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RESOURCE PACK

**SAFEGUARDING AGAINST  
CHILD EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**



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## WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?



## INTRODUCTION

As someone who works with or around children, having strict safeguarding policies and procedures in place should be one of your top priorities. Anybody who works in an education setting has a duty to protect the welfare of children who attend. This applies to governors, headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), teachers, teaching assistants, dinner staff, and anyone else who spends time with children.

It's widely accepted that, because those who work in education have daily contact with students, they are well-placed to identify and recognise when there's a potential issue. Because of this, it's crucial that you understand your responsibilities and the role you play in safeguarding.

The term 'safeguarding' is used to define actions taken to protect vulnerable groups from harm. This harm might come from adults or other children.

Legally, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. Therefore, safeguarding children is about protecting all those under 18 from harm.

When safeguarding a child, you:

- Protect them from abuse, maltreatment, and exploitation.
- Prevent anything from harming their health or development.
- Ensure they can grow up under safe and effective care.
- Take action to ensure they have the best outcomes in life.

Part of the safeguarding process is identifying and protecting children suffering from, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. Sadly, many children who suffer from abuse are too scared to speak out or may perceive their mistreatment as 'normal' – this is why it's so important that you know the signs of abuse or neglect.

## WHY IS SAFEGUARDING IMPORTANT?

Working with children is very rewarding, but it comes with many responsibilities. Everyone has a right to live their lives free from fear, abuse, and neglect – as a result, one of your responsibilities is to protect children's safety and basic human rights.

Poor safeguarding or a lack of safeguarding within your school or college can have serious consequences and leave children open to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

It could also cause:

- An increase in the cases or severity of abuse and neglect if they go unnoticed.
- Children being treated with a lack of compassion or empathy.
- Increased confusion and distress for individuals who are suffering but do not know who to talk to. This could adversely impact their behaviour, so you might notice more 'outbursts' of challenging behaviour.
- Consequences for children later in life - sufferers of prolonged abuse or neglect might turn to alcohol or drugs, drop out of school, commit crimes, and have fewer job opportunities.

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# SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES IN SCHOOLS



## INTRODUCTION

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 sets out a requirement for schools – including nurseries and the early years sector, and further education providers – to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Furthermore, the educational standards board, Ofsted, places safeguarding at the centre of any inspection.

In schools, you must create an environment where children feel safe to learn, play, and grow. Children should feel comfortable in their surroundings and know that they can approach you with any problems. You must be able to identify any children who are at risk of harm, and know the characteristics of abuse or neglect. If you suspect or confirm harm, then it's essential you know what actions to take.

Statutory safeguarding guidance for schools is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), which all staff in education settings should be aware of. It's especially important to keep this awareness up to date, as KCSIE regularly receives amendments with new and enhanced guidance and advice.

## TEACHER SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

If you're a teacher, you need to be aware of particular safeguarding issues. You should understand the following:

- **Preventing Radicalisation.** In 2006, the government introduced Prevent – a strategy to help prevent terrorism and radicalisation. As part of this, you have a duty to recognise when somebody is vulnerable and at risk of radicalisation and targeting from extremist groups.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).** This is a form of sexual abuse that occurs when an individual or group coerces, manipulates, or deceives a child or young person (under 18) into sexual activity.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).** This is a form of abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes (e.g. transporting drugs across the country, also known as 'county lines'). They may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Children and young people may become involved in gangs for a number of reasons. They may have been groomed by the gang members or peer pressured into joining it, been promised financial rewards by the gang, want others to respect them – thus gaining status and power – or they may simply feel like they have no other option, such as if they've been excluded from school.
- **Grooming.** This is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, exploitation, or criminal activity. Grooming can happen online or in the real world. The perpetrator can be a stranger or someone the child knows, and can be any age and gender.
- **Forced Marriage.** This is a marriage in which one, or both, people don't consent to the marriage. It's a criminal offence and a serious abuse of human rights. Forced marriages could be decided in advance, years before the child is old enough to marry.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).** FGM is a traumatic procedure where the external part of the female genitals are surgically removed. It's usually performed by someone who isn't medically trained and doesn't have a professional or sterilised blade. The procedure is often carried out in the first weeks of life, in mid-childhood (usually between the ages of eight and ten), or before puberty. FGM has no medical purpose, so it subjects young women to physical and psychological trauma for no reason. It is an illegal practice in the UK.
- **Bullying.** Bullying can happen anywhere at any time, such as directly in the classroom or anonymously online. It can have damaging effects on a child's confidence and, frighteningly, has even pushed children to suicide. Bullying becomes a child protection issue where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm'.
- **Self-Harm and Self-Neglect.** These are distinct signs that something's wrong in a young person's life – for example, they may suffer from another type of abuse, or depression. The reasons for this are individualistic and you must tailor your response to the student in question.
- **Peer-on-Peer Abuse.** Students are capable of abusing their peers, even at a young age. This can take many forms, such as acts of violence or sexual assault. If this causes significant harm, or a risk of harm, you must take steps to deal with it.

