



Guidance for Schools: Safeguarding Separation of Pupils

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1. Purpose

This document provides guidance to schools and educational settings in Gloucestershire on the use of safeguarding separation where there are concerns regarding harmful behaviour between pupils, including:

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Physical violence
- Abuse and exploitation
- Harm Outside the Home
- Threats of harm involving a weapon
- Other safeguarding incidents where the safety of one or more children may be compromised

The protocol reflects the Department for Education's *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (2026)* and should be used alongside *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026)*, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)* and Gloucestershire safeguarding procedures.

The primary purpose of safeguarding separation is to protect children from harm whilst maintaining access to education wherever possible.

This guidance is intended to support schools when considering whether it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to temporarily separate pupils for safeguarding purposes by requiring one pupil not to attend the school premises.

This is a rare safeguarding measure and must not be used as an informal exclusion, a behaviour sanction, or a means of avoiding the statutory suspension/permanent exclusion framework.

The 2026 exclusion guidance makes clear that, in certain circumstances, a school can temporarily forbid a pupil from attending the premises, for example where an allegation of harm by one pupil against another means physical separation is required; this is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

2. Relevant Legislation and Guidance

This protocol should be read alongside:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (2026)
- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) Procedures
- Gloucestershire Multi-Agency Children's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol
- Gloucestershire Child Sexual Abuse Pathway
- Gloucestershire Harm Outside the Home Guidance

3. Definition of Safeguarding Separation

Safeguarding separation refers to arrangements made to prevent contact between pupils where safeguarding concerns indicate such contact may present a risk of harm.

Wherever possible, schools should manage risk within the school environment through reasonable adjustments, supervision and safety planning.

Removal from the school site should only occur where:

- Risk cannot be safely managed on site; and
- Separation is essential to safeguard one or more children; and
- All reasonable alternatives have been considered and documented.

Safeguarding separation is expected to be a temporary arrangement subject to regular review.

4. Key Principles

Schools should apply the following principles in every case:

Safeguarding first

The decision must be driven by the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, not by behaviour management convenience. Schools have statutory safeguarding duties and must have regard to KCSIE 2026.

Child Centred Approach

All decisions must be child-centred and made in the best interests of the children involved. Schools should recognise that safeguarding concerns may affect both the alleged victim and the child about whom the allegation is made. KCSIE 2026 emphasises that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both children and that schools should provide appropriate support to victims, to children about whom allegations have been made, and to other children affected by the incident.

Rare and exceptional use

Separation from the school premises should only be used in rare circumstances where separation is essential and cannot practicably be achieved while allowing the pupil to remain on site.

Not a disciplinary exclusion

A safeguarding separation is not a suspension or permanent exclusion. If the school is removing a pupil as a sanction for misconduct, the statutory exclusion process must be followed.

Case-by-case decision-making

Decisions must be made on the facts of the individual case, using professional judgement led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and supported by other agencies, which are likely to include children's social care and the police.

Lawful, reasonable and proportionate

Schools must act in accordance with public law principles, including acting reasonably, rationally and fairly. They must also consider duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and KCSIE 2026.

Education must continue

Where a pupil is temporarily forbidden from attending the school premises for safeguarding reasons, the local authority must arrange education if the school itself or the pupil's parent does not do so. This engages the local authority's duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

Regular review and reintegration

The safeguarding risk assessment must be reviewed regularly to determine whether the pupil can safely return to school, whether additional safeguards are required, or whether separation remains necessary. Schools should support pupils to reintegrate successfully following a period of separation for safeguarding purposes.

