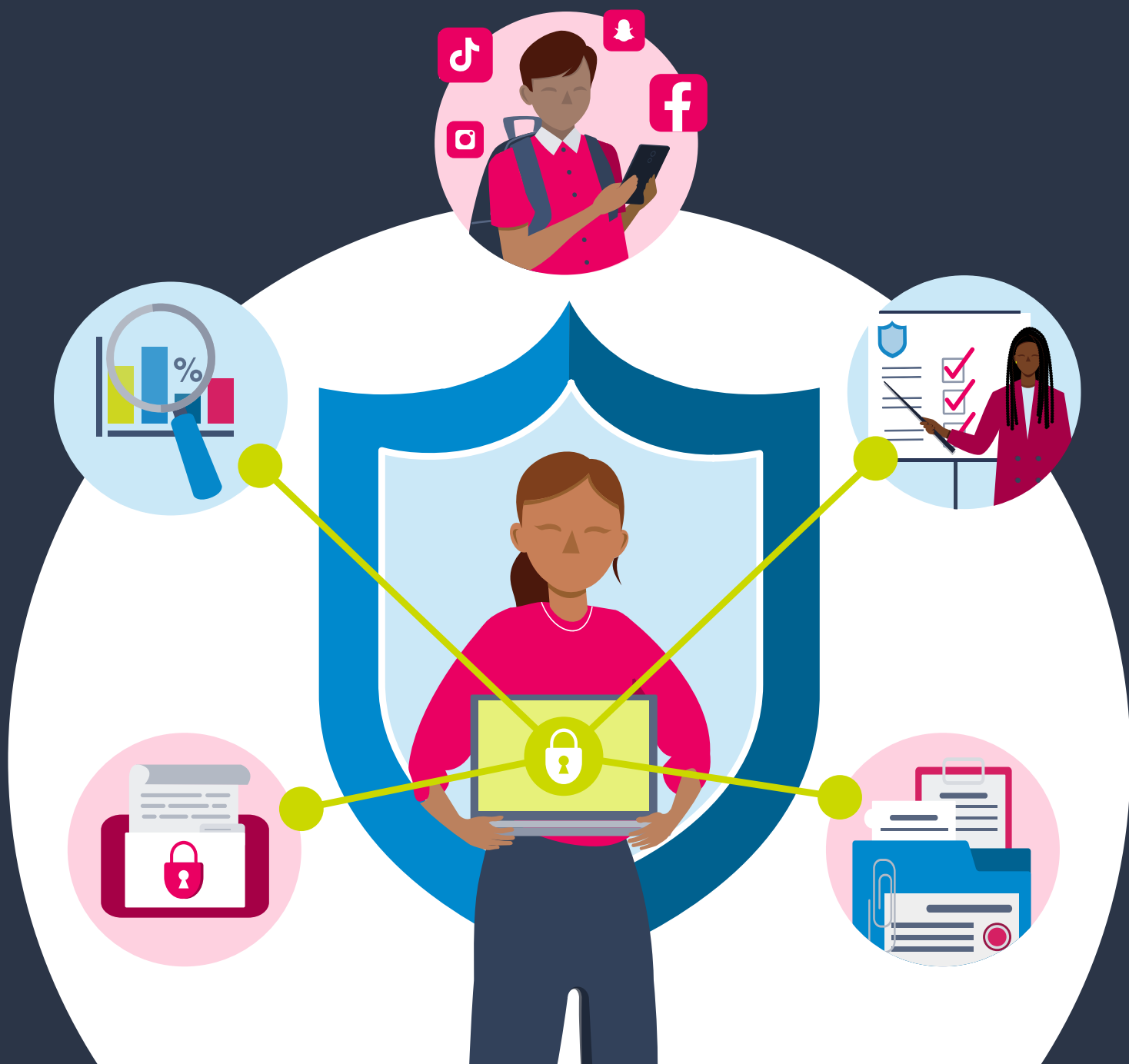




# Safeguarding Report 2025

Featuring responses from almost 2,000 school staff and governors across the UK.



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## Why this report matters

This report, released in alignment with Tes Safeguarding Awareness Week – our annual initiative highlighting safeguarding best practices – reflects urgent discussions unfolding across UK schools and throughout the education sector, capturing essential insights and developments in safeguarding practice.

Safeguarding sits at the heart of educational life. In an increasingly complex digital and social landscape, schools have become a frontline defence for children's safety and wellbeing. This report draws directly on the real-world experiences of almost 2,000 school leaders, teachers and governors. Their voices shine a light on urgent trends every education leader must understand, from the explosion of online safeguarding risks to the deepening crisis in children's mental health.

At a time when national reforms and Ofsted expectations are shifting, these findings offer schools both a warning and a roadmap. Understanding them is not optional – it's essential for creating truly safe and supportive schools in 2025 and beyond.



# Introduction

This year, a record 1,949 school staff and governors responded to our annual safeguarding survey – nearly triple the participation from previous years.

