

# Safeguarding Guidance for Contractors Working In School

## SUMMARY

This guidance has been drawn up to ensure the effective safeguarding of children where contractors are used in schools.

## SCOPE

It is intended for use where schools employ contractors to construct new accommodation, undertake routine maintenance or emergency repairs. This guidance will also apply to consultants employed on the building or maintenance project, and the term 'contractor' will mean contractor or consultant.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this guidance is to ensure that effective systems are put in place to safeguard children when building works, routine maintenance and emergency repairs are undertaken in Southend High School for Boys' premises.

## INTRODUCTION

All schools in England have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their care. The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidance in its document: Keeping Children Safe in Education (Appendix 1). The guidance is mainly directed at those who are employed to work with children and vulnerable adults; it also advises on those who come into contact with children on an ad hoc or irregular basis for short periods of time, such as building contractors, maintenance companies, delivery personnel etc. It cites examples of good practice and indicates where Disclosure, Barring and Safeguarding checks are not required. This guidance considers what the arrangements should be employed by Headteacher, School Business Manager, School Administrator and Site Manager where contractors are employed to work at their premises.

Any reference to a Headteacher in this guidance should be taken to include any person that the Headteacher has designated as the person responsible for safeguarding children at the school.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

All people working with children and young people are responsible for the safeguarding of the children and vulnerable adults in their care and they will be responsible for ensuring that adequate measures are in place to safeguard pupils whilst contractors are on the premises.

## REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

We would ask that all safeguarding concerns are reported to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Leads are Rachel Worth, Gareth March, John Brandon, Jude Nzemeke and Charlie Foley. A member of the team can be contacted through the school main office or your key contact person.

## SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

The aim of the safeguarding measures will be to manage the risk of harm to pupils and vulnerable adults. The measures adopted will be proportionate to the risk. Safeguarding measures to be considered will include any or all of the following, depending on the outcomes identified by the school in their security risk assessment:

**Segregate** - To avoid contact\* between contractors and pupils as far as possible

**Supervise** - To supervise any contact\* that does take place with a member of staff or a suitably vetted volunteer

**Code of conduct** - To require contractors to observe a code of conduct

**Regulate Access** - To regulate access to the premises

**Checks** - To undertake checks where appropriate.

*\* 'Contact' in this context will be taken to mean any opportunity for contractors' staff to converse with pupils or to communicate with them in any other way, e.g. by passing messages, without a member of staff or suitably vetted volunteer being able to monitor the contact and intervene where necessary.*

### **Segregate**

The risk of harm to pupils can be managed if contact between non-vetted contractors' staff and pupils can be avoided altogether.

Segregation can be achieved by physical means or by time, or by a combination of both.

For larger building projects lasting a number of weeks, physical separation would normally be achieved by the contractors' staff working within secure areas behind fencing, hoardings, barriers etc, where pupils would normally be excluded for routine health and safety concerns (this practice is already adopted on all Property Services contracts).

Outside such secure areas, separation can be maintained by confining the movements of the contractors' staff to specific areas and to specific times, so as to avoid contact at break times, class changeover times, and at the beginning and at the end of the school day. In this context a marked-up plan, agreed with the contractor, would be useful to show where, and at what times during the day, access would be permitted.

For routine maintenance visits or for emergency repairs lasting less than a day physical separation can be achieved by simply confining the movements of contractors to within clearly defined areas and specific times. Should any contact between the contractors' staff and pupils occur then it should be supervised by a member of staff or suitably-vetted volunteer.

Where works are to be undertaken outside school hours, safeguarding measures should be implemented for any pupil attendance in school outside normal school hours.

### **Supervise**

Measures should always be instigated to segregate non-vetted contractors' staff from pupils as much as is possible, not just in the context of this document but also for health & safety reasons. However, where such measures to segregate are in place but some contact may occur between non-vetted contractors' staff and pupils, any such contact should always be supervised by a member of staff or suitably-vetted volunteer.

As noted above, 'contact' will be taken to mean any opportunity for contractors' staff to converse with pupils or to communicate with them in any other way, for example by passing messages, without a member of staff or suitably-vetted volunteer being able to monitor the contact and to intervene where necessary.

'Supervise' will be taken to mean the ability for a member of staff or suitably-vetted volunteer to monitor conversation or communication of any kind between contractors' staff and pupils and to intervene where necessary.

The requirement to supervise can be limited to the times when contact is likely to occur, e.g. at break times, class changeover times and at the beginning and at the end of the school day. It is not necessary to monitor

the building works themselves, only any contact that might take place between the contractors' staff and pupils.

### **Code of Conduct**

The code of conduct should be used to inform all contractors (both vetted and non-vetted) what might be considered inappropriate behaviour. It will enable any inappropriate behaviour to be recognised and challenged by all concerned.

The code of conduct for contractors is:

1. Observe the code at all times.
2. It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
3. Work safely and responsibly and be aware of responsibility for your own actions and behaviour.
4. Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question your motivation and intentions.
5. Avoid contact with children. Never give your personal contact details to children or young people, including mobile telephone number.
6. Work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
7. Never be in contact with children without school supervision.
8. Stay within the agreed work area and access routes.
9. Obtain permission if you need to go outside the agreed work area or access routes.
10. Keep staff informed of where you are and what you are doing.
11. Do not use profane or inappropriate language.
12. Dress appropriately i.e. dress in a way that:
  - a. Is unlikely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
  - b. Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
  - c. Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
  - d. Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.
13. Remember your actions no matter how well intentioned could be misinterpreted.
14. Be mindful of the need to avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations.
15. Any order for works or building contracts should be given a clear condition that failure to observe the code will entitle Southend High School for Boys to exclude a member of a contractors' staff from the premises.