It's a requirement for all teachers to take safeguarding training. This is so that they know more about the subject, how to recognise when a child is at risk, and how to deal with concerns.

## GOVERNOR SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with safeguarding duties. As a result, there are a number of issues that you must be aware of if you are a governor:

- **Safer Recruitment of Staff.** You must ask anyone you hire to provide a Disclosure Barring Service Check (DBS) to ensure they're safe to work with children. This is the minimum requirement, but many schools ask teachers for a new check every three to five years. All staff must undergo safeguarding training during their induction.
- **Continued Safeguarding.** Staff should regularly renew their safeguarding training, especially if statutory guidance changes as it often does. The standard renewal period for staff training is every three years.
- **School Security.** You must have thorough security procedures and systems. This includes gates and railings to prevent strangers from entering the grounds, CCTV where appropriate, and policies for child collection. For example, if another family member is coming, use a secret word that only you and the family member know. You must also implement thorough security checks on your computer systems. These should prevent anybody from accessing your systems and confidential information, and stop dangerous people from potentially contacting your students.
- **Monitoring Attendance.** You must track students' attendance and take action if they miss a lot of school time. In addition, you should regularly communicate with local authorities about 'students missing from education'. These are students who are at school age but are not registered at a school and don't receive suitable education by other means. As a result, they're at significant risk of underachieving and being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation.

## DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD RESPONSIBILITIES

A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – previously known as a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) – coordinates and oversees safeguarding procedures and policies, as well as acting as a first point of contact for anyone with concerns, and ensuring that staff have received appropriate training.

If you're a DSL, you need to fulfil some essential responsibilities:

- Draw up and enforce the safeguarding policy. You can find a template of a safeguarding policy available for free from High Speed Training [here](#).
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date with the most recent statutory guidance, and that everyone who has safeguarding duties is familiar with any updates.
- Recognise issues, and be aware of any children with specific safeguarding needs or specific vulnerabilities.
- Keep detailed, accurate, and secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Be available for all staff to discuss any safeguarding issues or concerns. Ensure that all staff are aware of your (and your deputy's) contact details.
- Ensure that adequate reporting and recording systems are in place for safeguarding procedures, and that there are appropriate transferral procedures for records if students move.
- Make referrals to social services or other appropriate agencies (where appropriate).
- Work with families/primary caregivers: communicating the school's policies and procedures to them, as well as any concerns or referrals where appropriate.
- Ensure your own training is up to date, as well as that of other staff.
- Comply with any Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) requirements.
- Ensure your organisation has sufficient safer recruitment procedures.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it covers the main responsibilities that may be included in a DSL's job description, and that you'll be expected to fulfil if you're looking to become a DSL.

## DO I NEED TRAINING TO BECOME A DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD?

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in an organisation will be someone with the necessary knowledge, experience, and training to fulfil their role. This means that you will need to have some prior experience with safeguarding to advance to a DSL level. Overseeing safeguarding is a crucial responsibility, so being suitably prepared is a necessary step to becoming a DSL.

As the NSPCC states, the DSL must be trained in:

- The law and guidance on safeguarding.
- Types of abuse and the signs and indicators to look for.
- How to build a safe culture so that people are safe and willing to share concerns.
- Barriers to disclosure and recognition of safeguarding issues.
- Safer recruitment.
- Listening to and supporting those who have concerns.

This means that a DSL needs a [Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Lead](#) qualification.