- Respondents were primarily senior and middle leaders, as well as teachers
- Most (91%) were from state schools: 41% primary and 50% secondary

Schools are now second only to police as sources of referrals to children's social care, accounting for nearly 20% of all referrals (DfE, 2024)<sup>1</sup>. While the police made the highest number of referrals (nearly 30%), schools have increasingly stepped in to fill critical gaps and help protect students beyond the classroom, as external support services face overwhelming demand.

## The critical role of designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)

As highlighted in the Tes Safeguarding Report 2024, our latest findings continue to confirm the DSL role as one of education's most challenging and vital positions. DSLs today:

- Navigate complex multi-agency networks and evolving policies
- Manage emerging threats, including digital risks
- Balance safeguarding duties alongside other duties

There is clear, urgent recognition that DSLs need stronger systemic backing – from improved multi-agency collaboration to enhanced information-sharing practices – to help effectively safeguard students.



<sup>1</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-in-need/2024>

## Emerging safeguarding challenges

Safeguarding has grown increasingly complex, driven significantly by young people's digital experiences:



Popular culture, such as the Netflix series *Adolescence*, has amplified public concern



Campaigns are advocating restrictions on social media access for under-16s



Educators are calling for the integration of robust online safety within the PSHE curriculum

The Online Safety Act 2023 – which introduces a legal duty on platforms to protect children – is being closely monitored by schools. Although passed nearly two years ago, implementation continues into early 2025, particularly as Ofcom's regulatory frameworks and enforcement powers are phased in. Sector reports, including Ofcom's latest Online Safety Roadmap and commentary from education bodies such as the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), confirm that practical enforcement and clarity around schools' roles remain areas of active concern and debate<sup>2</sup>.

## Digital threats and multi-agency challenges

Safeguarding teams now face unprecedented digital threats:

- The Internet Watch Foundation reported a 380% surge in AI-generated child abuse imagery in just one year<sup>3</sup>
- Schools must now tackle threats such as deepfake imagery and online exploitation, which barely existed a few years ago
- Multi-agency coordination, increasingly critical, requires schools to adapt continuously

Schools have clearly highlighted growing concerns about students' mental health and digital safety, underscoring the urgent need for evolving safeguarding strategies.

## Moving forward together

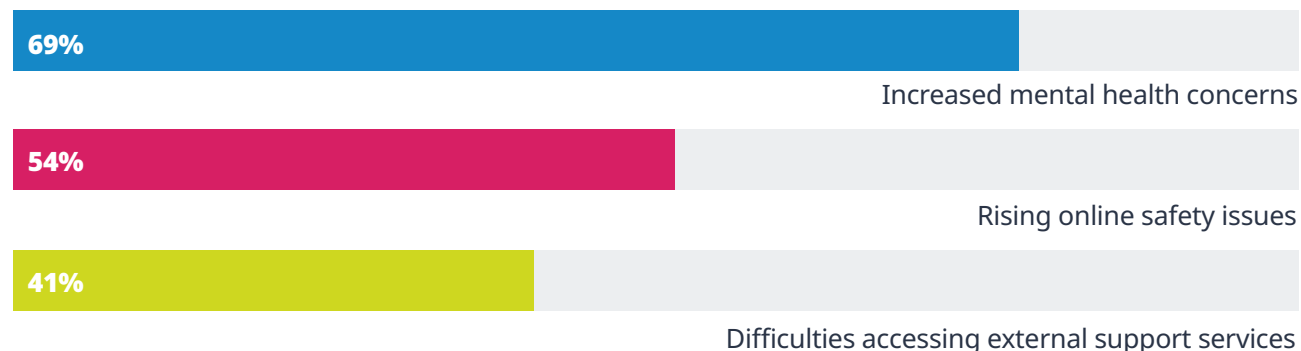
Before presenting our detailed findings, we sincerely thank every respondent whose insights shape this report. Your contributions will help:

- Guide schools nationwide in developing practical safeguarding strategies
- Raise broader awareness about safeguarding challenges in the education community
- Support national efforts to help ensure every school remains a safe, supportive place for all children

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/illegal-and-harmful-content/statement-protecting-children-from-harms-online>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics>

# The new reality: how safeguarding has changed in 2025

Safeguarding in schools has become more complex and demanding than ever before. When asked about significant safeguarding changes from the past two years, respondents highlighted three primary emerging challenges:



## These trends reflect national realities:

The likelihood of young people experiencing mental health problems has surged by 50% in just three years<sup>3.1</sup>. Currently, approximately five children in every class of 30 have a diagnosable mental health condition. Yet, due to overstretched services, only about one-third receive timely professional support.

Online safety is equally pressing, with around one in five children aged 10–15 experiencing online bullying (ONS)<sup>4</sup>. Social media use is now abundant, intensifying threats that extend beyond school boundaries into students' homes.

A survey respondent captures the gravity of these challenges:

**“The pressure on teachers (DSLs) has become increasingly difficult. External agencies are buckling under referrals and raising thresholds, forcing issues back to schools. We rarely have the resources or expertise needed, especially as most incidents occur outside school. Returned referrals erode parental trust further, complicating matters even more.”**

This underscores the profound difficulties schools face when external agencies, overwhelmed by demand, raise thresholds for intervention. Schools are often left to manage complex cases with limited resources or training, a situation widely recognised at national policy levels. The Department for Education's proposed Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill<sup>4.1</sup> aims to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding by giving schools greater decision-making involvement alongside police, health and local authorities.

