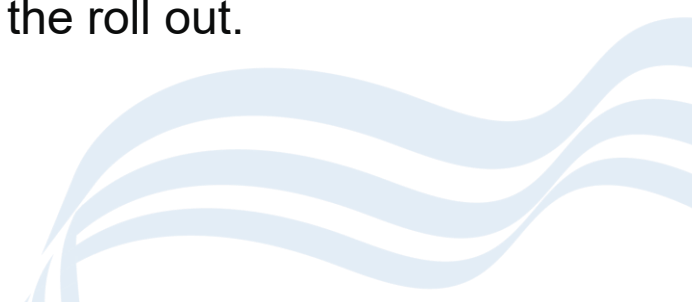
- The government's sustainability and climate change strategy recognises that the UK 'requires the education sector to play its role in positively responding to climate change and inspiring action on an international stage'.
- It supports the United Nations' seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030, which set out the key role of education in the successful achievement of the goals.
- The sustainability and climate change strategy for education (Gov.uk published in 2023) states: "By 2025, all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a climate action plan". This includes early years settings, schools, multi-academy trusts, colleges, and universities.
- The climate action plan should address the four areas listed below.
 - ▶ Decarbonisation
 - ▶ Adaptation and resilience
 - ▶ Biodiversity
 - ▶ Climate education and green careers

[EY Stronger Practice Hub webinar](#)

[Education Hub Blog](#)



Supervised Toothbrushing

- In March 2025 the government announced that children in the most deprived areas of England will get access to a programme to help protect them from tooth decay.
 - The supervised toothbrushing programme will be rolled out in early years settings and primary schools, with funding available from April, helping hundreds of thousands of children aged between 3 and 5 years old to develop positive brushing habits.
 - The scheme - a manifesto commitment - will be launched in collaboration with Colgate-Palmolive who are providing free Colgate toothbrushes, toothpaste and educational materials to continue good work at home.
 - Coventry is one of the local areas who will receive funding as part of this programme. This will be led the Oral Health team with support from the Early Years Team.
 - Schools will be contacted individually to invite them to be part of the first phase of the roll out.
 - [Further information](#)
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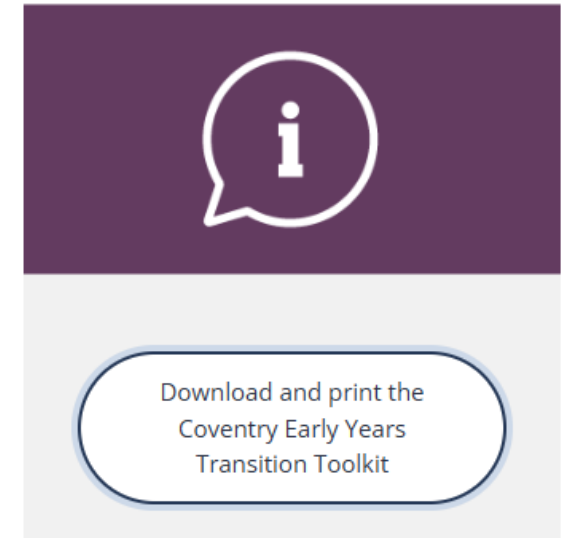
The 2025 reception baseline assessment

- Maintained schools, academies (including free schools) and Ministry of Defence schools will use the new assessment services to administer the statutory RBA from September 2025.
- Schools will need a **minimum of 2 devices** to administer the RBA. The practitioner will need one device to administer the assessment, and the pupil will need to use a separate touchscreen device to respond to some of the questions. This change supports accessibility and aligns with developments in classroom practice.
- The assessment will remain interactive and still use physical resources for some of the questions.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reception-baseline>



Transition Toolkit

- Our Transition Toolkit can be found [here](#) on our website.
- The toolkit contains a number of documents which have been developed with the sector including:
 - Transition guidance
 - Transition document – longer and short versions
 - Professional discussion record
 - Points to consider
 - Transition timeline
 - Working Together, Ready for School leaflet