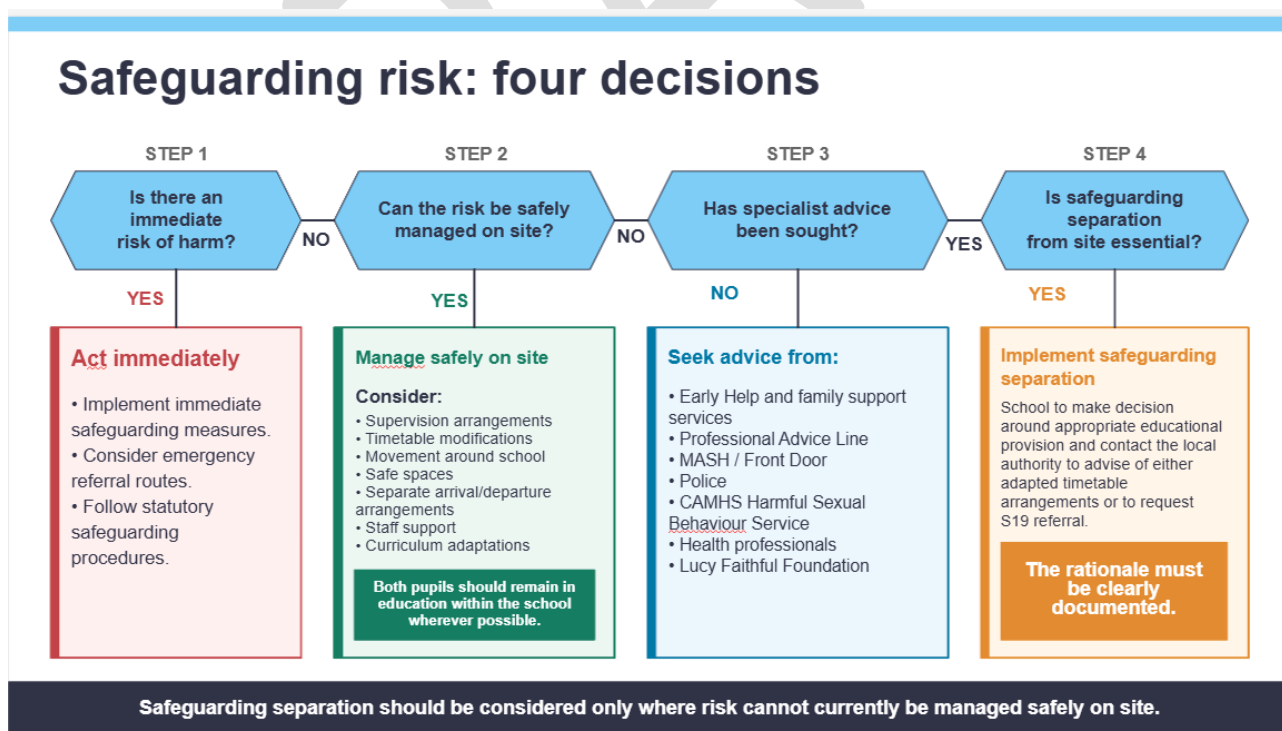
5. Immediate response to harmful incidents

Schools should take the following actions without delay:

1. Ensure the immediate safety of all children involved.
2. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
3. Follow school safeguarding procedures.
4. Consider whether emergency services involvement is required.
5. Record concerns and actions taken.
6. Complete an initial risk assessment.
7. Seek advice from relevant safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

6. Decision-making framework

Schools should consider the following questions:



7. When is it appropriate to use safeguarding separation?

Appropriate use	Inappropriate use
• Serious safeguarding risk. • Risk cannot be safely managed on site. • Physical separation is essential. • Multi-agency risk assessment supports the decision. • Temporary arrangement with review and reintegration planning.	• Behaviour management or punishment. • Time to investigate an incident. • Parent request without evidence that the threshold is met. • Substitute for statutory exclusion or pupil-movement processes. • Convenience where on-site arrangements could manage the risk. • Where reasonable on-site arrangements could safely manage the risk; • Where the concern is low-level and does not require physical separation; • Where separation would disproportionately disadvantage a pupil because of SEND, disability or another protected characteristic without proper consideration of reasonable adjustments. • As an alternative provision placement process. • As a mechanism for off-rolling. • To encourage parents to remove a child from roll.

The exclusion guidance makes clear that exclusion is a disciplinary measure, whereas safeguarding separation is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds. Decisions involving pupil movement must also be scrutinised to ensure they are necessary and not used inappropriately.

Pupils subject to safeguarding separation must remain on their school's roll unless a lawful change of registration subsequently occurs.