3.1 <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics>  
4, 4.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-culture-change-needed-to-tackle-normalised-sexual-harassment-in-schools-and-colleges>

### How students raise safeguarding issues

Despite these emerging challenges, the methods students use to report safeguarding concerns have seen relatively limited change, predominantly relying on in-person communication:

**91%**

of respondents said students most commonly **speak directly to a member of staff**

**76%**

of students follow the recommendation to **approach the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**

**30%**

of respondents said students have access to an **anonymous reporting system**

**27%**

of schools provide an **online reporting option**, despite widespread smartphone use among students. This approach is notably more common in secondary schools (35.5%) than in primary settings (6%)

#### Why this matters

The reliance on face-to-face reporting builds trust, but limited use of digital reporting methods is a missed opportunity. Many students – particularly those who are older and digitally fluent – may be more comfortable reporting concerns online or anonymously. To ensure no student slips through the cracks, schools should consider adding secure digital reporting methods alongside traditional channels, using platforms such as MyConcern.

### Differences in safeguarding challenges by school phase

Significant variations exist in safeguarding challenges between primary and secondary phases:



Secondary schools are particularly impacted by **mental health concerns** (73%), while primary schools emphasise family/home-related safeguarding issues (45%)



**Knife crime and weapon possession** have become notable concerns, reported by 33% overall, rising significantly to 43% in secondary schools



**Sexual harassment or assault** cases have increased, with 22% noting a rise over two years. This aligns with Ofsted's 2021 report<sup>4,2</sup>, highlighting that sexual harassment had become "normalised," with around nine in 10 girls experiencing sexist name-calling or receiving unwanted explicit images

Schools nationwide have responded by strengthening relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), fostering open reporting cultures and addressing harmful behaviours proactively. However, our survey clearly indicates continued vigilance and proactive action remain critical priorities.

4.2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-culture-change-needed-to-tackle-normalised-sexual-harassment-in-schools-and-colleges>

# Digital dangers: online risks have moved into focus

Digital life is no longer a parallel universe for young people – it's where they live. Safeguarding practice must reflect this shift.

Our findings show safeguarding leads continue to be very worried about the risks posed by young people spending so much of their time online.

## Key findings from 2025:

**92%**

of respondents stated that **monitoring online behaviour outside school** is their biggest challenge

**66%**

cited **online bullying** as the most common online safeguarding issue

**46%**

reported that safeguarding concerns originate from a combination of **online, in-school, at-home** and **wider community** environments

**11%**

said safeguarding concerns originate **solely online**

**65%**

identified **online anonymity** as a key barrier to safeguarding

## Comparative data from 2024:

**93%**

of respondents felt that safeguarding had become harder because of children's **increased autonomy online**

**46%**

noted that **nudes/sexting** had become regular issues

**88%**

reported that **online bullying/cyberbullying** was a regular issue

**15%**

observed issues with **online predators** approaching children



### Direction of travel

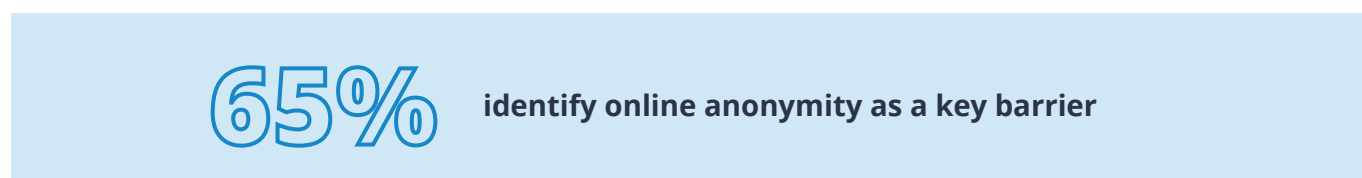
The data indicates a growing concern among educators regarding online risks:

### Respondents highlighting challenges in monitoring online behaviour outside school:



### Reports of online bullying:

This may reflect changes in reporting practices or the emergence of other pressing issues.



This consistent concern underscores the ongoing challenge in addressing online safeguarding.

In other words, rarely is a concern entirely isolated in one domain – for example, a bullying incident might start in school and then escalate on social media, or an issue at home might manifest through a child's online behaviour. This means schools must help protect children way beyond the school gates. Working closely with families, communities and other agencies to manage risks that cut across environments is vital in helping to protect our young people.



Over the last few years, safeguarding concerns have been rising. The majority stem from students' behaviour online, which parents are ill equipped/unwilling to deal with, or family behaviour.

Survey respondent

### Online safeguarding: key risks and challenges

We asked respondents to identify the most common online safeguarding issues they face:

**A staggering 66% of respondents said that online bullying – or cyberbullying – is the most common online risk. This figure rose to 74% among primary respondents and was 64% for those from secondary schools.**

Cyberbullying has significant impacts on students' mental health, self-esteem and academic performance. Unlike face-to-face bullying, it extends beyond school hours, infiltrating students' private lives through social media and online forums. National research shows that **40%** of young people experienced some form of bullying (online or offline) in the past year<sup>5</sup>. The relentless, round-the-clock nature of online bullying leaves little refuge for victims, contributing to anxiety, depression and even school avoidance.