Coventry Early Years Transition Timeline

Early Years Providers

- Ask parents/carers about their child's allocated school place.
- Start to plan for summer transition arrangements.
- Obtain informed consent from parents/carers for transition information to be shared with receiving school.
- Begin contacting the receiving school to discuss transition plans and arrange visit dates.
- Consider the support required for children with a higher level of need.
- Attend LA Early Years Transition Briefing and access the Coventry Transition toolkit.
- Ask the receiving school to share transition information such as photographs of the classroom, staff names, induction/information packs.
- Incorporate transition activities into curriculum planning.
- Support visits to receiving school/children attend transition day.
- Complete all relevant transition documents and share these securely with the receiving school.
- Continue to contact receiving schools, as needed.
- Signpost families to local community events for over the summer period. (e.g. Family Hubs/50 Things to Do Before You're Five)
- Direct any new arrivals to the Coventry Admissions Team to apply for a place.

April



May



June



July



August

School Reception Class

- School will have received notification of new places offered for September.
- Start to plan for summer transition arrangements.
- Begin contacting Early Years providers to discuss transition plans and arrange visit dates or telephone discussions. Attend LA Early Years Transition Briefing and access Coventry Transition toolkit.
- Collate transition information received from Early Years providers, including EHCP's.
- Consider specific arrangements required to meet children's individual needs. Develop health care plans, if required.
- Access training or external support as required for health care plan.
- Complete visits or telephone discussions with Early Years providers.
- Complete school transition day for new children.
- Complete any relevant transition documents.
- Transition information/packs shared with parents/carers re: home visiting in sessions, stay and play, transition meetings, arrangements for September.



Coventry Early Years Service - February

Working
Together, Ready
for School
Guide for Parents and Professionals
– supporting children with getting a
good education



ONE
COVENTRY



Coventry Early Years Transition Professional Discussion Record

This document can be used to support professional discussions between settings during transition times, for example, to record discussions with a receiving provider or within an organisation. This may include discussions between a Childminder and Reception class, a setting and a school, or rooms within the same setting.

Current Early Years Provider:

Practitioners Name:

Receiving Early Years Provider:

Practitioners Name:

Date:

Telephone call ☐

Face to Face discussion ☐

Child's Full Name:

Known as:

Gender:

Date of Birth:

Ethnic Origin:

Languages spoken by the child:

Languages spoken at home:

Any relevant Safeguarding information to share: (e.g. LAC / Early Help / Child Protection / Child in Need / Family Support)

Any Health / Dietary Requirements:

Starting Reception

Your child's journey to school starts at home.



Starting Reception



Microsoft Edge
PDF Document

Starting Reception outlines school readiness through a list of practical skills and activities for parents to support their child's transition. It focuses on independence, relationships, physical development, and healthy routines—such as using the toilet, expressing feelings, sharing, and using cutlery—emphasising the key role of the parent-child relationship in building these foundations.

Explore the [Starting Reception](#) useful resources and guidance to support children to build on their personal, social, emotional and physical skills ahead of starting school.

Next Steps



- Review and update policies.
- Train all staff on new safeguarding measures.
- Communicate changes with parents and stakeholders.
- Work with Ofsted and safeguarding boards for compliance.
- Consider EY Lead/DSL attending the Early Years DSL Network Meetings – next meeting is September 24th 2025 5-6.30pm Booking can be made in the coming weeks.
- Consider attendance at EY specific DSL training
- Review lunch time arrangements / check PFA is in place



ANY
Questions?



Further Information can be found at:

- [DfE Help for Early Years Providers](#)

- [Foundation Years:](#)

[Poster About the Changes PDF](#)

[Information sheet About the Changes PDF](#)

- [Nurturing Nutrition Vodcast from Foundation Years](#)
 - [EYFS Nutrition guidance from DfE](#)
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Useful Information

- [Strong foundations in the first years of school](#)
- [Child Development modules](#) now include a module on *Supporting individual differences and needs – Module 8*
- [Help for early years providers](#) [continues to be updated](#)

[Childcare Works](#)

Childcare Works are supporting the expansion of childcare provision through a series of resources for both early years provision and wrap around provision.

One area included resources to support SEND and Inclusive Practice. These resources include a [4 part series of videos](#) which support providers in fostering meaningful inclusion in the early years.

[EY PP Information](#)

[Education Endowment Foundation Guide to EYPP](#)

