



**Bellevue Guidance on Contractors Working in Schools**

Reviewed August 2023

## **SUMMARY**

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

## **SCOPE**

This guidance 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 shall 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 Bellevue Schools 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) have issued guidance in its document:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

The guidance is mainly concerned for 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 and the like.

It cites examples of good practice where contact is on an ad hoc or irregular basis and indicates where Disclosure, Barring and Safeguarding checks are not required (Appendix 1).

This guidance considers what arrangements should be employed by the Principal / Vice Principal / Office Manager / College Caretaker, where contractors are employed to work at their premises.

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

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

## **SAFEGUARDING MEASURES**

The aim of the safeguarding measures will be to manage the risk of harm to pupils and vulnerable adults. **The measures adopted shall 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 shall 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 and the like where pupils would normally be excluded for routine health and safety concerns (this practise 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 and at the beginning and at the end of the school day. In this context a marked up plan agreed with the contractor to show where and at what times during the day access will be permitted would be useful (Appendix 2).

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, using the principles illustrated in Appendix 2. 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 then 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 H&S reasons. However, where such measures to segregate are in place but some contact may occur between non-vetted contractors' staff and pupils then any such contact should always be supervised by a member of staff or suitably vetted volunteer.

As noted above, 'contact' shall 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 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:

Work safely and responsibly and be aware of responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

1. Avoid contact with children. **Never** give your personal contact details to children or young people, including mobile telephone number
2. Work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
3. Never be in contact with children without school supervision
4. Stay within the agreed work area and access routes
5. Obtain permission if you need to go outside the agreed work area or access routes.
6. Keep staff informed of where you are and what you are doing
7. Do not use profane or inappropriate language
8. Dress appropriately i.e. dress in a way that is unlikely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative, does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive and observe the code at all times
9. Remember your actions no matter how well intentioned could be misinterpreted. Be mindful of the need to avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations.
10. Any order for works or building contracts should be let with a clear condition that failure to observe the code will entitle Bellevue and/or the school to exclude a member of a contractors' staff from the premises.
11. To ensure the effectiveness of any code it shall either be:
  - Issued to contractors when quotations or tenders are invited
  - Stated as a condition on any order for works or building contract no matter how or by whom the contractor is appointed
  - Issued to all contractors direct by the school/educational establishment when they first attend and before any work has commenced.

12. Additionally, where appropriate, the code should be:

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

### **Identify**

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

The means by which any contractors' staff are to be identified 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 shall be worn and be visible at all times when the contractor is on the site.

Typical methods may include:

- ID badges
- Photo ID
- Photo book of all staff
- Branded workwear
- Signing in book

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 any other relevant checks should be determined by a suitable risk assessment undertaken by the individual school/educational establishment, and advice may be sought from Bellevue.

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. Although 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 that 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 check in addition to measures to supervise any contact. For example, a check may be appropriate where a contractors' representative (e.g. 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.

Appendix 4 gives guidance as to when such checks may be deemed appropriate but is in no way comprehensive.

(Where checks are necessary then the contractor must confirm in writing to the school/educational provider that these are in place and the nature of these checks).

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

It should be noted that not all contractors engaged by Bellevue 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.

The Safeguarding Governor should be contacted whenever specific guidance around checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or other bodies are needed.

### **Allegations**

KCSIE 2020 includes guidance on dealing with allegations against staff who are not directly employed by the school. This guidance is included in the Safeguarding Policy.

### **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 and also enable checks where necessary to be completed and in place before works start.

Where the works are being arranged through Bellevue appointed contractors, the Headteacher or Premise Manager shall determine what measures should be implemented in conjunction with Bellevue. This should be done well in advance of any works starting on site to ensure that they can be included in the building contract.