Where Gloucestershire County Council identifies concerns that safeguarding separation is:

- Being used as a long-term arrangement;
- Operating in place of statutory exclusion processes;
- Resulting in reduced educational access without appropriate justification; or
- Potentially constituting off-rolling;

the Local Authority reserves the right to challenge decision-making and request evidence that actions are compliant with relevant legislation and statutory guidance and are in the child's best interests.

8. Reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice

Schools must consider whether behaviour may be linked to:

- SEND
- Disability
- Trauma
- Abuse
- Exploitation
- Mental health needs
- Unmet developmental needs

Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

Environmental and Organisational Adjustments	• Increased adult supervision. • Escorted movement between lessons. • Adapted timetables. • Supervised movement around school • Separate arrival and departure arrangements. (times/entrances) • Staggered break and lunchtime arrangements. • Access to designated safe spaces. • Alterations to seating plans or classroom locations. • Risk-managed access to toilets, changing rooms, corridors and communal areas • No contact arrangements • Supervised social times • Temporary removal from specific lessons only
Pastoral and Relational Support	• Safety planning with both pupils (including online safety planning) • Support from the DSL or deputy DSL • Provision of a mentor • Allocation of a trusted adult. • Enhanced pastoral support. • Daily check-in and check-out arrangements. • Support for witnesses or affected peer groups • Restorative approaches where assessed as safe and appropriate. • Reintegration support planning. • Appropriate external referrals
Curriculum and Learning Adjustments	• Temporary timetable modifications. (different teaching groups) • Alternative teaching locations within the school. • Supervised remote access to specific lessons from within school

	• Temporary withdrawal from shared clubs, enrichment activities or trips • Blended learning approaches. • Additional academic support. • Adjustments arising from SEND, disability or medical need.
Wider Planning	• SEND review • Written risk assessment and safety plan. • Supervision plans. • Risk-reduction strategies informed by specialist advice. • Review of an EHCP, where applicable • Involvement of educational psychology or specialist advisory services • Online safety measures. • Contextual safeguarding considerations. • Regular review meetings • YJS / police / social care specialist input where relevant

Schools must evidence all adjustments considered, implemented or rejected and the reasons for their decisions.

More detailed advice and guidance can be found at:

[Safety planning in education: A guide for professionals supporting children following incidents of ...](#)

9. Risk assessment and safety planning

Schools must complete a written risk assessment and safety plan.

This should include:

- Nature of the concern
- Risk posed
- Known vulnerabilities: SEND, trauma, exploitation or care status.
- Protective factors
- Supervision arrangements
- Education arrangements
- Online safety considerations
- Timetable adjustments
- Locations of concern
- Views of children and families where appropriate
- Multi-agency involvement, including whether police or social care investigations are ongoing.
- Whether contact between pupils may compromise evidence or increase risk;
- Review arrangements
- Reintegration planning

The risk assessment must be reviewed regularly and updated whenever new information becomes available. The following information should be recorded:

- Adjustments considered.
- Adjustments implemented.
- The impact of those adjustments.
- Adjustments rejected and the reasons why.
- Why remaining on site is considered unsafe or impracticable despite these measures

10. Multi-agency responsibilities

Schools remain responsible for safeguarding pupils on roll and must work collaboratively with partner agencies.

Schools should:

- Follow Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) procedures
- Share information appropriately
- Attend safeguarding meetings
- Contribute to assessments and safety planning
- Implement agreed actions

Schools should liaise with all appropriate agencies including but not limited to:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Headteacher and senior leadership team.
- Parents and carers (unless doing so would increase risk).
- Early Help services.
- Appointed Social Worker.
- Gloucestershire Children's Front Door/MASH.
- Police.
- Health professionals.
- CAMHS.
- CAMHS Harmful Sexual Behaviour Team.
- Education Inclusion Service.
- Education Safeguarding Team (GCC)
- SEND services where relevant.
- Other professionals already involved with the child or family.
- YJS where relevant

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and schools should demonstrate that appropriate information has been shared lawfully and proportionately and that partner agencies have been involved in planning and risk management where required.

