

Section 157 / 175 Biennial Self-Assessment Audit 2024 - 25

Introduction

The Schools Safeguarding Audit provides assurance of safeguarding arrangements across all educational settings in North Yorkshire. It enables schools to self-assess, identify areas for improvement, and develop action plans, while supporting governing bodies in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. This audit emphasises the importance of safeguarding culture within schools with the newly introduced “Culture of Safeguarding” section, developed with education partners, additionally, the audit informs partners of emerging themes and shines a light on the positive practice in our schools across North Yorkshire.

Areas of Good Practice

Safeguarding Culture is embedded as a lived value across school communities, with visible leadership, regular DSL briefings, and tailored safeguarding messages.

Pupil Voice - Pupils are empowered to share concerns and influence their environment through peer-led sessions, SEND-inclusive technologies, and visible disclosure routes.

Staff Training and Supervision is supported through scenario-based learning, safeguarding briefings, bulletins, and via senior leaders.

Partnership Working is demonstrated by schools through local child exploitation arrangements, liaising with community and statutory partners in person, and developing relationships via NYSCP networks and events.

Looked After Children and Fostering - An increase in Designated Teachers for children in care, and collaboration with the Virtual School Head across most schools, with private fostering arrangements recorded on admission.

Early Years settings show high compliance with the EYFS framework, with trained staff, safer eating practices, and active participation in safeguarding learning events and inspections

Context

North Yorkshire schools educate over **85,000** children across **297 Primary** and **43 Secondary** Schools, plus **Special, Independent**, and **post-16** settings.

The audit achieved a **96% response rate**, an increase from the last audit cycle.

A representative sample of schools participated in **multi-agency panel visits** to explore themes and validate self-assessments.

The audit covers key safeguarding areas and is **aligned with statutory guidance**.

Resources & Further Information

[What is the NYSCP?](#)

[NYSCP Schools Audit Page](#)

[NYSCP Pages - Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[NYSCP Pages - Learning for Professionals](#)

[NYSCP Resources, MACE Sign Up, Latest Information](#)

[NYSCP Training & Learning](#)

Areas for Development

Contextual Safeguarding and Prevent - Strengthening engagement with contextual safeguarding forums, ensuring consistent approaches, and sharing of assessments.

Substance Use - Clearer, standalone substance misuse policies. Addressing rising vaping rates.

Supervision - Understanding the benefits of implementing formalised, quality supervision and its impact on the wellbeing of staff and pupils

Governors - Consistency in ongoing safeguarding training and policy awareness among Governors, supporting the role as a “critical friend” to school leaders.

Information Sharing - Clear understanding of the principles and processes of information sharing, particularly during pupil transitions, and encouragement of professional curiosity.

Training - Ensuring that school leaders are aware of, and that safeguarding messages are consistently shared with all school staff.

Mental Health - Formalisation of Mental Health Lead roles, whole school approaches and the monitoring of mental and emotional wellness, and resilience.

Safer Recruitment - Expansion of safer recruitment practices by recording non-statutory information to enhance safeguarding culture and inspection readiness.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthening Local and Contextual Safeguarding in Schools.**
2. Embedding and Sharing the PREVENT Risk Assessment Across All Schools in North Yorkshire.
3. **Strengthening Substance Misuse and Vaping Policies in Schools.**
4. Supporting Effective Safeguarding Supervision and Reflective Practice in Schools.
5. **Ensuring School Trustees, Governors, Leaders, and Staff are sighted to NYSCP Safeguarding Information, and this is cascaded to all school staff.**
6. Information Sharing, and Strengthening Transition Protocols Between School Settings.
7. **Enhance whole-school staff understanding and visibility of safeguarding support routes, so all staff can identify and respond to pupil worries, even if their role is not directly related to safeguarding.**
8. Ensure every school has a trained and active mental health lead to strengthen leadership and support for children’s emotional wellbeing.
9. Schools to record non-statutory information on the Single Central Record.

Actions and recommendations will be reviewed as part of the NYSCP Subgroup meetings

Questions for Reflection

What is one practical step I could take to strengthen my safeguarding knowledge or confidence?

What could I share with colleagues to help build their understanding of safeguarding practices?

What could the NYSCP do more or less of to better support safeguarding in my role or setting?

What to do now

Consider the questions for reflection in your team meetings or when being professionally curious about a young person or family.

Share learning and key messages with your colleagues.

Email us with comments, queries, or feedback!