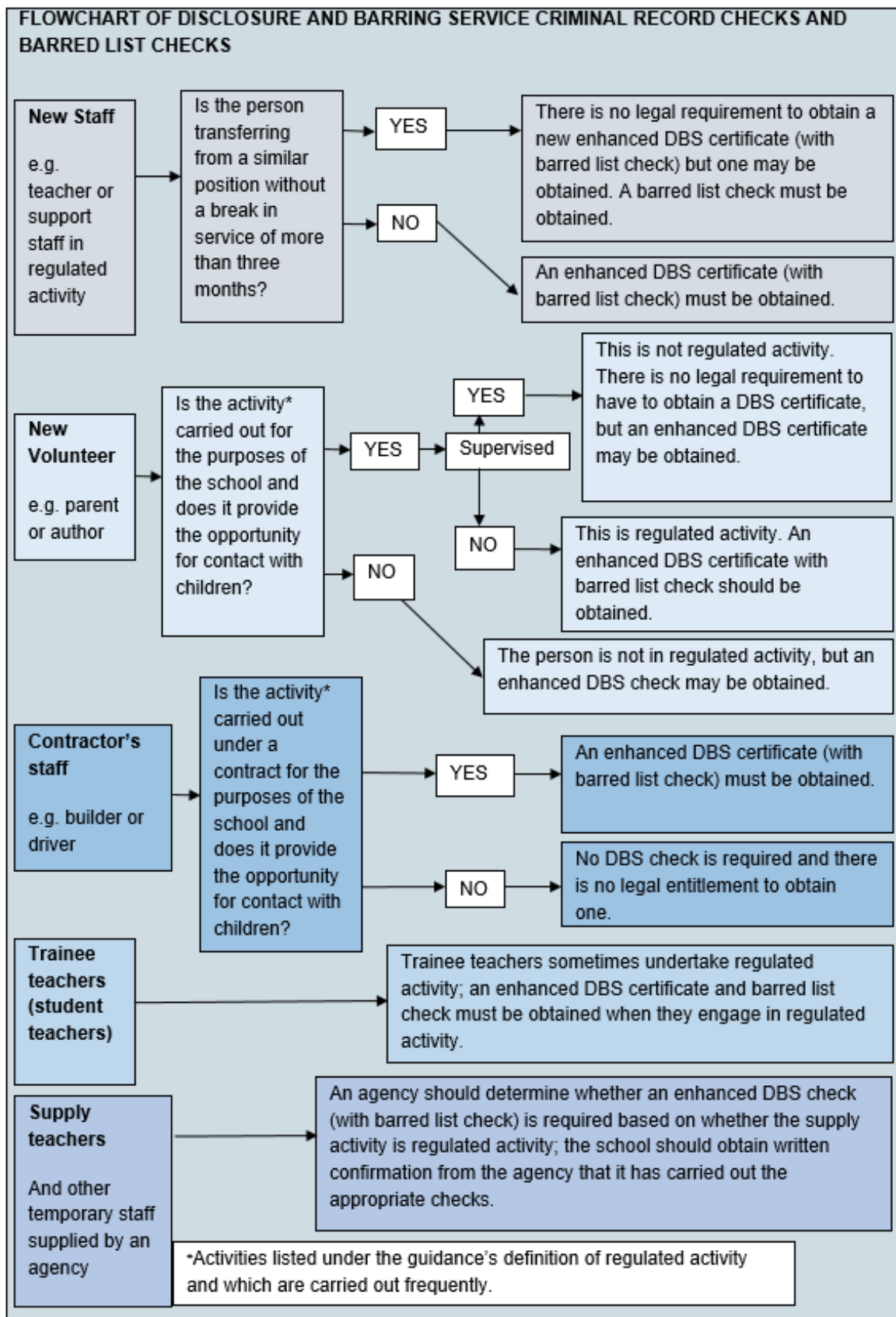
### **Summary**

Wherever any type of building related work is undertaken of any duration, safeguarding measures shall 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.