Where schools believe risk cannot safely be managed on site, they should be able to evidence:

- Multi agency risk assessments/safety plans completed
- Advice sought
- Alternatives considered
- Why on-site arrangements cannot safely manage the risk
- Plans for education provision
- Reintegration planning

11. Safeguarding separation threshold checklist

Check	Required evidence or action
☐	An immediate or significant safeguarding risk has been identified.
☐	The DSL and headteacher or principal are involved.
☐	A written risk assessment and safety plan have been completed.
☐	Relevant agencies have been consulted where appropriate.
☐	Reasonable adjustments and on-site alternatives have been considered and recorded.
☐	The rationale for any off-site separation is clearly documented.
☐	Suitable education arrangements have been identified.
☐	Review dates and reintegration planning are in place.
☐	The decision has been recorded and communicated appropriately.

12. Section 19 provision

Where the pupil is not attending the school premises because of safeguarding separation, the local authority's Section 19 duty may be engaged if suitable education is not otherwise arranged by the school or parent. The 2026 exclusion guidance states that, in this scenario, the local authority must arrange education for the pupil if the school itself or the pupil's parent does not do so.

Schools must ensure that:

- Educational provision continues during any period of safeguarding separation.
- Pupils are not left without access to suitable education.
- Arrangements are proportionate and regularly reviewed.
- Plans are developed to facilitate reintegration wherever appropriate.

The Local Authority will require evidence that education arrangements remain suitable and that separation is being actively reviewed. It is likely that the Gloucestershire County Council will arrange for the transfer of AWPU funding attached to this child for the duration of the alternative education arrangements.

Pre-referral expectations prior to consideration of a Section 19 referral

Before seeking Local Authority support under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 due to safeguarding separation, schools must be able to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable, proportionate and evidence-informed steps to maintain the child's access to education safely within their own setting wherever practicable.

In line with the DfE expectation that decisions about safeguarding separation are made on a case-by-case basis and supported by safeguarding professionals and partner agencies, schools should evidence both the reasonable adjustments implemented and the multi-agency activity undertaken prior to referral.

Evidence GCC may request prior to agreeing Section 19 provision

Evidence
Detailed chronology of events
Current written risk assessment/safety plan
Reasonable adjustments considered and implemented/rejected
Rationale explaining why education cannot safely be delivered on site
Current education arrangements
Review arrangements and reintegration plan
Safeguarding arrangements
Pupil curriculum, SEND, EHCP and access information
Parental involvement and communication
Advice from external agencies
Multi-agency meeting records

Gloucestershire practice expectation

Where safeguarding separation extends beyond a short-term emergency response, schools should convene a multi-agency review meeting at the earliest opportunity to consider:

- Current risks.
- Progress against the safety plan.
- Further reasonable adjustments.
- Specialist intervention requirements.
- Reintegration opportunities.
- Whether alternative arrangements remain necessary and proportionate.

The expectation in Gloucestershire is that safeguarding separation should remain under active review, with a clear plan for maintaining educational access and facilitating a return to full-time education at the earliest safe opportunity.

Section 19 referral process

Schools should complete the referral form for a S19 consideration at this link:

[Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

13. School responsibilities during safeguarding separation

- The school should maintain regular communication with the child, parents/carers and the provider, irrespective of whether the arrangement has been made by the school or the local authority (under its section 19 duties). This will include sharing relevant information and monitoring attendance, engagement, attainment and wellbeing.
- Safeguarding remains the responsibility of the school, which must continue to promote and protect the pupil's welfare, ensure appropriate information sharing, and maintain oversight of any safeguarding concerns in accordance with *KCSIE 2026*.
- Schools must remain actively involved in all statutory and non-statutory support arrangements, including Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, Early Help Plans and other multi-agency processes, attending meetings and contributing to planning and review arrangements as required.
- Schools should also ensure that pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals continue to receive their entitlement throughout the period that they are forbidden from attending school.
- Where education is delivered remotely or through an alternative provider, the school should work collaboratively with the provider to ensure that education remains suitable, support is coordinated, and barriers to learning are addressed.
- For pupils in all year groups with statutory examinations, schools retain responsibility for examination entry and should consider examination arrangements at the earliest opportunity, working with the provider, examination boards and other relevant agencies to ensure that examination entries, access arrangements, non-examination assessment requirements and examination venues are planned and agreed in good time.
- Regular review of the pupil's provision and progress should take place throughout the period that the pupil is forbidden from attending school premises for safeguarding purposes.

