



## Ensuring Safety of School Children

**For Prelims:** [Supreme Court](#), [Guidelines on School Safety and Security 2021](#), [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#), [Right to Education \(RTE\) Act, 2009](#), [NISHTHA Program](#), [National Education Policy \(NEP\), 2020](#), [SDG 16](#), [E-Baalnidaan](#), [POCSO e-Box](#)

**For Mains:** Role of NCPCR in implementing guidelines on school safety and security 2021

**Source:** [HT](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) directed the implementation of the Centre's 2021 [Guidelines on School Safety and Security](#) in schools, following the sexual assault of two schoolgirls in Badlapur, Maharashtra.

- It also asked the [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#) to monitor the implementation of the guideline.

### What are Guidelines on School Safety and Security 2021?

- **About:** The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** has framed the guidelines to ensure **school management** is held **accountable** for the safety of children in schools.
  - It address critical issues including **security measures, staff responsibilities, and procedures** to prevent incidents of harm or abuse.
  - It is applicable to **all schools, including private schools**.
- **Purpose of the Guidelines:**
  - **Co-creation of a Safe School Environment:** Foster a **collaborative approach** among all stakeholders i.e., **students, parents, teachers, and school management** to create a safe and secure school environment.
  - **Awareness of Existing Acts, Policies, and Guidelines:** Making all stakeholders aware of the various **laws, policies, procedures, and guidelines** related to different aspects of child safety. E.g., [Juvenile Justice Model Rules, 2016](#), [Right to Education \(RTE\) Act, 2009](#) etc.
  - **Zero Tolerance Policy:** Enforce a "**Zero Tolerance Policy**" against any form of **negligence or misconduct** and the perpetrator must face strict consequences.
- **Three-pronged approach:**
  - **Accountability for Child Safety:** In **government and government-aided schools**, the **head of the school, teachers, and education administration** are held accountable for child safety.
    - In **private and unaided schools**, the responsibility lies with the **school management, principal, and teachers**.
  - **Whole School Approach:** The guidelines adopt a "**whole school approach**" by incorporating safety and security aspects into education itself.
    - This includes focusing on **health, physical, socio-emotional, psycho-social,**

**and cognitive aspects** of child safety, ensuring a holistic view of student well-being.

- **Multi-Sectoral Concerns:** It integrates inputs and recommendations from **various ministries and departments** beyond the education sector. E.g., **health and hygiene protocols** by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

▪ **Key Features:**

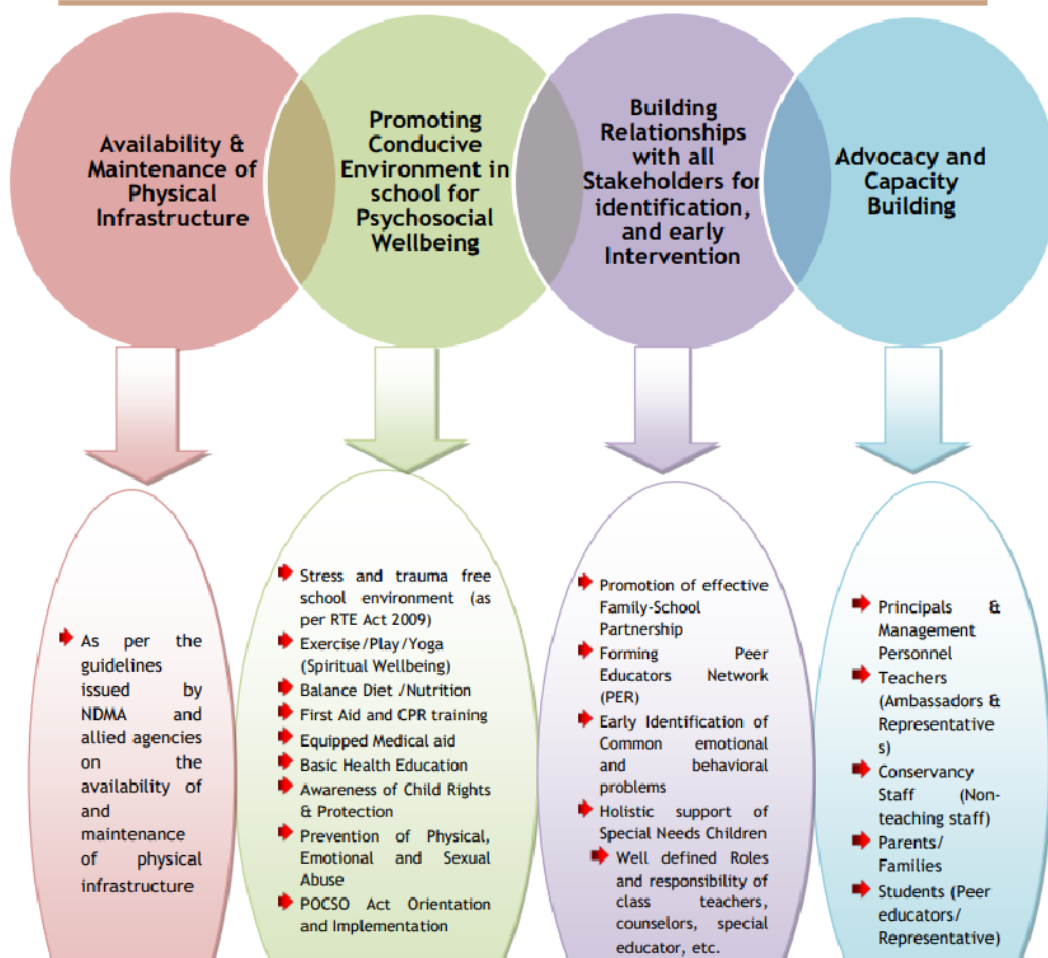
- **Teacher and Stakeholder Capacity Building:** It stresses the urgency of **sensitising, orienting, and building the capacity** of teachers, school heads, parents, and students to better manage safety protocols.
  - E.g., the [NISHTHA program](#) for elementary school teachers includes a special module on the educational response to [Covid-19](#).
- **Cybersecurity and Online Education:** It emphasises the importance of [cybersecurity](#) and **online safety** for children and teachers to adopt strong digital safety measures.
- **Compliance with Disaster Management and Safety Policies:** It aligns with the [National Disaster Management Guidelines on School Safety Policy, 2016](#) regarding **physical infrastructure and disaster preparedness**.
  - It also complies with the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) guidelines** for residential schools.
- **Aligned with National Education Policy (NEP), 2020:** The [NEP, 2020](#) mandates the formation of a **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)** to ensure all schools maintain certain professional and quality standards.
  - The policy lays down the safety of students, particularly **girl children**, in residential hostels as a priority.
- **Complies with International Conventions:** The **Convention on the Rights of the Child** obligates nations to ensure that children are protected from **all forms of violence**.
- **Fulfilment of SDGs:** **SDG 4** ensures **inclusive and quality education** for all and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence'.
  - **SDG 16** addresses **violence against children** and promotes **peaceful and inclusive societies** by reducing violence and ending exploitation, trafficking, and abuse of children.