Many schools are responding by implementing robust anti-bullying policies that explicitly cover cyberbullying, educating students about digital empathy and improving reporting mechanisms to ensure concerns are captured and acted upon. While online bullying stands out as the most common online risk, other significant threats were also identified:

#### **Exposure to harmful content:**

**15%** of primary respondents said they often see the consequences of students being exposed to material on topics such as self-harm or eating disorders. National bodies like Ofcom and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) confirm that children – even at primary age – are increasingly encountering disturbing online content. The IWF recently reported that children under 10 are being groomed online “like never before”<sup>6</sup>

#### **Sexting and online predators:**

Although not cited as the most frequent risks, respondents highlighted regular concerns around inappropriate image sharing and grooming attempts, even among younger pupils

Students now encounter risks ranging from cyberbullying to grooming and harmful content from as early as primary school age. Yet most online activity takes place outside the school's direct supervision – on private devices, at home and often under the radar.

Schools are responding by teaching digital safety and critical thinking from an early age, while advocacy continues to push social media companies to proactively filter harmful content in line with the new Online Safety Act regulations<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

<sup>6</sup> <https://uat.iwf.org.uk/annual-data-insights-report-2024>

<sup>7</sup> <https://digital-leaders.childnet.com>

## Top challenges in managing digital safeguarding

Respondents were asked to highlight their three primary challenges. The four most common were:



### 1. Monitoring online activity outside of school (92%)

With **90%** of children owning or using smartphones by age 11, most online activity occurs beyond school supervision. Schools lack visibility into these private digital spaces.

Many schools attempt to bridge this gap through student and parent education, although comprehensive monitoring remains virtually impossible.



### 2. Anonymity and lack of traceability (65%)

Anonymous accounts and encrypted apps allow harmful behaviours to go undetected, complicating intervention efforts.

Schools emphasise teaching students how to use online reporting tools and encourage openness in sharing concerns. However, these tools have limits when used on private devices outside school networks.



### 3. Resistance from parents and students (62%)

Effective safeguarding is hindered when parents fail to acknowledge, understand or manage risks, or when students defend their digital autonomy.

This challenge varies notably between primary (**78%**) and secondary (**54%**) respondents, highlighting greater difficulty engaging parents of younger children. Schools find success with proactive parent communication and targeted educational efforts.



### 4. Managing personal devices and social media (primary: 25%, secondary: 55%)

Uncontrolled smartphone and social media use, especially in secondary schools, enables students to bypass filters and policies, resulting in frequent safeguarding incidents.

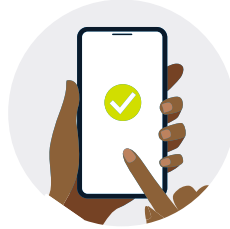
Many schools implement clear phone policies, digital education initiatives and appealing offline activities. Some schools adopting phone-free policies have reported significant improvements in student focus and behaviour.

### Why a collaborative approach matters

Safeguarding leads stress that addressing digital risks can't rest with schools alone. Effective safeguarding requires:



