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EARLY YEARS TEAM

The EYFS Statutory Welfare Requirements Changes – September 2025

Guidance for Early Years Practitioners and Leaders

From 1 September 2025, updates to the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** came into force. These changes primarily affect the *safeguarding and welfare requirements*, and are designed to strengthen safe practice, clarify professional responsibilities, and support the wellbeing of all children in early years settings.

This blog outlines the key changes, their rationale, and practical next steps to support you and your setting with implementation.



Summary of Key Changes

1. Strengthened Safer Recruitment Procedures

- All providers are required to obtain **professional references** before employing any individual to work with children.
- Safeguarding policies must now include explicit details on **recruitment practices**, ensuring that only suitable persons are employed.
- **Childminders who employ assistants** must have a written safer recruitment policy in place.

2. Absence Monitoring and Emergency Contact Requirements

- Providers must ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of a child being **absent without explanation**, particularly for extended periods.

- All children must have **more than one emergency contact** on file, to ensure support in the event that parents or carers cannot be reached.

3. Nutrition, Mealtime Supervision and Safe Eating Practices

- Revised wording in the framework places a stronger emphasis on **supervised mealtimes**, the safe management of **allergies**, and **minimising choking risks**.
- A new **non-statutory nutrition guide** has been published by the Department for Education. Providers are expected to follow this guidance unless there is a clear rationale not to.

4. Safeguarding Training and the Introduction of Annex C

- The framework introduces **Annex C**, which outlines in detail the **required content for safeguarding training**.
- Providers must ensure all staff access regular safeguarding training and are supported to implement learning in daily practice.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) may be subject to additional expectations regarding training and leadership responsibilities.

5. Paediatric First Aid (PFA) Requirements for Students

- Trainee practitioners will now be required to hold **valid PFA certification** in order to be included in staff-to-child ratios at the level below their qualification status.

6. Intimate Care and Respecting Children's Privacy

- Updated language reinforces the importance of respecting children's **dignity and privacy** during toileting and nappy changing, while maintaining appropriate supervision and safeguarding oversight.

7. Mandatory Whistleblowing Policy

- All providers must implement a **written whistleblowing policy**, outlining clear procedures for reporting concerns and the protections available for whistleblowers.

8. Experience-Based Route (EBR) for Staffing Ratios

- The introduction of a new **Experience-Based Route (EBR)** allows experienced practitioners (without formal qualifications) to count at **Level 3** in staffing ratios, subject to specific criteria.
- Staff-to-child ratio regulations have been updated to reflect this new pathway.



Why These Changes Matter

The Department for Education has introduced these updates to:

- Strengthen **safeguarding and welfare** practice across all early years settings.
- Provide clearer guidance and expectations around key areas of risk (e.g. safer recruitment, absence, choking, intimate care).
- Support a **broader and more flexible workforce**, especially through the new Experience-Based Route.
- Align statutory guidance with **current best practice**, sector feedback, and research on child development, health, and protection.