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## WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

### EXAMPLE - FOR SAFETY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING



### Best Practices:

- Nagaland has introduced a **9-month Diploma course in School Counselling** and has been designed and introduced from 2018 with the primary objective **to train teachers** in theory and practice of **School Counselling**.
- It **equips** educators and professionals with the necessary **skills and knowledge** to provide effective **counselling support** to students to enhance the **emotional and psychological well-being** of students.

### NGOS Working for Children Welfare

- Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA):** It is India's **largest anti-trafficking and anti-slavery grassroots movement**. It was founded by **Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi in 1980** with a vision to protect and prevent children from all forms of exploitation.
- CRY (Child Rights and you):** They provide access to **free and quality education**, primary healthcare and **prevent violence, abuse, and exploitation** of children.
- Pratham:** Pratham is an **innovative learning organisation** created to improve the quality of education in India.
- Nanhi Kali:** It provides 360-degree support to **underprivileged girls from Class 1-10**, with the objective of enabling them to complete their schooling with dignity.

## What is the Role of NCPCR in Ensuring Child Safety?

- **Monitoring Responsibility: NCPCR and SCPCRs (State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights)** are responsible for **monitoring the implementation** of the legal aspects of the guidelines related to **school safety and security**.
- **E-Baal Nidan:** NCPCR has a dedicated **Online Complaint System, "E-Baal Nidan"**, to ensure **timely redressal** of complaints of various violations and deprivation of child rights.
- **POCSO e-Box:** NCPCR has launched the **POCSO e-Box** for **easy and direct reporting** of sexual offences against children as well as timely action against the offenders under the **POCSO Act, 2012**.
- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:** Section 31 and Section 32 of **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009** assigns the NCPCR and SCPCRs the task of overseeing the **implementation of the RTE Act, 2009** including ensuring children's right to free and compulsory education.
- **Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005:** Section 13(1) of **CPCR Act, 2005** entrusts the NCPCR and SCPCR to **inquire into complaints of child rights violations**, monitor the implementation of child protection laws etc.
  - NCPCR and SCPCR can take **suo-moto notice** of matter relating to **deprivation and violation** of child rights.
- **Juvenile Justice Act, 2015: Section 109** of the **Juvenile Justice Act, 2015** tasks the commissions with **monitoring the implementation** of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 for children safety.

## Provisions of the Constitution for the Protection and Safety of Children

Provision	Rights
Article 14	Fundamental right to equality and equal protection of the law
Article 15 (3)	Fundamental right to special provisions
Article 21	Fundamental right to life and personal liberty
Article 21 A	Right to free and compulsory elementary education for all children aged 6-14
Articles 23 and 24	Fundamental right against exploitation
Article 39 (e)	Right to health and freedom from abuse due to economic necessity
Article 39 (f)	Right to development with dignity and guaranteed protection of childhood and youth against exploitation and moral and material abandonment
Article 46	Right of weaker sections to special educational care and protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation
Article 47	Right to nutrition, standard of living, and improved public health
Article 51A (k)	Duty of parents or guardians to provide opportunities for education

## Way Forward

- **Strict Compliance with NCPCR Guidelines:** Schools must strictly adhere to the **NCPCR's Manual on Safety and Security of Children in Schools**, identifying gaps in their safety protocols, and addressing them.
- **Safety Planning:** Each school should include a **School Safety and Security Plan** as a major component of their **School Development Plan (SDP)**.
- **In-Service Teacher Training:** Teachers should be sensitised to various safety issues, including

the Prevention of Child Sexual Offences (**POCSO Act, 2012**), and their responsibilities for reporting offences.

- Schools must report any offences or suspicions related to child sexual abuse as per **Section 19** of the **POCSO Act, 2012**.
- **Anti-Bullying Committee:** Schools should establish **Anti-Bullying Committees** implement a **bullying (ragging) prevention program** and regularly discuss its effectiveness.
- **School Safety Week:** Schools should celebrate **School Safety Week** at the beginning of every academic session to review all safety arrangements.

**Drishti Mains Question:**

Discuss the measures needed for ensuring the safety and security of children in schools. What is the role of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in implementing this?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### **Mains**

**Q.** Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation. **(2016)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/ensuring-safety-of-school-children>