14. Attendance registration during safeguarding separation

Schools remain responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance register.

Attendance coding should reflect the individual circumstances and should be discussed with the Local Authority where extended safeguarding separation is being considered.

Schools should:

- Ensure attendance coding is lawful and accurately reflects the pupil's circumstances. (see Appendix 2)

- Maintain records of educational provision arranged.
- Keep attendance arrangements under review.
- Notify the Local Authority where alternative educational arrangements or part-time timetables are implemented at the following link:

[Pupils who are not in receipt of full-time education in the usual way | Gloucestershire County Council...](#)

Please note this form now includes an option to identify safeguarding separation as reason for PTTT or alternative provision

The Education Inclusion Service should be consulted where schools are uncertain regarding appropriate attendance coding or education arrangements.

15. Review of risk assessment/safety plan and return to school

Consistent with KCSIE 2026, risk assessments should remain dynamic documents that are reviewed whenever new information becomes available. Reviews should take account of police updates, children's social care advice, alleged victim views, changes in risk, attendance, educational progress and the effectiveness of protective measures.

The risk assessment must be reviewed regularly to determine whether the pupil is able to return to school safely. The safeguarding separation should remain in place only for as long as it is necessary to manage the identified safeguarding risk. The aim should be to facilitate a safe return to school at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Reviews should normally take place:

Within the first few school days of the separation;

- At least weekly in the early stages;
- After any significant update from police, social care or other agencies;
- Before any planned reintegration;
- Immediately if circumstances change.

The review should consider:

- Whether the original risk remains;
- Whether new evidence has emerged;
- Whether the alleged victim feels safe;
- Whether the child about whom the allegation was made can return with controls in place;
- Whether on-site separation is now practicable;
- Whether any bail conditions, police advice or social care plan affects school attendance;
- Whether SEND or mental health needs require additional support (this may include considering the SEND Cluster offer);
- Whether S.19 provision remains necessary;
- What reintegration support is required.

Before a pupil returns to school site, the headteacher, in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant agencies, should review the multi-agency risk assessment and consider whether the risks can safely be managed within the school environment. The views of the pupil, parents or carers and relevant professionals should be taken into account.

The decision that a pupil can safely return to the school site should be made by the headteacher, informed by the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant agencies as applicable. The rationale for the decision should be recorded and retained on the pupil's safeguarding record.

The school should develop a reintegration strategy that supports the pupil's return to full-time education, gives them a fresh start, rebuilds belonging and engagement, and is reviewed and adapted with the pupil, parents and other relevant agencies.

The reintegration plan should set out:

- The support that will be provided to the pupil;
- Any arrangements required to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all pupils;
- The roles and responsibilities of staff;
- Any ongoing risk management measures; and
- Arrangements for monitoring and review.

Where safeguarding concerns relate to another child, consideration should be given to how contact between pupils will be managed, taking account of the needs, rights and welfare of all children involved.

16. Malicious, false, unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations

Schools should recognise the distinction between allegations that are:

- Substantiated;
- Unsubstantiated;
- Unfounded;
- False; and
- Malicious.

KCSIE 2026 states that where an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, consideration should be given to whether the child making the allegation requires additional support, whether they may themselves be at risk of harm, and whether a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

Where an allegation is found to have been deliberately invented or made maliciously, the school should consider whether action under the behaviour policy is appropriate.

However, schools should exercise extreme caution before concluding that an allegation is malicious. The absence of evidence, withdrawal of a complaint, lack of prosecution or a denial by the child about whom the allegation was made does not automatically mean that an allegation is false or malicious. Decisions should be informed by the risk assessment process and, where relevant, advice from police, children's social care and other safeguarding partners.

Where a pupil has been separated from school for safeguarding purposes and subsequent enquiries determine that the allegation is unfounded or malicious, the separation should end unless another safeguarding risk remains. The school should work proactively to support reintegration and minimise stigma for all pupils involved.

