



forum for SEND School DSLs

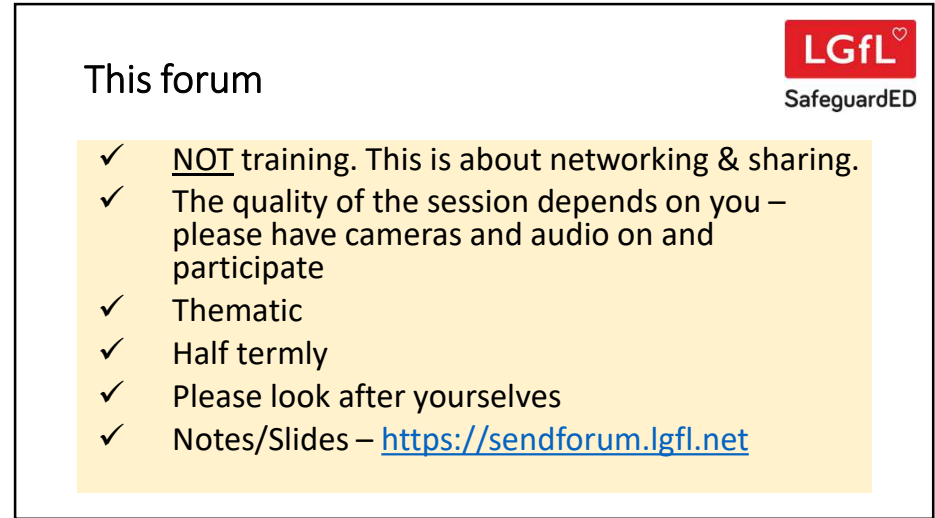
Share challenges, solutions and good practice related to safeguarding children with SEND

Topics for next year?



LGfL SafeguardED IncludED

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This forum

LGfL SafeguardED

- ✓ NOT training. This is about networking & sharing.
- ✓ The quality of the session depends on you – please have cameras and audio on and participate
- ✓ Thematic
- ✓ Half termly
- ✓ Please look after yourselves
- ✓ Notes/Slides – <https://sendforum.lgfl.net>

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SafeguardED SEND DSL Forum

Meeting each half term, this forum is for any DSL who works with SEND pupils either in specialist or mainstream education provision. It offers an opportunity for DSLs to come together, discuss challenges relating to safeguarding children with SEND, share good practice and solutions and to offer peer support.

Each meeting of the SEND DSL Forum will have a theme, so that colleagues can decide if they wish to attend or not.

And the best bit? It's completely free!

Next Forum dates:

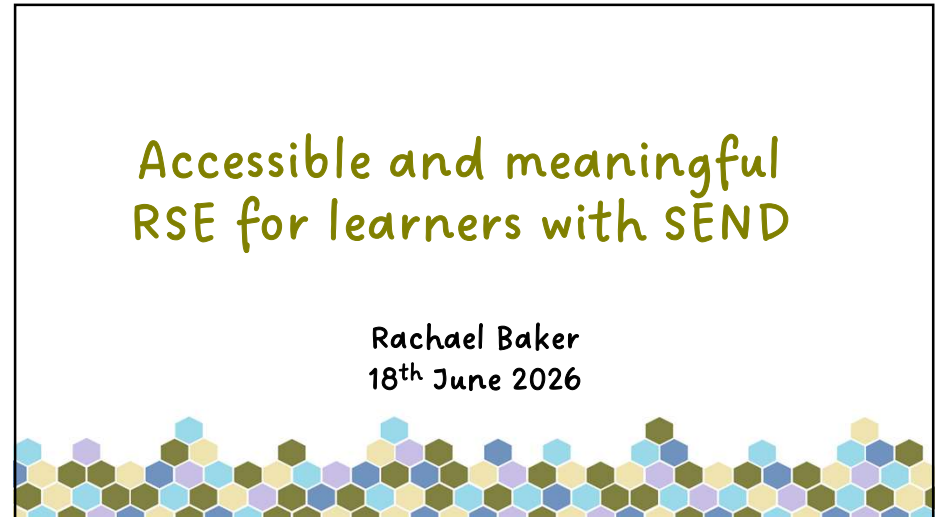
- 28th January 2026 - Preventing children with SEND from Radicalisation
- 19th March 2026 - Improving the recognition and response to neglect of children with SEND
- 13th May 2026 - TBC
- 16th June 2026 - TBC

