

Ofsted (2011) Safeguarding in Schools: Best practice. London: Ofsted.
Ofsted Reference 100240

Summary Notes

This report is based on a selection of schools recently judged outstanding. These include some special schools.

It contains a useful definition of safeguarding.

Safeguarding: a definition

Ofsted adopts the definition of safeguarding used in the Children Act 2004 and in the Department for Education and Skills (now Department for Education) guidance document Working together to safeguard children, which focuses on safeguarding and promoting children's and learners' welfare. This can be summarised as:

- *protecting children and learners from maltreatment*
- *preventing impairment of children's and learners' health or development*
- *ensuring that children and learners are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care*
- *undertaking that role so as to enable those children and learners to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.*

The focus is on safeguarding arrangements in general terms and there is no specific reference to personal care or special approaches for those with complex, severe or profound needs (there is a section on medical care). However many of the 'best practice' points would apply equally to safeguarding privacy and dignity in personal care.

The following are a summary of 'best practice' points particularly relevant to the module:

- *High standards are set for all aspects of safeguarding practice; effective schools make sure that these standards are upheld by all concerned. Attention to detail is a crucial factor in their success, and pupils' safety and well-being are central to all that the schools do.*
- *Channels of communication are simple and effective. Each member of staff knows what they are responsible for and how their safeguarding duties relate to those of others.*
- *Staff, governors, pupils, parents and external partners are consulted to ensure that policies are sustainable.*
- *Effective leaders successfully establish an ethos and culture based on mutual respect and acceptance of differences, where safeguarding is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility.*

- *Schools with outstanding leadership and management promote the genuine involvement of staff at all levels in maintaining high standards and putting children and young people first.*
- *Quality assurance is integral to daily practice, with schools acting on the findings of their monitoring activities.*
- *Leaders and managers put in place safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect their rigour and close attention to detail.*
- *Practice is consistent across the school, supported by the sharing of accurate and up-to-date information.*
- *Senior managers encourage their staff to draw on the expertise of other agencies and professionals to support and protect pupils and their families.*
- *Training in safeguarding is given a high priority in effective schools. Expertise is extended effectively and internal capacity is built up.*
- *Effective induction programmes for new staff give high priority to safeguarding, recognising that all staff should have the necessary basic training before they work with pupils. New staff need clear, easily accessible written guidance so that they can quickly become familiar with the school's particular ways of working.*
- *Staff actively draw on the expertise of other agencies and professionals.*
- *Effective schools ensure that staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils' individual care needs as well as their academic needs and take these into account when working with them and their families.*
- *Effective schools recognise the importance of caring for pupils' emotional well-being and the central part that this plays in them feeling safe and secure.*
- *They typically have successfully established a culture of openness and transparency which encourages vigilance and a sense of shared responsibility for the protection of children and young people.*
- *Health and safety are carefully monitored in effective schools.*
- *Schools with effective provision for their pupils' health and safety do not neglect their dignity and privacy either, for example by taking particular care to protect those with medical care needs.*
- *Routines related to health and safety are carried out systematically and thoroughly in outstanding schools.*
- *Personal, social and health education (PSHE) plays a crucial part in teaching children and young people to recognise dangers and harmful situations and to know the preventative actions they can take to keep themselves safe.*

- *A common feature in outstanding schools is the desire and success in including all pupils in all aspects of school life regardless of their needs and difficulties.*

In referring to weakness in this area the report emphasises the importance of leadership and management.

Weaknesses in safeguarding are usually related to broader failings in leadership, management and governance.