17. Information sharing

KCSIE 2026 emphasises the importance of timely and appropriate information sharing to protect children. Where separation is being considered, schools should ensure that relevant safeguarding information is shared, where lawful and necessary, with:

- Children's social care;
- Police;
- Health services;
- Local authority officers;
- Alternative provision providers;
- Other agencies involved with the child.

Information sharing should support effective risk management while complying with data protection legislation and principles of confidentiality.

18. Governance and oversight

Governing boards should monitor the use of safeguarding separation to ensure it is lawful, proportionate, time-limited and not being used as an informal exclusion or inappropriate pupil movement. The 2026 exclusion guidance states that governing boards should review pupils attending education off site, including separation for safeguarding purposes, and consider whether such arrangements are reviewed at sufficient intervals and whether pupils are benefiting from them.

Governors/trustees should receive anonymised information about:

- Number of safeguarding separations;
- Duration of arrangements;
- Pupil characteristics, including SEND, disability, social care involvement and care status;
- Whether section 19 provision was requested;
- Whether risk assessments were reviewed regularly;
- Reintegration outcomes;
- Any patterns by year group, gender, SEND, ethnicity or vulnerability.

19. Summary

When a harmful incident occurs between pupils, schools must take immediate safeguarding action, complete a robust risk assessment, seek appropriate specialist advice and implement measures that allow pupils to remain safely in education wherever possible.

Safeguarding separation from the school site should be used only in exceptional circumstances where risk cannot safely or practicably be managed on site. Any such arrangement must be clearly justified, time-limited, regularly reviewed and accompanied by suitable educational provision and reintegration planning.

Appendix 1: Useful contacts and references

Gloucestershire Education Inclusion Service

Email: inclusionteamed@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01452 427360

Gloucestershire Education Safeguarding Team

Email educationsafeguarding@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Gloucestershire MASH / Front Door

Telephone: 01452 426565 (Option 3)

Professional Advice Line

Telephone: 01452 427070

Gloucestershire CAMHS Harmful Sexual Behaviour Team

Telephone: 01242 634050

Email: vcsadmin@ghc.nhs.uk

Stop It Now

Telephone: 0808 1000 900

Website: [Stop It Now](#)

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Website: [Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#)

Safety Planning in Education, Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

[Safety planning in education: A guide for professionals supporting children following incidents of ...](#)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

Appendix 2: Attendance coding

Code	Situation
Code B	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that has been arranged by the school (for example unregistered alternative provision). The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Code B cannot be used where a pupil is completing remote learning at home.
Code C	The pupil's education, during the period that they are forbidden from attending the school's premises, has been arranged by the parent(s).
Code C	The pupil is accessing remote learning, arranged by the school or local authority, during the period that they are forbidden from attending the school's premises. The DfE guidance on Providing remote education states that pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be marked as absent using the most appropriate absence code; this will ordinarily be Code C unless another authorised absence code applies.
Code D	The pupil is attending another school during the temporary period and is on the admission register of that school (dual-registered).
Code K	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19. Code K cannot be used where a pupil is completing remote learning at home.
Code Y7	The pupil is prevented from attending the school premises because there are bail conditions in place that prevent the pupil from attending the school or being present in the area where the school is situated during the school day <u>and</u> no other attendance or absence code applies (for example where alternative provision is being arranged but has not yet commenced).

Appendix 3: Examples where safeguarding separation is appropriate

Example 1: Serious allegation of harmful sexual behaviour in a small school

Scenario	A Year 7 pupil alleges that another pupil sexually assaulted them in a secluded area of the school. The police and children's social care are notified. The pupils are in the same small year group, share multiple lessons and social spaces, and the alleged victim is highly distressed. The school considers separate timetables, supervised movement and different areas of the school, but concludes that due to the layout of the site and limited staffing, it cannot safely prevent contact.
Decision	Safeguarding separation may be appropriate. The school should complete an immediate risk and needs assessment, involve police and children's social care, notify the governing board and parents, and request section 19 support if it cannot arrange suitable education itself.
Section 19 position	Remote learning would be appropriate as a temporary measure while the safeguarding risk is assessed and reviewed.
Review	The arrangement should be reviewed at least weekly and after any police or social care update. Reintegration should be considered as soon as on-site safety measures can manage the risk.