Cooperation from tech companies to create safer online environments

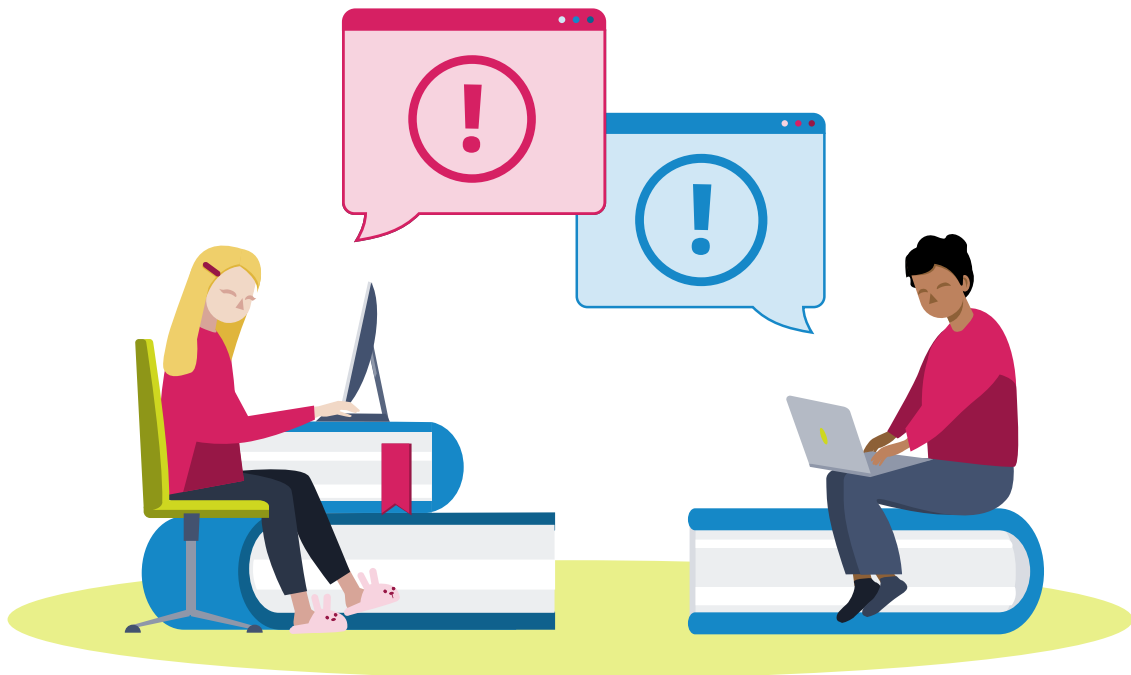


Active involvement from parents in supervising home digital activities



Empowering students through peer-led digital safety initiatives

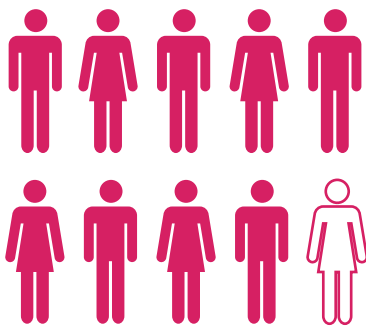
Programmes like Childnet's Digital Leaders<sup>7.1</sup> – where students lead online safety training – demonstrate measurable improvements. In one report<sup>7.2</sup>, **75%** of teachers noticed safer online behaviour from students as a result of peer-led initiatives. Alongside curriculum developments and close monitoring of digital trends, such collaborative, multi-layered approaches will be essential for future safeguarding strategies.



# Staff confidence, training and gaps in safeguarding

While educators remain deeply committed to safeguarding, our 2025 survey reveals signs of strain regarding confidence in reporting processes.

## Decline in reporting confidence

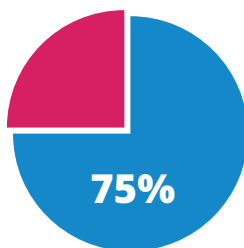


This year, 90% of respondents believed students were **confident** or **somewhat confident** to report safeguarding concerns – down from 98% last year.

Primary school staff showed slightly higher confidence compared to secondary school staff, likely reflecting closer pupil-teacher relationships.

Although still relatively high, the drop highlights growing staff concerns that students may now be more hesitant to speak up, possibly due to stigma or the complexity of issues involved. Secondary schools, in particular, may benefit from encouraging reporting through approachable pastoral staff, anonymous reporting tools or regular check-ins with form tutors.

## Perceived student safety



Encouragingly, 75% of staff overall believed most of their students **felt safe**, while 22% said students felt '**somewhat safe**.' Primary respondents reported greater perceived safety (83%) compared to secondary respondents (67%).

This gap highlights the unique pressures adolescents face – including peer dynamics, social media influence and academic stress – which may impact their overall sense of safety.

Secondary schools may need additional measures, such as mentoring schemes, wellbeing hubs or student-led anti-bullying initiatives, to foster a stronger sense of security among older students.



Staff do a brilliant job keeping children safe. School is a safe space for children."

Survey respondent



"There is a lot behind the scenes we are not aware of, which is fine as we are not DSLs, but some should be shared for staff to help pupils."

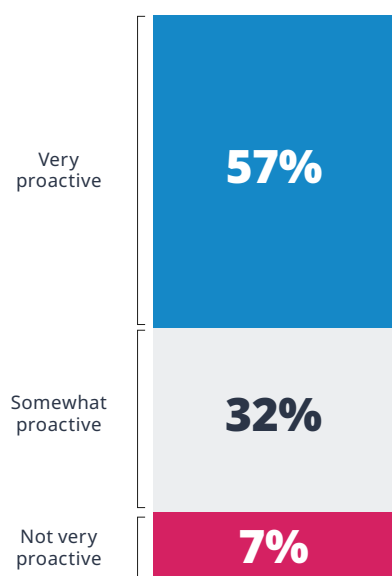
Survey respondent



"Our DSL regularly has a safeguarding quiz for staff. Staff are vigilant and children are happy to open up to us if they are in any kind of trauma."

Survey respondent

### Proactivity in safeguarding intervention

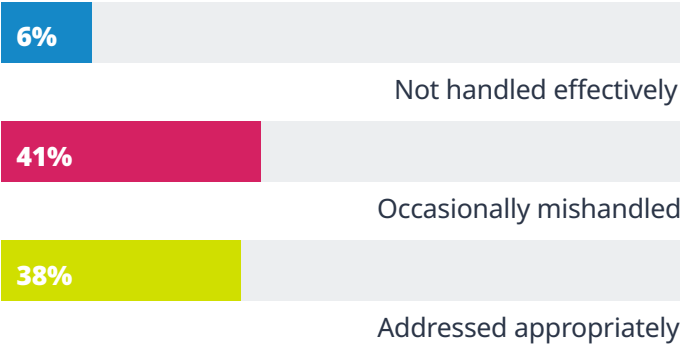


57% of respondents rated their schools as **"very proactive"** in identifying and intervening in safeguarding concerns early. 32% considered their schools **"somewhat proactive,"** while 7% felt their schools were **"not very proactive."**

Overall, nearly nine out of 10 respondents view their schools positively in terms of proactive safeguarding. Schools rated less proactive may need increased resources, clearer reporting processes or preventive measures to shift from reactive to proactive safeguarding approaches.

