

A one-minute guide for safeguarding and promoting the education outcomes of Children who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and in kinship care arrangements in Early Years Settings



This one-minute guide has been developed to support all Early Years providers working with children aged from birth to five years, with a focus on good practice in relation to providing care and education to children known to or previously known to social care, including those in kinship care arrangements.

The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) Framework 2026 states that:

In every setting, a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the Local Safeguarding Partners. Every person looking after children must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. (section 3.4)

Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. The requirements in this section explain what early years providers must do to: Safeguard children; ensure the people who have contact with children are suitable; promote good health; support and understand behaviour. And maintain records, policies, and procedures. (Section 3.3)

Key Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within an organisation and acts as the main point of contact for staff and external agencies. In all settings there should also be a Designated lead who will also take the lead for focusing specifically on promoting the **educational achievement** of children who are looked after (LAC: known as children in care (CiC) in Warwickshire) and previously looked after (PCiC in Warwickshire). This role may be undertaken by the lead DSL or another lead who is capable, confident and suitably trained.

Responsibilities for children in care (CiC) or who were previously in care (PCiC) include:

- **Championing Progress:** Leading on promoting the educational achievement and well-being of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (CiC and PCiC).
- **Personal Education Plans (PEPs):** Leading the development, implementation, and review of Personal Education Plans for children in care.
- **Collaboration with the DSL:** Working closely with the DSL to ensure any safeguarding concerns regarding these vulnerable children are quickly and effectively addressed.
- **Liaison with External Partners:** Collaborating with the Virtual School (VS), social workers, and carers to ensure joined-up support.
- **Raising Staff Awareness:** Ensuring all school staff understand the specific needs, potential trauma, and barriers to learning faced by CiC and PCiC children.

Responsibilities for children with a social worker (CWSW) or in kinship care arrangements include:

- **CWSW:** improve educational outcomes for children who currently supported on a Child Protection (CP) plan, Child in Need (CiN) plan, or were previously supported within the last six year (Ever6 CWSW) but plans are now closed.
- **Kinship care:** support children living with extended family or connected carers under formal arrangements that have never been in the care of the local authority (e.g. Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) or Child Arrangements Orders (CAO)).

Key principles for best practice

1. Understand Key Guidance

- Be familiar with the *EYFS Statutory Framework 2026* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*
- Have an awareness of best practice guidance: *KCSIE*, *Designated Teacher Guidance* and *Promoting the education of children with a social worker and those in kinship care guidance*.
- Know local safeguarding procedures and Virtual School expectations for these cohorts.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Identify a senior member of staff to be:

- **DSL:** the main point of contact for staff and external agencies and maintain oversight of all children.
- **Designated lead for CiC and PCiC:** overall responsibility for monitoring and promoting educational achievement and emotional wellbeing through termly PEPs (for CiC only).
 - **Designated Lead for CWSW / Kinship care:** maintain effective communication between partners, contributing meaningfully to multi-agency any plans, so education remains a shared priority.

The DSL may take on all these roles, or as an early year's provider, you may choose to appoint separate leads for each role, ensuring they are confident, capable, and suitably trained. In the designated teacher guidance, this

person is referred to as the designated teacher; however, in early years settings, they do not need to hold a teaching qualification.

3. Identify Vulnerable Groups

- Have systems in place which support the identification of children who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and in kinship care arrangements (See guidance on [Virtual School Website](#)).
- Recognise that these children may have additional safeguarding and educational needs.
- Ensure that these children are flagged confidentially on admission and management systems.
- Ensure all staff know who the vulnerable children are (with confidentiality).

4. Respond to Safeguarding Concerns

- Ensure systems are in place to monitor, report and respond to unexplained absences or patterns of absences promptly.
- Ensure systems are in place for prompt reporting of concerns to DSL.
- DSL escalates concerns to children's social care; to their allocated worker for CiC, CP or CiN pupils or Family Connect where there is no open plan currently, in line with the settings safeguarding policy.

5. Multi-Agency Working

- Ensure the designated lead attends and participates in termly PEP reviews, and any All About Me Review meetings (AAMR).
- Ensure the lead attends each CiN or CP meeting and/or other multi-agency meetings.
- Ensure updates on attendance, developmental milestones, and wellbeing are shared at meetings.

6. Educational Support

- Ensure PP+ or EYPP funding is aligned with individual plans to enhance educational targets in any plans, including PEPs and CP and CiN plans.
- Plans and targets begin with a strong focus on the Prime Areas of Learning, recognising their importance for building secure foundations.
- Establish educational targets for attendance, developmental milestones and wellbeing.
- Rigorously monitor and evaluate attendance, developmental milestones, and wellbeing to ensure the provision is effective and responsive to the child's needs
- Plan carefully for transitions with relevant partners - whether starting at the setting, moving between rooms, or transferring to school.

7. Training

- Ensure all staff access regular training on trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice, as well as understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Ensure the designated lead for CiC and PCiC attends annual DT training led by the Virtual School.
- The designated lead for CP, CiC, Ever6 CWSW or those in kinship care arrangements are also able to attend the annual (CWSW) leadership day led by the Virtual School.

8. Confidentiality

- Follow the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on information sharing and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) data sharing.
- Establish systems to identify and record who holds parental responsibility and ensure all staff understand the implications of this e.g. for communication, safeguarding matters, consent for trips, medication, and SEND referrals.

9 Monitoring and Review

- Conduct regular reviews of safeguarding records and attendance logs to identify any emerging patterns of concern and ensure timely intervention.
- Provide an annual report to committees to celebrate progress and demonstrates accountability.
- Ensure all policy reviews include input from DSL, DT, and/or CWSW leads.

Useful links

- [EYFS Framework 2026 \(group/school-based providers\)](#).
- [Working Together To Safeguard Children 2026](#)
- [KCSIE 2026](#)
- [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)
- [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements](#)
- [DfE Information Sharing advice \(May 2024\)](#).
- [ICO 10step guide to sharing information to safeguard children.](#)
- [Warwickshire Spectrum of Support](#)
- [Warwickshire Virtual School](#)

"If we get it right for the most vulnerable pupils, we get it right for everyone" Ofsted 2025