LGfL SafeguardED IncludED

- ✓ Neglect
- ✓ Tackling extremism
- ✓ Having courageous conversations with parents
- ✓ DSL Wellbeing
- ✓ Bruising & Injuries
- ✓ Exploitation
- ✓ Bereavement
- ✓ Self Injurious Behaviour
- ✓ Sexualised Behaviour
- ✓ Personal & Intimate Care
- ✓ Online Safety
- ✓ Child on Child abuse

<https://sendforum.lgfl.net>

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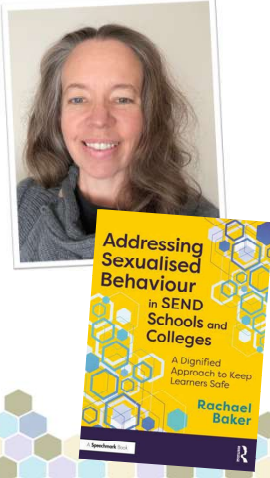
Accessible and meaningful RSE for learners with SEND

Rachael Baker
18th June 2026

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Rachael Baker

- Qualified teacher
- RSE trainer and educator since 2007
- Author of newly published *Addressing Sexualised behaviours in SEND Schools and Colleges*
- Governor of a primary school
- Offers training and support around relationships and sex education, specialising in sexualised behaviours
- Associate trainer for Bodysense Education
- Disability Consultant for Split Banana: [blog: why RSE is so important for learners with SEND](#)



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Today's session

Aims for this session

This session offers practical tips and advice to support educators to deliver quality and timely RSE to learners with SEND in mainstream and SEND schools.

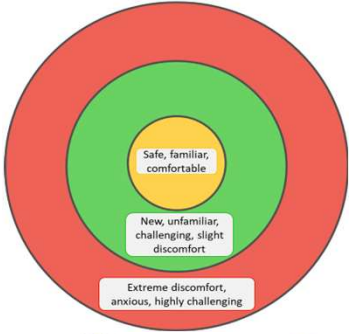
Outcomes:

- A brief update on the statutory guidance for RSE for learners with SEND
- Ways to deliver RSE to support learners to access and retain learning, including resources and methodology
- Exploring priority RSE topics at different ages and stages of development
- Tips and advice for supporting whole school commitment, including working with parents

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Working Together

- Be mindful of our different lived experiences and starting points
- Try to hear everyone's voice
- Questions, questions, questions!
- Do cascade your learning, but respect the confidentiality of the learning space
- Participate as much as you are comfortable to
- Learners at the heart
- Respect our common goal
- Try to avoid jargon. Ask for clarification if you don't understand.
- Be mindful of our different lived experiences and starting points
- No personal questions, comments or sharing please



Safe, familiar, comfortable

New, unfamiliar, challenging, slight discomfort

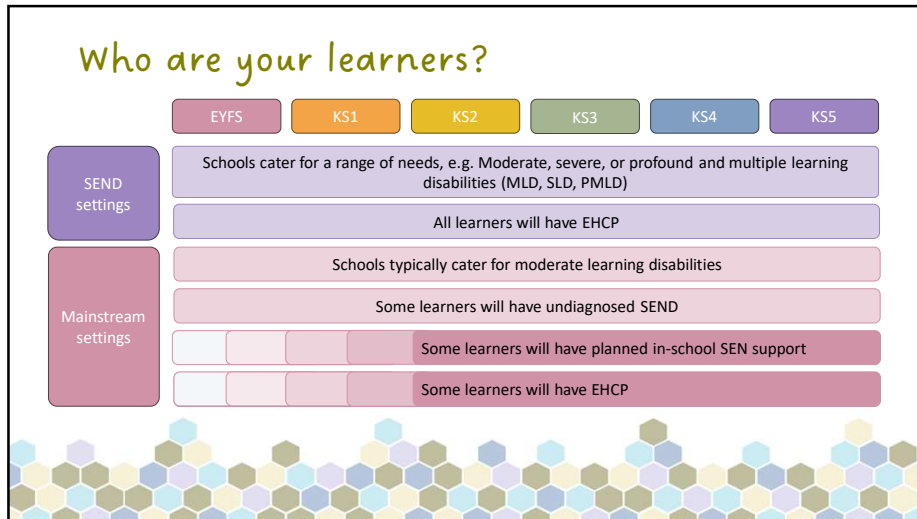
Extreme discomfort, anxious, highly challenging

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An example working together agreement

 Join in as much as you can	 Keep your hands and feet to yourself
 It's ok to laugh!	 It's fine if you don't know
 good listening Good listening skills	 PRIVATE No personal questions

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Learners with SEND may...