Handling of past safeguarding concerns

A concerning 6% reported ‘multiple’ safeguarding incidents that **weren’t handled effectively**. 41% said issues were **occasionally mishandled**, whereas 38% felt all concerns had been **addressed appropriately**.



Secondary respondents expressed more doubts, with only around one-third stating all concerns were handled effectively, compared to 43% from primary schools.

These findings suggest that, particularly in secondary settings, safeguarding processes occasionally fall short due to delayed responses, miscommunication or inadequate follow-up. Regular internal reviews or “lessons learned” sessions after incidents are recommended to continuously strengthen practices.

Effectiveness of safeguarding policies and training

61% of respondents rated their safeguarding policies as “**very effective**,” while 29% noted **gaps and inconsistencies**, and 8% considered their policies **ineffective or needing improvement**.

Training remains a critical gap



These statistics highlight significant gaps in ongoing professional development and initial teacher preparation. The Department for Education’s statutory guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024<sup>8</sup>) mandates regular safeguarding training, yet implementation is clearly inconsistent.

8. [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)



**“It is easy to report a concern online using MyConcern, and these are picked up daily by the DSLs and the deputy head who deals with safeguarding. He must be commended for his dedication and hard work in this regard. He is also easily approachable for queries/concerns.”**

**Survey respondent**

This highlights best practice: using digital systems like MyConcern to streamline reporting, improve accountability and complement face-to-face interactions.



**I think my school should update the contents of the safeguarding training. We’ve been trained the same thing for years and years. We should provide an online report tool or anonymous box for students to show their concerns. Sometimes there’s no feedback or follow-up from the leadership team after teachers report the concern.**

**Survey respondent**

This feedback suggests clear improvement areas:

- Regular updates to training content to reflect emerging trends
- Multiple avenues for student reporting (online/anonymous options)
- Improved feedback loops after staff report concerns to enhance communication and staff confidence

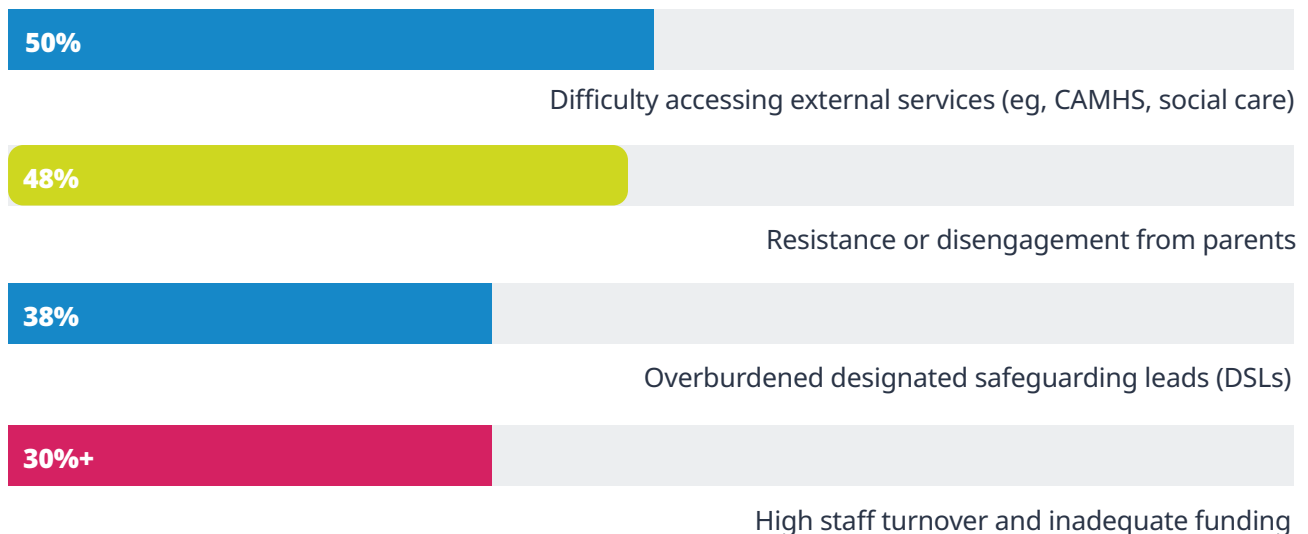
Schools can address these areas by introducing scenario-based training, interactive modules, or easily accessible training (such as Tes Safeguarding Training) to refresh and reinforce best practices.



# Barriers to effective safeguarding

Safeguarding staff identified several persistent systemic barriers that continue to complicate their work.

## Top reported barriers:



**It is frustrating when concerns are raised, but external agencies won't take action because cases aren't 'severe enough.' We feel impotent.**

**Survey respondent**

This persistent frustration indicates systemic strain on services like children's social care and mental health services. With stretched local authority resources and higher intervention thresholds, schools must increasingly manage serious safeguarding cases alone.

