

Schools' HR Bulletin

July 2026

Purpose of letter	For Information & Action
Target audience	All Governing Bodies All Head Teachers Teachers-in-Charge of Pupil Referral Units School Business Managers
Date of Edition	All Bulletin July 2026

Dear Colleagues,

This edition includes key HR updates, guidance and resources to support schools.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 – Key Updates for Schools

The Department for Education has published Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, which comes into force on 1 September 2026. Schools should review their safeguarding policies, procedures and recruitment practices ahead of implementation.

Key changes include:

- Updated references to legislation and guidance, including the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, which is now included within the definition of UK data protection laws.
- Enhanced guidance on AI-generated imagery, with KCSIE now making clear that nude and semi-nude images include those that have been digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence (e.g. deepfakes and “deep nudes”).
- Changes to regulated activity for volunteers, following the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Volunteers who teach, train, instruct or supervise children frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight, may now be engaged in regulated activity and will require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.
- Schools must review arrangements for existing volunteers whose roles become regulated activity from 1 September 2026 and ensure appropriate safeguarding checks are completed.
- Greater emphasis on recorded risk assessments for volunteers who are not in regulated activity, ensuring schools can evidence how decisions about safeguarding checks have been made.

Action for schools:

Schools should familiarise themselves with the updated guidance, review safeguarding and recruitment procedures, ensure staff training reflects the new requirements, and assess whether any existing volunteer arrangements are affected by the changes taking effect from September 2026

Teacher Pay Award Update – Information for Schools

Following the publication of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) 36th Report on 1 July 2026 and the Government's response, the key recommendation is a 3.5% increase to all teacher pay ranges and allowances for 2026/27, alongside a 5% uplift to the minimum point of the unqualified teacher pay range. The STRB has also recommended a 3% pay increase for 2027/28, with an indicative 3% increase for 2028/29.

Current information indicates that funding for the 2026/27 award will be met through a combination of existing budgets (0.8%), school efficiencies (1%), and additional government funding (1.7%). Similar funding arrangements are anticipated for 2027. Schools should carefully assess the financial impact of the award, particularly where budget pressures remain significant.

Schools should also be aware of media reports suggesting that at least one teaching trade union may consider industrial action due to concerns about the level of funding available to support the award. At present, these reports remain media speculation and do not represent any formal notification of industrial action. However, schools may wish to consider the potential industrial relations implications should concerns escalate nationally.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has advised that a teacher pay survey will be issued shortly to gather employer views on the proposed multi-year pay award, funding arrangements and the draft School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) 2026.

The Schools HR Advisory Service will continue to review the detailed implications of the STRB report and will provide further updates and guidance as additional information becomes available.

Safeguarding Update: Changes to Regulated Activity from September 2026

From 1 September 2026, important changes to the definition of regulated activity with children will come into force. The key change is the removal of the supervision exemption for certain volunteers, meaning that some volunteers who were previously not classed as undertaking regulated activity will now fall within its scope.

This is expected to have the greatest impact on volunteers who regularly work with children, including parent volunteers, reading volunteers, classroom helpers, educational visit volunteers, sports and extracurricular activity volunteers, and volunteer mentors. As a result, some volunteers may require additional safeguarding checks before carrying out their duties.

Barking & Dagenham

The changes are primarily a volunteer safeguarding and DBS issue rather than an employee issue. Most paid school staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, learning support assistants, school leaders, pastoral staff and midday supervisors, are already undertaking regulated activity and are therefore unlikely to be affected.

Schools should review their current volunteer arrangements and assess whether existing volunteers will require Enhanced DBS checks, including Children's Barred List information, under the new arrangements. Single Central Records and volunteer records may also need updating to reflect any additional checks required.

Schools are advised to begin preparations now by reviewing volunteer roles, confirming current DBS clearance levels, updating safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures where necessary, and briefing key staff, governors and safeguarding leads on the changes.

The key message is that the removal of the supervision exemption will bring some volunteers into the scope of regulated activity for the first time. Schools should review their volunteer workforce and safeguarding arrangements ahead of September 2026 to ensure compliance with the new requirements.

Yours sincerely,



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Feedback on the Service can be submitted regarding the Schools HR Advisory Service via the following link: [Feedback Form 2026](#)