- be non-verbal, and communicate using symbols or equipment
- be working significantly below age-related expectations
- may find the school environment very challenging, especially sitting still or being quiet
- may be a non-reader and non-writer
- display challenging behaviour or appear disengaged or withdrawn
- have difficulties with friendships and relationships
- have physical needs as well as learning needs
- may require a sensory curriculum
- may have learning disabilities and be gifted in some areas (twice exceptional)

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Why do we teach RSE?

- Skills to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, including intimate relationships when they are old enough and ready
- Skills to recognise and report when relationships may be unhealthy or negative
- Young people who have had quality RSE tend to wait until older before having sex, first sex is more likely to be consented, and are more likely to be able to keep themselves safe when they do have sex
- Empowers learners with skills to navigate intimate relationships with confidence and autonomy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary>

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Why this work matters

Mencap sexuality and relationships easy read statement

- People with learning disabilities are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse at all stages of life, and are overrepresented in statistics for experiencing abuse and crime¹.
- Around 30% of the prisoner population has learning disabilities², compared to around 2.5% of the general population³.
- People with learning disabilities are more likely to experience loneliness and isolation⁴.
- Only 3% of people with a learning disability live as a couple, compared to 70% of the general adult population⁵.

1. <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/11/education-for-prisoners-with-learning-difficulties-and-or-disabilities/>
 2. <https://www.onis.gov.uk/>
 3. <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics/how-common-learning-disability>
 4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-loneliness-and-relationships-a-thematic-report-a-thematic-report/disability-loneliness-and-relationships-a-thematic-report>
 5. <https://www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/what-we-think/relationships-and-sex-what-we-think>

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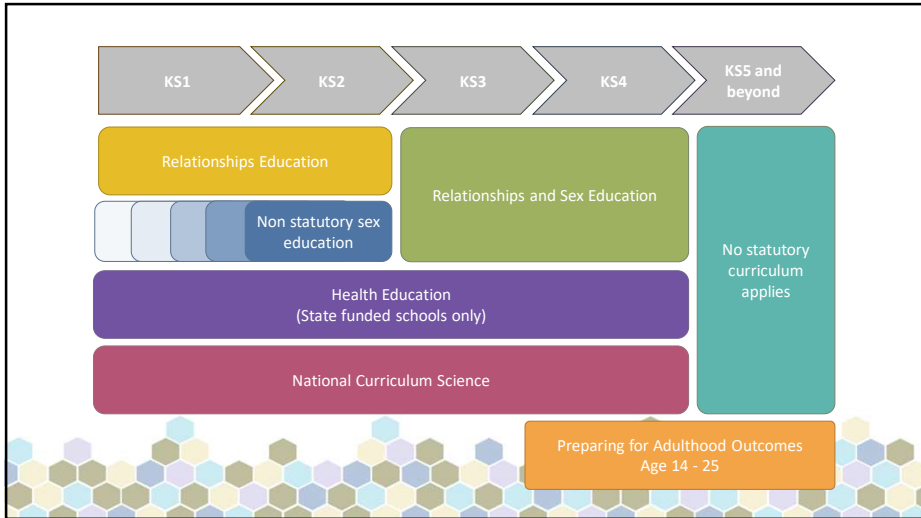
Why this work matters

Research by Brown et al (2024) found that:

- children and young people with intellectual disabilities want **education, support and information** on matters relating to their relationships and sexuality.
- There was **enthusiasm** amongst all the pupils with intellectual disabilities **to learn about RSE**, and they also wanted the opportunity to extend their learning beyond the school years.
- It was very clear that the exchange of information relating to relationships and sexuality education from the educators and between their peers was appreciated by all. Whilst different modes of learning took place, **classroom-based practical learning with teachers was the perceived preference amongst the pupils.**

Learning for life, friendships and relationships from the perspective of children and young people with intellectual disabilities
BMC September 2024

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Do parents have the right to withdraw their child from RSE?