Example 2: Serious assault and ongoing threat in a secondary school

Scenario	A Year 10 pupil is seriously assaulted by another pupil outside school. The incident results in injury and the police are notified. The pupils are in the same year group, use the same social areas and are likely to encounter one another during movement around the school. The alleged victim reports feeling unsafe and there are credible concerns about further intimidation, including messages sent outside school. The school considers separate arrival arrangements, increased supervision, changes to lessons and supervised movement, but concludes that the size and layout of the site, together with the pattern of unstructured social time, means it cannot safely prevent contact or manage the risk on site in the immediate term.
Decision	Safeguarding separation may be appropriate. The school should complete an immediate risk and needs assessment, involve the police and children's social care where appropriate, notify the governing board and parents, and record why on-site arrangements are not currently sufficient to manage the safeguarding risk. The school should consider separately whether the incident meets the threshold for suspension or permanent exclusion under the school behaviour policy. Safeguarding separation should only be used where the immediate purpose is to manage safeguarding risk and prevent unsafe contact, not to impose a disciplinary sanction. If the headteacher decides that exclusion is appropriate as a sanction, the statutory exclusion process must be followed.

Section 19 position	Remote learning or short-term alternative provision may be appropriate as a temporary measure while the safeguarding risk is assessed and reviewed. If the school cannot arrange suitable education itself and the pupil is unable to attend the school premises for safeguarding reasons, a section 19 referral should be considered.
Review	The arrangement should be reviewed at least weekly and immediately following any police, social care or safeguarding update. Reintegration should be considered as soon as the school can demonstrate that revised safety planning, supervision or timetable arrangements can manage the risk on site.

Example 3: Immediate safeguarding concern linked to weapons and community risk

Scenario	A Year 9 pupil is reported to have threatened another pupil with a weapon outside school at the end of the school day. The police are notified and there are concerns that the pupils may be part of wider peer or community conflict. Both pupils attend the same year group and use the same entrances, corridors and social spaces. The alleged victim reports feeling unsafe and parents raise concerns about reprisals on the journey to and from school. The school considers separate arrival and departure times, supervised movement, increased adult presence, changes to social time arrangements and temporary timetable amendments, but concludes that the immediate risk cannot safely be managed on site while police and safeguarding enquiries are ongoing.
Decision	Safeguarding separation may be appropriate where the risk assessment indicates that physical separation is essential and cannot safely be achieved through on-site arrangements. The school should complete an immediate safeguarding and contextual risk assessment, involve the police and children's social care where appropriate, seek advice from relevant safeguarding partners and record why the available on-site measures are insufficient in the immediate term. The school should also consider whether wider harm outside the home, peer conflict or exploitation concerns require additional multi-agency planning.
Section 19 position	Remote learning, supervised off-site provision or short-term alternative provision may be appropriate as a temporary arrangement while the safeguarding risk is assessed and reviewed. If the pupil is unable to attend the school premises for safeguarding reasons and suitable education is not otherwise arranged by the school or parent, a section 19 referral should be considered.
Review	The arrangement should be reviewed at least weekly and immediately following any police, social care or contextual safeguarding update. Reintegration should be considered as soon as the school can demonstrate that revised safety planning, supervision, travel arrangements or timetable adjustments can safely manage the risk.

Appendix 4: Examples where safeguarding separation would not be appropriate

Example 1: Behaviour incident where risk can be managed on site	
Scenario	A Year 8 pupil pushes another pupil during an argument at lunchtime. The incident is upsetting for the pupil who was pushed, but there is no evidence of ongoing threat, intimidation, coercion, exploitation or wider safeguarding risk. The pupils are in the same year group but do not share all lessons, and the school is able to put immediate measures in place, including separate seating, increased supervision at social times, a no-contact expectation, pastoral check-ins and restorative work if assessed as safe. The DSL reviews the incident and concludes that the risk can be managed through the school's behaviour, pastoral and safeguarding procedures without requiring either pupil to remain off site.
Decision	Safeguarding separation would not be appropriate. The concern does not meet the threshold for removal from the school premises because there is no evidence that physical separation off site is essential to safeguard either pupil. The school should manage the incident through its behaviour policy, safeguarding procedures and reasonable on-site adjustments. If a disciplinary sanction is required, the school should consider the appropriate behaviour response, including suspension only if the statutory threshold is met.
Section 19 position	Section 19 would not be engaged because the pupil is not prevented from attending school for safeguarding reasons and suitable education can continue on site. Remote learning or alternative provision should not be used as a substitute for ordinary behaviour management or supervision arrangements.
Review	The school should keep the risk assessment and pastoral arrangements under review, particularly if further incidents occur or new safeguarding information emerges. If the level of risk changes, the school should reconsider whether additional safeguards are required, but safeguarding separation should not be used unless the threshold is clearly met.

