

KCSIE 2026: WHAT SCHOOL GAMES ORGANISERS NEED TO KNOW

IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING UPDATE FOR THE SCHOOL GAMES NETWORK – ENGLAND

From **1 September 2026**, the updated **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** statutory guidance came into force.

School Games Organisers (SGOs) are employed and managed by schools and other organisations and responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance therefore remains with the appropriate employing, host and/or delivery organisation.

YST is sharing this briefing to **raise awareness** of the changes and highlight potential implications for local School Games practice. It **does not interpret KCSIE or determine local compliance**.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

1. KCSIE 2026

KCSIE sets out the safeguarding responsibilities of schools and colleges in England.

From 1 September 2026, all school and college staff are expected to read **Part One** of KCSIE. The previous shorter Annex A has been removed.

For SGOs employed by a school or college, their employer should advise them of the requirements that apply to their role.

SGOs employed through other organisations should similarly check the safeguarding requirements applying to their role with their employer.

2. A significant change affecting regulated activity and volunteers

A separate but related change also takes effect on **1 September 2026**.

The existing **supervision exemption from regulated activity is being removed**.

Previously, some unpaid activities involving teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children were not considered regulated activity where the individual was supervised by someone already undertaking regulated activity.

From September, supervision alone will no longer provide that exemption.

Where a volunteer role meets the relevant activity, frequency or overnight criteria, it **may now constitute regulated activity** and require an **enhanced DBS check including children's barred-list information**.

This may be particularly relevant to School Games delivery involving volunteers and other adults who regularly support children.

SGOs **should not determine for themselves** whether a role is regulated activity or what DBS checks are required. Volunteer arrangements should be **reviewed with the employing organisation, school/college and appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, particularly where supervision has previously been relied upon.

3. Sport, children questioning their gender and changing facilities

KCSIE 2026 includes guidance with particular relevance to School Games participation and event planning:

- For some sports, separation by biological sex may be necessary for **safety**. In other cases, single-sex arrangements may be adopted for **fairness**. Schools should be informed by relevant **National Governing Body guidance** on the safe and fair operation of individual sports.
- An SGO **should not make a decision about an individual child in isolation**. Any questions about a child's participation should be **discussed in advance** with the child's school and DSL or safeguarding lead, alongside relevant NGB guidance and competition requirements.
- Changing and shower arrangements should be checked with participating schools and the venue **before the event**. KCSIE includes specific requirements for pupils aged 11 and over and explains how suitable alternative arrangements may be considered. Arrangements should protect the **safety, comfort, privacy and dignity of every child**.

WHAT SHOULD SGOs CONSIDER?

SGOs **should not determine these issues in isolation**. They should discuss local arrangements and any uncertainty with their **employer, host organisation and/or appropriate DSL or safeguarding lead**.

Due to changes in KCSIE, SGOs may find it helpful to consider the following:

- Am I clear about the safeguarding requirements my employer expects me to follow?
- Are safeguarding responsibilities clear when organising School Games competitions, festivals and other events involving multiple schools?

- Is there a clearly identified safeguarding lead and reporting route for each event?
- Are participating schools clear about their responsibilities for the children they bring to an event?
- Have arrangements involving coaches, officials, volunteers or other adults been reviewed with the employer/DSL or safeguarding lead?
- Do any current volunteer arrangements rely upon supervision, and have these been referred to the employer/DSL or safeguarding lead for review?
- Has the employing or responsible organisation determined whether any volunteer roles now constitute regulated activity?
- Has the employing or responsible organisation confirmed that the appropriate DBS and barred-list arrangements are in place where required?
- Are procedures clear if a child makes a disclosure or a safeguarding concern arises during a School Games event?
- Is it clear how concerns will be communicated to the appropriate school DSL or other safeguarding lead?
- Where external venues or delivery partners are involved, are respective safeguarding responsibilities understood?
- Have participation and changing requirements been identified with schools and venues in advance, so that suitable arrangements are not left until the day?
- Is information-sharing limited to what is necessary for the appropriate safeguarding and event arrangements, and shared only with those who need to know?

MULTI-SCHOOL SCHOOL GAMES EVENTS

School Games activity can bring together children and adults from several schools/organisations. This makes **clarity of responsibility and advance planning** particularly important, especially where participation or changing arrangements may be required.

SGOs should consider whether local event arrangements clearly establish:

- **who retains responsibility for participating children**
- **who has responsibility for event-wide safeguarding**
- **who receives and records concerns**
- **how concerns are passed to the appropriate school or organisation**

- how participation and changing arrangements will be agreed before the event
- what information is necessary, who needs to know it and how it will be shared securely

This does not necessarily mean creating new systems. In many areas appropriate arrangements will already be in place. The September changes provide a useful opportunity to **review and confirm that those arrangements remain appropriate.**

Where there is uncertainty, SGOs should seek advice from their employer or relevant safeguarding lead.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

We encourage SGOs to:

- **Share this update with the appropriate safeguarding lead within your employing/host organisation and consider together whether any School Games delivery arrangements need reviewing**
- Particular attention should be given to **volunteers and DBS arrangements, multi-school events, participation in sport, changing facilities, advance planning** and external delivery partners.

Further information

- The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 came into force on **1 September 2026.**
- DfE has also published specific guidance explaining the **removal of the supervision exemption for regulated activity**, which takes effect on the same date.
- SGOs should refer to the official government guidance and their employing organisation's safeguarding policies for definitive requirements.
- KCSIE 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-or-volunteering-in-regulated-activity-with-children/regulated-activity-removal-of-the-supervision-exemption-comes-into-force-1-september-2026>