

## The Designated Safeguarding Lead

*A quick reference to the role, its core duties, and where the standards fit.*

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, or DSL, is the named person who holds lead responsibility for safeguarding within a setting. In schools and education settings the role is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. In religious congregations the equivalent leadership and oversight responsibilities sit within the CSSA National Safeguarding Standards. Whatever the setting, the principle is the same: one clearly identified, well-supported person who makes sure safeguarding is understood, acted on, and evidenced.

### Core duties at a glance

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and the protection of children and adults at risk.
- Be the first point of contact for concerns, and know exactly how and when to refer.
- Keep clear, secure and current safeguarding records.
- Make sure safer recruitment and vetting are followed for every appointment.
- Support and advise colleagues, and manage allegations or concerns about adults.
- Oversee training so everyone can recognise a concern and knows how to report it.
- Work with partner agencies and report clearly to leadership and trustees.
- Keep online safety, filtering and monitoring under regular review.

### Schools and education settings

Keeping Children Safe in Education sets the DSL role and the safeguarding basics. The 2026 edition takes effect on 1 September 2026, and asks that all staff read Part One in full. Under the Ofsted framework, safeguarding is judged simply met or not met.

### Religious congregations

The CSSA eight National Safeguarding Standards frame leadership, culture, safe practice, the care of those harmed, the management of allegations and respondents, robust HR, training, and quality assurance. The DSL role sits at the heart of Standards 1 and 7.

**Four things that make the difference.** Culture matters more than paperwork. Evidence tells the story, so keep it current. Know your referral routes before you need them. And never carry a concern alone, safeguarding is a shared responsibility.

**Need independent DSL support, or help getting audit and inspection ready?** Safeguarding Assured provides independent safeguarding leadership, assurance and readiness for religious congregations and education settings. Find out more, and try our free readiness checks, at [safeguardassured.com](https://safeguardassured.com).