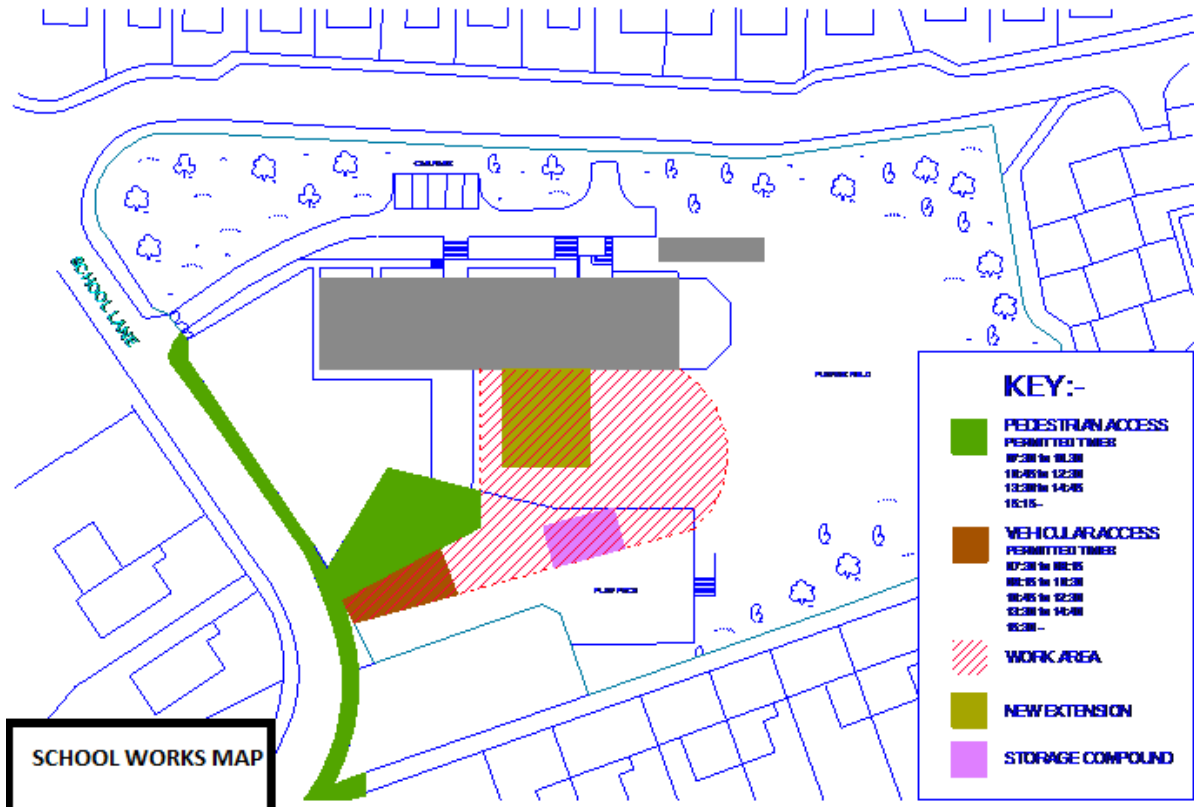
Other steps such as codes of conduct, identification and DBS checks should be considered as supplementary measures where appropriate.

APPENDIX 1

Copy extracted from 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021'



APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE SEGREGATION PLAN





**APPENDIX 3**

- a. **CONTRACTORS IN SCHOOLS**
- b. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

**CONTRACTORS IN SCHOOLS  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

Work safely and responsibly and be aware of responsibility for own actions and behaviour. Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Avoid contact with children. **Never** give your personal contact details to children or young people, including mobile telephone number

Work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.

**Never be in contact with children without school supervision**

Stay within the agreed work area and access routes

Obtain permission if you need to go outside the agreed work area or access routes.

Keep staff informed of where you are and what you are doing

Do not use profane or inappropriate language

Dress appropriately i.e. dress in a way such that:

- It is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive

Observe the code at all times

Remember your actions no matter how well intentioned could be misinterpreted. Be mindful of the need to avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations.

**APPENDIX 4**

**CHECKS ON CONTRACTORS WORKING IN BELLEVUE SCHOOLS OR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS**

CONTACT WITH PUPILS	RECOMMENDED MEASURES	HEADTEACHER /DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
<p><b>Nil</b> [e.g. works undertaken on a separate site, during out of hours or in school holiday periods]</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>
<p><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]</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>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</p>
<p><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]</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>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</p>