Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council S175/157 Safeguarding Audit 2026/2027

Information and guidance when completing the annual Safeguarding Audit

Thank you for taking the time to complete this year's section 175/157 Safeguarding audit. We ask that for schools who are part of a Multi Academy Trust or Federation, a return is made for each school with a separate DSL.

The purpose of this audit is two-fold. Firstly, all Local Authorities, under S175/157 of the 2002 Education act, requires all schools, including maintained, academies, independent or any who are registered with the Department for Education, are fulfilling their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. In essence, this directly links to the requirements within the current Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). Much of this aspect of the audit is within part one.

Secondly, the audit will be used to consider any key initiatives, priorities or areas for possible development across Oldham. This helps to identify what is working well for schools and to inform the Local Authority and wider safeguarding partners (namely those within the Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership – OSCP) where priorities should be. Therefore, we request your support to ensure that the analysis represents all schools and education settings within Oldham, as it will be presented to the Director of Education and Early Years and the Statutory Partners to provide assurances that there are adequate safeguarding arrangements and safeguarding practices in place.

The audit should be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in their absence the Deputy DSL and returned no later than **27th November 2026**. This as an excellent opportunity to undertake an annual audit of safeguarding across the setting, identifying any areas that the setting may decide to develop further to be included in wider school development or improvement plans. Involving the Safeguarding Governor or Trustee in completing this audit is appropriate as no individual children or families should be referenced. The DSL should report the completion of this audit, and any areas for development to their governing/trust board.

Please include as much detail as possible. The Safeguarding Advisor for Education (Stacey Brackenridge) will also use this evidence to promote innovative practice with other schools and settings. This audit can also be used to evidence evaluation of safeguarding practices with inspectors from Ofsted or ISI.

Once all returns have been submitted, these are analysed by the Safeguarding Advisor for Education to identify trends and adjust training where necessary. Each individual return is read, if we identify any concerns from the audit, the Safeguarding Advisor for Education will contact the school directly to discuss and offer additional support if appropriate and required. As the audit only provides an overview of the safeguarding arrangements in the schools and educational settings who complete it, a further sample will be taken to quality assure this.

Approximately, 10% of schools and educational settings in Oldham will be chosen and these visits will take place in January and February 2027.

Once analysed, the outcomes from all schools are presented to The Partnership Board at their March meeting to outline how any identified areas for development will be actioned. This plan is also shared with the Education Assurance Board and will contribute to established priorities for the partnership, including how Education is a key partner as required within Working Together 2026. The summary of the outcomes of all schools will also be shared with headteachers by the Safeguarding Advisor for Education and Director for Education and Early Years so that they are aware of how their evaluations will be used to inform policy, training and safeguarding procedures in Oldham.

This year, we will ask you to grade each of the statements using the scale below:

Standard is secure	The safeguarding standard is fully embedded in practice, consistently applied across the school, and regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Staff are confident in procedures, and evidence shows sustained compliance with policies.
Standard has been met	The safeguarding standard has been fully implemented, with policies and procedures in place and followed by staff. There may be minor areas for improvement, but overall, expectations are met.
Working towards the standard	Progress is being made toward meeting the safeguarding standard, but some gaps remain. Actions are in place to address these, and partial implementation is evident.
Attention needed to meet the standard	Significant areas require improvement to meet the safeguarding standard. Key elements may be missing, inconsistently applied, or not well understood by staff. Urgent action is needed to achieve compliance.
Standard not met	The safeguarding standard is not in place or is fundamentally inadequate. There are serious gaps in policy, practice, or staff understanding, posing potential risks. Immediate action is required.
Not applicable	This standard does not apply to the specific setting, situation, or role. No action is required.

Each statement provides a space to add notes to help you identify the next steps needed to improve or enhance safeguarding arrangements in your setting. We recommend adding any notes for statements where you answer 'working towards the standard' or below. Then these can be added to your Safeguarding Action Plan (an exemplar template is on the education section of the OSCP website) or School Improvement Plan to work on for the current academic year.

Please ensure that the audit is completed and returned no later than **27th November 2026**. Should you have any questions relating to the completion of the audit, please contact Stacey.brackenridge@oldham.gov.uk