Statutory guidance paragraphs 16 - 23

- Parents have the right to request to withdraw their child from sex education only.
- No right to withdraw from relationships, health education or national curriculum science.
- In primary, requests to withdraw from sex education should be automatically granted. In secondary, Head teachers can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances e.g. safeguarding concerns

“Before granting any request for withdrawal of a child from sex education, it is good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents, and the child if appropriate, to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum”

“From three terms before the pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. ... Schools should ensure that pupils know they have this option.”

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Specific considerations for learners with SEND

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

75. Teaching should be developed to ensure these subjects are accessible for pupils with SEND and prepare pupils for adulthood,¹⁴ as set out in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. This applies to both mainstream and special schools.

76. Schools should be aware that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, bullying and other issues. RSHE can be particularly important for these pupils, particularly those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.

- ✓ Accessible for pupils with SEND
- ✓ Link to preparing for adulthood outcomes and SEND code of practice
- ✓ Acknowledges increased vulnerability of learners with SEND to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, bullying and other issues.
- ✓ Identifies the importance of RSE for learners with SEND, and particularly those with SEMH needs and learning disabilities

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Age-appropriate

- RSE must be accessible for all learners, including learners with SEND
- Learners are entitled to the full extent of the RSE curriculum
- Teaching should be differentiated and personalised to enable learners to access
- Teaching needs to be developmentally appropriate and tailored to the learner's learning needs
- Content must be age appropriate to the learner's chronological age

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Relationships education in primary



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Relationships education in secondary



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Guiding principles

Schools should develop a curriculum with the following key principles in mind:

- Engagement with pupils.** An inclusive and well-sequenced RSHE curriculum should be informed by meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.
- Engagement and transparency with parents.** Schools should engage with parents on the content of RSHE and be transparent with parents about all materials used in RSHE. All materials should be available to parents, as described in the section on openness with parents on page 33. Parents have a right to request that their children are withdrawn from sex education (pupils can opt back in from three terms before they turn 16) and schools should ensure parents are aware of sex education content within lessons in advance.
- Positivity.** Schools should focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health. Schools should avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people – for example gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys.

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Guiding principles

d. **Careful sequencing.** Schools should cover all statutory topics, recognising that young people can start developing healthy behaviour and relationship skills as soon as they start school. Schools should sequence teaching so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms.

e. **Relevant and responsive.** Schools should develop the curriculum to be relevant, age and stage appropriate and accessible to pupils in their area, where appropriate working with local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues and ensure needs are met.

f. **Skilled delivery of participative education.** The curriculum should be delivered by school staff or, where schools choose to use them, external providers who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create a safe and supportive environment and to facilitate participative and interactive education which aims to support and not to alarm pupils. Staff should be trained in safeguarding and offering support, recognising the increased possibility of disclosures.

g. **Whole school approach.** The curriculum is best delivered as part of a whole school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships, supported by other school policies, including behaviour and safeguarding policies.

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Preparing for Adulthood

Relationships with colleagues, customers etc, understanding of what is expected in different settings, responsibility

Living alone or in shared space, responsibilities and rights, people who help you live independently

Being part of the community, active participation, belonging

Positive health outcomes, taking responsibility for own health, making good choices

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Priorities for RSE for learners with SEND

In small groups, brainstorm the key topics that you feel your learners need.

Think about the skills they will need to be prepared for the most independent, happy and healthy adulthood possible.

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What are the top 3 RSE topics for your learners?

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Adapting and differentiating

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Worked examples - NOT exhaustive!

- Concepts of pornography and explicit content
- Adults may choose to share photos of private activities if the both want to.
- We do not look at pictures of people doing private activities
- No photos or cameras allowed in changing rooms and bathrooms
- Basics of public and private

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Worked examples - NOT exhaustive!

- Consent to look at explicit images
- Finding explicit images online
- No cameras in private spaces
- Reporting
- Complexities of consent to share explicit images
- Making choices to share images
- Public and private
- Consent to touch
- Consent to sex
- Digital ethics
- Consent to specific sexual activities

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Worked examples - NOT exhaustive!

- Basics of public and private
- Privacy for private activities e.g. personal care
- Consent to specific sexual activities
- Basics of consent and touch
- We don't watch people doing private activities
- Explicit images
- Pornography
- Masturbation

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What do our learners need to learn?

Primary

Secondary

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Where do we start?