Parental resistance is nearly as prevalent and equally complex, often arising from mistrust, cultural differences or parents' own pressures. Without parental cooperation, even the best safeguarding efforts risk falling short.



**I believe that schools are expected to do too much now compared to when I first started teaching. Our job is to educate, but often we are dealing with issues that should be picked up by social services. We have had to act where social services won't. It seems to be left to schools to monitor risky adults in the children's lives and in some cases, we have to push social services to take some sort of action. We have less budget and less resources to deal with the complex issues some children have. In addition, parents are less supportive than they have ever been. They don't want what they see as school interference and are less willing than ever to work with us."**

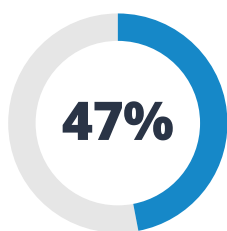
**Survey respondent**

These candid insights highlight educators' deep frustration at their expanding safeguarding responsibilities. With public services stretched thin, schools often become the default safety net. School staff increasingly feel responsible for monitoring "risky adults," managing complex safeguarding issues without adequate resource and facing growing parental resistance – often fuelled by misinformation or distrust.

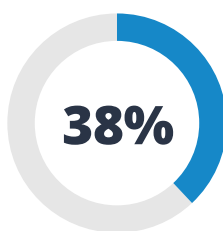
Improved parental engagement strategies, scenario-based staff training and clearer communication of safeguarding roles and intentions are vital to easing these pressures.

### Why issues can go wrong

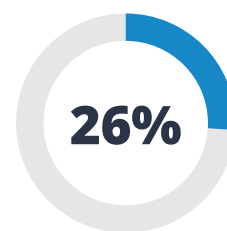
Respondents identified reasons why safeguarding cases occasionally were not managed effectively:



**External agencies (social care, police) unavailable or slow to respond**



**Information miscommunication or withholding**



**Internal failures in following safeguarding processes**

Delays from external agencies highlight the critical need for timely, multi-agency responses to prevent escalation. Communication breakdowns further underscore the importance of improved information-sharing; the government's ongoing pilot of a single child identifier across services aims to address this gap. Internal errors underline why continuous training and clearly defined procedures – particularly contingency plans for when DSLs are unavailable – remain crucial.

### Addressing barriers in practice

Schools are adopting innovative solutions:

- **Parental engagement:** Regular coffee mornings, dedicated family liaison roles and sharing accessible resources (eg, NSPCC guides) can build trust with reluctant parents
- **Scenario-based training:** Brief, realistic safeguarding simulations can help staff handle challenging situations proactively, enhancing readiness and resilience

### Steps towards improvement

Given the increasing complexity of safeguarding, overcoming these barriers will require enhanced training, strengthened collaboration and greater resource investment.

Positive policy shifts are emerging:

- **Children's social care reform:** The government's Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive policy<sup>9</sup> promotes early intervention and integrated support
- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill:** This legislation aims to formally include schools in local safeguarding partnerships and expedite information sharing through a unified child identifier<sup>10</sup>
- **Increased funding:** Doubling the Family Help services budget to £500 million should alleviate some pressures on schools by boosting early family support<sup>10,1</sup>

Additionally, by the end of 2025, every English school will have a senior mental health lead to coordinate student wellbeing initiatives, easing the DSL workload around mental health issues. Schools are also increasingly leveraging safeguarding software like Tes MyConcern and Clarity for more effective case management and strategic oversight.

These collective efforts – from government, local authorities and educational institutions – are essential to empowering schools to safeguard every child effectively.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-helping-families-thrive>  
<sup>10, 10.1</sup> <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/12/the-childrens-wellbeing-bill-what-parents-need-to-know>

# Strengthening safeguarding: recommendations and best practices

To position schools at the forefront of safeguarding in 2025, we recommend these actionable steps based on our findings and wider best practice:

## 1. Embed digital safety education and empower students

- **Integrate online safety into PSHE curricula** to ensure digital safety becomes central to school culture
- **Provide confidential digital reporting options** alongside traditional methods
- **Empower students as peer leaders** ('digital ambassadors') who promote positive online behaviour. This approach notably improves student conduct – 75% of teachers reported safer behaviours after implementing peer-led digital safety programmes<sup>7,3</sup>.

By actively involving students, schools foster a supportive culture of proactive safeguarding ('upstanders'), both online and offline.

## 2. Prioritise mental health and early intervention

- **Establish clear mental health support pathways** such as school counsellors, wellness hubs or external referrals
- Fully utilise the nationally funded **senior mental health lead** role to implement whole-school wellbeing initiatives (eg, mindfulness, stress management, mentoring)
- **Collaborate with mental health support teams** or **local charities** to extend provision
- **Conduct proactive parental communication** and reduce stigma via assemblies, workshops and information evenings

Early identification and intervention with mental health concerns (eg, anxiety, self-harm, trauma) help to improve outcomes, creating stronger partnerships between schools and families

### 3. Strengthen multi-agency collaboration

- **Actively engage with local safeguarding partnerships** and consistently escalate concerns, especially when external agency thresholds are high
- **Foster strong relationships** with social care, police and health professionals. Attend local safeguarding forums to ensure education professionals' perspectives inform multi-agency discussions

Persistent collaboration helps overcome systemic barriers, ensuring timely interventions for students at risk.