To ensure the effectiveness of any code it will either be:

1. Issued to contractors when quotations or tenders are invited.
2. Stated as a condition on any order for works or building contract no matter how or by whom the contractor is appointed.
3. Issued to all contractors direct by the school when they first attend and before any work has commenced.

Additionally, where appropriate, the code should be:

1. Highlighted and discussed in any pre- start meetings for larger building contracts.
2. Posted on the building site.
3. Posted on the school staff notice board.
4. Included as part of any contractors site safety briefings.
5. Issued to contractors staff

## **Identify**

To ensure that as far as possible only bona fide personnel are afforded access, a suitable means of identification will be provided by all contractors. The means of identification will be agreed and produced for checking by the school in advance of any works taking place (normally a driving licence or passport). If a contractor fails to produce such ID they will be refused entry to the site.

The means by which any contractors' staff are to be identified on site will be determined in each case to suit the location and nature of the work being undertaken. In the case of school-issued ID badges or contractors' own photo ID, these will be worn and be visible at all times when the contractor is on the site.

Typical methods may include: ID badges, Photo ID, Branded workwear, signing in system.

Identification should only ever be used as a supplementary measure to the principal safeguarding measures of segregation and supervision.

## **Checks**

Whether or not contractors' staff should undergo a DBS check and ISA registration should be determined by a suitable risk assessment.

The risk assessment should take account of the likely amount of contact that the contractors' staff might have with pupils, and after other measures, such as segregation and supervision, have been considered. In some cases where measures to segregate and supervise are in place, it may still be necessary to consider checks.

DBS checks would not be required where there would be no contact between contractors' staff and pupils; for example where a building was being built on a separate site, or where the works were to be undertaken outside school hours or during school holidays. However, consideration must of course be given to extended activities on the school site.

Similarly, DBS checks would not normally be required for contractors' staff working on site building an extension or undertaking repairs, where they are segregated from pupils and where any contact that did take place was supervised by the school.

However, where a member of the contractors' staff is likely to have either frequent or prolonged contact with pupils then it would be appropriate to obtain a DBS check in addition to measures to supervise any contact. For example, a check may be appropriate where a contractors' representative (eg foreman, site manager etc) needs to liaise with school staff on a day-to-day basis.

A check may also be considered appropriate in the case of a contractors' representative where such staff are responsible for ensuring compliance with other safeguarding measures such as segregation, identification, code of conduct etc.

Similarly, where contractors' staff regularly visit schools to undertake routine maintenance (boilers, electrical tests and the like) then a check may be deemed appropriate in addition to measures to supervise any contact.

(Where checks are necessary then the contractor organisation must confirm in writing to the school that these are in place and the nature of these checks. If self-employed, the school may facilitate the checks, to be reimbursed by the contractor).

**Under no circumstances should a member of a contractor's staff, even those who have undergone a DBS check, be allowed to have any unsupervised contact with pupils.**

The Safeguarding Lead at the school should be contacted whenever specific guidance around checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or the Independent Safeguarding Agency (ISA) is needed.

It should be noted that not all contractors engaged by Southend High School for Boys will have been vetted in any way and DBS checks are not routinely requested, unless specifically required due to the nature of the work they are undertaking.

### Planning

The safeguarding measures should be determined and agreed with any contractor well in advance of any planned works e.g. building contracts, starting on site. This will enable sufficient time for school staff to be briefed on the supervision required and on the access arrangements agreed with contractor; it will also enable checks, where necessary, to be completed and in place before works start.

### Summary

Wherever any type of building-related work is undertaken of any duration, safeguarding measures will always be implemented and include arrangements to segregate pupils from contractors' staff as far as reasonably practicable and for any contact between them to be supervised by a member of staff or suitably-vetted volunteer.

Other steps such as codes of conduct, identification and DBS checks should be considered as supplementary measures where appropriate.

### Checks on Contractors Working in schools

CONTACT WITH PUPILS	RECOMMENDED MEASURES	HEAD TEACHER /DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Nil</b> [e.g. works undertaken on a separate site, during out of hours or in school holiday periods]	contractors' staff to comply with code of conduct contractors' staff to sign in and out of premises contractors' staff to wear Company ID at all times <u>no</u> DBS required	undertakes a risk assessment requires contractor to adopt code of conduct requires to contractor sign in and out of premises requires contractor to wear ID on site
<b>Minimal</b> [where contractors' staff are segregated from pupils and any contact that does occur is supervised e.g. new build and major repair projects]	segregate supervise any contact contractors' staff to comply with code of conduct contractors' staff to sign in and out of premises contractors' staff to wear ID at all times <u>no</u> DBS required (may be necessary for some individuals in particular area's)	undertakes a risk assessment ensures segregation arrangements in place ensures arrangements for any contact to be supervised requires contractor to adopt code of conduct requires contractor to sign in and out of premises requires contractor to wear ID on site reviews and amends arrangements to accommodate any change
<b>Regular</b> [e.g., where contractors' staff are segregated from pupils but there is likely to be regular supervised contact, e.g. foremen liaising with schools on new build or major repair projects, service engineers making routine maintenance visits]	segregate supervise any contact contractors' staff to comply with code of conduct contractors' staff to sign in and out of premises contractors' staff to wear ID at all times consider DBS (undertake a risk assessment)	undertakes a risk assessment ensures segregation arrangements in place ensures arrangements for any contact to be supervised requires contractor to adopt code of conduct requires contractor to sign in and out of premises requires contractor to wear ID on site ensures any required DBS checks completed before works start reviews and amends arrangements to accommodate any change