



Navigating the 2026 Landscape: UPDATE FOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITY PROVIDERS

Safeguarding duties for activity providers working with children continues to evolve with two significant updates in 2026. Revised statutory guidance outlined below reinforces safeguarding as an embedded culture, not a compliance checklist. The statutory frameworks, terminology and inspection bodies differ across the UK's four nations, and providers should work to the framework that applies in their location.

'Working Together' 2026 (England only)

The DfE's March 2026 update to Working Together to Safeguard Children strengthens expectations around inclusive, anti-discriminatory practice and multi-agency working.

- **Anti-discriminatory practice.** The guidance requires practitioners to identify, understand and challenge racism and discrimination, placing a clear expectation on leaders to create inclusive, anti-discriminatory cultures. Staff codes of conduct should go beyond physical safety to include managing inclusive environments and challenging exclusionary behaviour.
- **Serious incident timelines have tightened.** Rapid reviews following a serious incident notification must now be submitted within 15 working days. This reinforces the importance of providers having timely, well-organised internal incident records.

- **The 'family help' integration.** 'Early Help' has been replaced by 'Family Help' - a more joined-up model combining early and statutory support under a single pathway. Update your referral language and make sure your DSL knows what this means for you.

2. KCSIE 2025/2026 (England only)

If working with schools, you should understand (and where relevant mirror) the standards set in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The KCSIE 2026 consultation draft proposes changes from September 2026, providers should monitor the final publication.

- **Mental health is explicitly linked to safeguarding.** The 2026 draft connects mental health concerns to safeguarding risk, including self-harm and suicidal ideation. Your staff should know how to raise a low-level welfare concern internally and your DSL should have a clear process for acting on them.



- **Physical intervention.** KCSIE 2025 addresses the use of reasonable force, and the 2026 draft strengthens expectations around staff behaviour policies and appropriate physical contact. Providers should document the distinction between safety assistance (e.g. stabilising a distressed child on high ropes) and restrictive practice. Restrictive practice in most circumstances would be carried out by school teachers or others who have received specific training, but providers should ensure policies are clear and their staff are aware.
- **Digital safeguarding.** The Online Safety Act's broader cultural shift towards proactive online safety means that all organisations working with children should have clear digital safeguarding policies in place. This includes filtering on any internet access provided (WiFi), staff guidance on device and social media use, and an understanding of online safety risks relevant to the age groups you work with.

3. Accreditation frameworks

AHOEC Gold Standard

Updated criteria assesses safeguarding as a distinct domain. Inspectors are looking beyond policies to evidence genuine safeguarding culture including how you consider the psychological and emotional impact of activities on young people, and how you safeguard staff as well as participants.

LOtC Quality Badge

The LOtC Quality Badge is the primary indicator schools use when assessing providers. One significant addition: your emergency procedures must now include compliance with the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act, Martyn's Law, so you should update your procedures to reflect this.

AALA

The AALA regulations require providers to be 'fit and proper'. While they don't explicitly audit a provider's full Safeguarding Policy (like a social services or Ofsted inspection would), they expect to see that staff are competent and that young people are appropriately supervised.



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