- My body – what body parts do I have?
- Which body parts are private?
- Good touches and bad touches
- Who is allowed to touch or look at my private body parts?
- When, where, how, why are they allowed to touch?
- Understanding public and private, and which activities are allowed where
- Consent – being asked for my opinion, and having my opinion heard and respected
- Seeking consent of others, understanding the rules about touch and consent, and respecting others' no
- Moderating behaviour if I cannot have what I want e.g. due to location or other person not consenting
- What can I share and look at online?

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Ladders for tricky topics

In small groups...

- Create a simple 4 or 5 step ladder for your topic
- At the top, put the aspirational learning that you hope to achieve
- At the bottom, put the most simple starting point for the topic
- Work out some of the incremental steps between those two extremes

Pornography

Contraception

Puberty

Fancying people

Online safety

Sex

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For your topic, come up with 5 incremental steps on a learning ladder

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<p>What is Change?</p> <p>Puberty Basic Body parts, private body parts, changes to the body parts, emotional changes, changes to own body, changes to the body of others, full understanding of puberty</p> <p>1 not sharing passwords and names and addresses 2 it may be ok to share pics of yours if fully clothed with family members and family friends if you have given consent 3 legalities of sharing images</p> <p>1)What is change 2)How time and seasons cause change 3) Animal life cycles 4) humans life cycles 5) what is sex?</p> <p>1 clear knowledge of body parts 2. Understanding the changes to your body, both physically and emotionally. 3 deeper understanding of the physical differences between male and females in puberty</p> <p>1=don't share private information online 2= only share images with clothes on 3= consent agree to share images age guidance 4= law and sharing, making images</p> <p>top of ladder online safety the law and the trouble you could get into for sharing / viewing images / videos sharing and accessing adult images sharing and accessing general pictures private info</p>	<p>1. Adults model public/private and consent 2. CYP identify public and private spaces 3. activities 4. safe and unsafe touch 5. Safe and unsafe touch in different contexts (will vary depending on needs of learner)</p> <p>1- body parts- using correct names 2- human life cycle 3- puberty</p> <p>1. Present while adults model safe touch e.g. doing personal care in a private space. 2. Accept appropriate touch e.g. in personal care routines 3. Demonstrate a response to touch they don't like</p> <p>games to explore change - looking at changes over time - linking changes over time to animal life cycles - looking at driving factors behind change - linking that to need for sexual reproduction</p> <p>1 language, 2 basic changes 3 differences of gender 4 emotional side 5 full understanding of changes</p> <p>5- knowing what to do when menstruating 4 - applying pads to underwear 3 adding red dye to pads 2 - touching, opening and sticking pads in underwear 1- exposure and exploration of sanitary products</p>
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Top tips for differentiating



- Start **simple** and climb the ladder
- Think **skills** over facts – the same skill can be taught through simpler models for learners who need it
- Assess **empathy** as a core skill for RSE
- Skill development requires opportunity to **practise** – repetition is key
- Blooms taxonomy – a ladder for **thinking skills**
- Hingepoint questions for assessment for learning
- Secret missions for more able learners



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Where next?



- Training for teachers and professionals including full days and programmes, short sessions and twilights
- Support around learners displaying problematic sexualised behaviour
- Consultation – RSE policy, SB strategy, wellbeing approaches, curriculum
- Direct work with learners

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20% Discount with Code 26AFLY2

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Next Year - Your Views




<https://forms.gle/wdc35vQK22MY1gce7>

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Next Session



for SEND School DSLs

1st October 2026

Share challenges, solutions and good practice related to safeguarding children with SEND



<https://sendforum> / <https://safetraining.lgfl.net>

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Keep in touch

Social Media: @lgflsafeguarded
Newsletter: safenewsletter.lgfl.net
Main portal: safeguarding.lgfl.net
SEND Forum site: sendforum.lgfl.net
IncludED site: included.lgfl.net
Resources: saferesources.lgfl.net
Training: safetraining.lgfl.net
Email: safeguarding@lgfl.net



SafeguardED



AIP in symbols for pupils with SEND (updated for Sept 2023)



Josh & Sue animation for pupils with learning difficulties on staying safe online



Poster: Neglect and disabled children



STAR SEND Toolkit



Anti-Bullying Alliance SEN & Disability



Know it All for SEND



Supporting children with SEND when taking online



Online Safety Guidance for Adults and Young People with Learning Disabilities



Relationships, the internet and you booklet for 11-16s with SEND

<https://sendsafe.lgfl.net>