### 4. Engage parents as safeguarding partners

- **Regularly hold workshops** on topics such as online safety, drug awareness, exploitation risks and the importance of good mental health to equip parents and reinforce messages at home
- Build trust through initiatives like **parent safeguarding champions** – parents actively involved in developing safeguarding policies or awareness campaigns

Engaging parents as safeguarding allies ensures a consistent and unified safety net across school and home environments.

### 5. Invest in staff training and robust safeguarding systems

- **Provide annual, interactive safeguarding training** for all staff (teachers, support staff, governors). Update training content regularly to reflect emerging trends (eg, online grooming, new legislation)
- **Implement scenario-based exercises or quizzes** to maintain staff awareness and readiness
- Consider **external expertise**, like **Tes Safeguarding Training**, to maintain high-quality, up-to-date training
- Leverage technology effectively:
  - Use **secure safeguarding software**, like **MyConcern**, to streamline case management, ensure confidentiality and track safeguarding actions
  - For multi-school trusts or local authorities, tools like **Clarity** help aggregate data, identify trends and **support strategic responses**

These integrated systems and training frameworks strengthen internal processes, build staff confidence and ensure concerns are effectively addressed, recorded and resolved with accountability.

### Ofsted 2025: What the safeguarding changes mean for schools

In 2025, Ofsted will be updating their Education Inspection Framework (EIF)<sup>11</sup>, bringing sharper focus on safeguarding practices across schools, with a greater emphasis on:

- Evidence of early identification and early help pathways
- Embedding a whole-school culture of vigilance on safeguarding
- Stronger checks on how schools address online risks, including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying and peer-on-peer abuse
- Robust evidence of staff training and confidence in handling new safeguarding challenges eg, AI-generated risks, social media trends)
- Schools will be expected to show clear use of record-keeping systems and proactive safeguarding audits (MyConcern and Clarity provide vital evidence trails)

This evolution of Ofsted expectations reflects growing national recognition of the complex environment schools are operating in. It offers schools the opportunity to showcase excellent work already underway – and to further strengthen safeguarding culture by embedding training, multi-agency working and technology-enabled case management. Schools investing early in safeguarding readiness will not only meet inspection standards but create visibly safer environments for children.



## Conclusion: safeguarding at a crossroads – leading the future together

**Safeguarding in 2025 stands at a crossroads. The risks facing children – from mental health crises to exploitation – are growing more complex by the day. The expectations placed on schools are heavier than ever.**

Yet within these challenges lies a powerful truth: Schools and educators have never been more essential in protecting children and young people from risk of harm.

DSLs, leaders, teachers and governors are increasingly the first, and sometimes only, line of protection for children. It's school communities who are stepping up where the system struggles.

The findings in this report show that safeguarding excellence demands more than compliance. It demands:

- Relentless vigilance
- Ongoing innovation
- Stronger collaboration with external agencies and families
- Bold leadership in adapting to emerging risks

Schools cannot do this alone. But with greater investment in training, staffing, technology and multi-agency support, they can continue to be the safe havens children need.

Safeguarding is not just a duty. It's a promise we make to every young person – that their future is protected, nurtured and empowered.

This report is both a call to action and a testament to the educators who, even amid unprecedented pressures, continue to lead the way in ensuring children's safety, wellbeing and futures. Tes remains committed in supporting educators to building a stronger, safer future for every child.





## Tes total safeguarding

True safeguarding comes from seeing the whole picture. We offer a fully connected, end-to-end approach to safeguarding, empowering schools, trusts and school groups to create a safer environment where students can thrive.

Helping to identify potential risks early, address concerns promptly and ensure the wellbeing of every child, our solutions are designed to support every stage of the safeguarding process.

### Our solutions include:



#### Safeguarding training

Equip your staff, volunteers and trustees with the knowledge and skills to spot concerns early with unlimited access to a wide range of flexible, interactive online courses covering safeguarding, compliance, health and safety, and wellbeing. Track learning progress and evidence training with our robust reporting suite.



#### Case management

Streamline record-keeping and case management with our secure, centralised system for managing all types of safeguarding concerns. It helps you identify patterns, address issues proactively and make well-informed decisions.



#### Staff allegations

Handle staff allegations, low-level concerns and self-referrals on a dedicated platform, separately from student concerns. Early reporting improves visibility into risks, protects students from harm and safeguards staff from false accusations while reducing reputational risks.



#### Student voice

Give students, parents and the wider community an easy, anonymous way to report safeguarding concerns – anytime, anywhere. With customised forms shared via links or QR codes, reporting becomes quick and accessible, so nothing gets missed.



#### Safeguarding reporting

Identify trends and gain actionable insights with our powerful reporting tool specifically designed for trusts and school groups. Paired with our case management system, it supports data-driven decisions, detects risks and ensures a consistent approach to safeguarding.

**Learn more about how we can support  
you with safeguarding**

[tes.com/total-safeguarding](https://tes.com/total-safeguarding)