Example 2: Parent request for separation where on-site safeguards are sufficient	
Scenario	A Year 9 pupil reports that another pupil has been making unpleasant comments about them online and avoiding them in school. Parents request that the other pupil is kept away from the school site until the matter is resolved. The school investigates, speaks to both pupils and reviews available evidence. The comments are inappropriate and require a behaviour and pastoral response, but there is no evidence of an immediate risk of significant harm, coercion, exploitation, threats, physical violence or ongoing unsafe contact in school. The pupils do not share all lessons, and the school is able to implement a no-contact expectation, seating changes, supervised social-time arrangements, online safety work, pastoral support and monitoring by year staff and the DSL.

Decision	Safeguarding separation would not be appropriate. A parental request, distress or conflict between pupils is not sufficient on its own to justify requiring a pupil to remain off site. The school should manage the matter through its behaviour policy, anti-bullying procedures, online safety work, pastoral support and proportionate on-site safety planning. If further evidence emerges that the risk cannot be safely managed in school, the decision should be reviewed.
Section 19 position	Section 19 would not be engaged because the pupil is not unable to attend school for safeguarding reasons. Suitable education can continue on site with reasonable adjustments and supervision. Remote learning or alternative provision should not be used in response to parental preference or as a way of managing ordinary peer conflict where the risk can be managed safely in school.
Review	The school should monitor the effectiveness of the on-site arrangements and review the position if there are further incidents, escalation, new safeguarding information or evidence that contact cannot be safely managed. The focus should remain on reducing risk, supporting both pupils and maintaining access to education.

Example 3: Primary pupil with SEND whose dysregulation can be supported on site

Scenario	A Key Stage 2 pupil with identified SEND becomes dysregulated during transitions and unstructured times. There have been incidents of disruption, throwing objects and hitting staff. The behaviour is understood to be linked to the pupil's SEND, communication and regulation needs. The school has not yet fully reviewed the pupil's SEND provision, sought specialist advice, updated the behaviour support plan or risk assessment, or implemented a planned package of reasonable adjustments such as a reduced transition plan, predictable routines, sensory breaks, access to a safe space, trusted adult support, adapted expectations, increased supervision and structured de-escalation strategies. The incidents are serious and require an immediate response, but there is not yet evidence that the pupil's attendance on site is unsafe despite reasonable adjustments and specialist support.
Decision	Safeguarding separation would not be appropriate at this stage. Dysregulation linked to SEND, even where it results in disruption or hitting staff, should not automatically be treated as a reason to require a pupil to remain off site. The school should first review and strengthen SEND support, reasonable adjustments, behaviour support planning, risk assessment and de-escalation arrangements. If a disciplinary response is being considered, the statutory exclusion framework must be used where the threshold is met; safeguarding separation must not be used as an informal exclusion or as a substitute for SEND provision.
Section 19 position	Section 19 would not normally be engaged because the pupil is not unable to attend school for safeguarding reasons. Suitable education should continue on site with appropriate SEND support, reasonable adjustments, supervision and risk management. Remote learning or alternative provision should not be used

	because the school has not yet exhausted reasonable on-site support or completed the necessary SEND and risk assessment activity.
Review	The school should urgently review the pupil's SEND needs, involve parents or carers, seek advice from relevant professionals where appropriate, and update the behaviour support plan, risk assessment and reasonable adjustments. The position should be kept under review and escalated only if there is clear evidence that, despite appropriate adjustments and specialist advice, the immediate safety risk cannot be managed on site.

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