Training must be refreshed regularly (every two years) in line with any updates or changes to guidance. DSLs are generally recommended to receive accredited, enhanced training each year as required to keep their knowledge up to date. This is especially important as the Department for Education often update their guidance, i.e. Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

## **SAFEGUARDING LAWS AND GUIDANCE THAT DSLS SHOULD BE AWARE OF**

You must have an awareness of the following:

- **The Children Act 1989**, which allocates the responsibility of care to local authorities, courts, other agencies, and families to keep children safe. It introduced the concept of child-centred work and promoted the upbringing of children by their families, if possible. It also established the concepts of 'children in need' and 'children at risk of significant harm'.
- **The Children Act 2004**, which is an amendment to the Children Act 1989 following the Victoria Climbié inquiry. The law was updated to include key recommendations as a result of the inquiry. This included making it a requirement that all those who work with children must know how to safeguard them.
- The Education Act 2002, which outlines the duties and responsibilities for schools in regards to teachers, teaching methods, and the curriculum.
- **Every Child Matters 2004**, which is a government guidance document that introduces the 'five key outcomes' for all children in the UK, which should be reflected in all child protection policies. The five key outcomes are: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and economic wellbeing. While the content is still relevant, more recent guidance has been published.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children** – A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children.

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY TEMPLATE**

A safeguarding children policy is essential for showing compliance with safeguarding law and for giving staff guidance on the school's expectations. It also acts as a trust signal for parents, carers, and guardians of children. They'll appreciate a thorough breakdown of everything the school does to keep children safe.

This policy needs to be comprehensive and can therefore be time-consuming to produce. That's why we've worked together with a designated safeguarding lead to create a safeguarding policy template. You can use it in almost any school and adapt certain sections to your specific safeguarding measures where needed.

You can download our Safeguarding Policy Template for free [here](#).

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## SIGNS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT



## SIGNS OF CHILD NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs. There are four main forms of child neglect: emotional, medical, educational, and physical. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse.

Children who are being neglected may not get the love they need, and may not have adequate clothing, support, supervision, nourishment, and medical or health care. They may also suffer from other forms of abuse and may not be protected from physical and/or emotional harm.

The following physical signs may indicate that a child is being neglected:

- Appearing hungry, as though they may have gone without breakfast.
- Turning up to school without lunch or money for food.
- Repeated injuries caused by lack of supervision.
- Skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies, or ringworm.
- A thin or swollen tummy.
- Having poor hygiene, being visibly dirty, or smelling.
- Being without adequate clothing.
- Being tired.
- Having poor language or communication skills.
- Being anaemic.
- Not meeting developmental milestones.
- Appearing to care for family members.
- Being unsupervised.
- Living in an unsuitable home environment.

## SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

Physical abuse is hurting a child through physical, violent, and aggressive means and is never accidental - for example, hitting, burning, or poisoning. Parents and carers who abuse a child may do so because of emotional or behavioural problems, having experienced abuse themselves, health issues, stress, and/or not understanding the needs of a child.

Furthermore, some new parents struggle to adapt and to understand the needs of the child. For example, they may see the child crying as an attempt to annoy them and they might become frustrated.

Some signs of physical abuse include:

- Bruises.
- Swelling.
- Scarring.
- Burns or scalds.
- Broken bones.
- Fractures.
- Bite marks.

Children who have been poisoned may experience symptoms such as drowsiness, seizures, and vomiting. Parents who abuse babies can cause non-accidental head injuries if they shake or hit them. Some parents may tell a child they are ill and give them medication which can make them ill or lead to death.

## SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

Emotional or psychological abuse is the sustained maltreatment or neglect of the emotional needs of a child.

Signs of emotional abuse may include:

- Younger children being overly affectionate or clingy towards strangers.
- Lacking confidence and being anxious.
- Struggling to control emotions.
- Lacking social skills.
- Having few friendships.
- Appearing to have a negative relationship with parent or carer.
- Seeming isolated from their parent or carer.
- Being aggressive and cruel to other children and towards animals.
- Using language inappropriate for their age.

Emotional abuse happens for a number of reasons. Parents may experience financial, material, psychological, and/or emotional distress and without help, this distress can often manifest as abuse.

Emotional abuse of children tends to form into two categories, passive and active.

**Passive emotional abuse** is more subtle than active. This is when a parent or carer refuses to provide their child with the kind of emotional care they need. It may involve emotional unavailability, bad attitudes towards the child, a failure to recognise that they must support the child, using the child as a support mechanism for themselves, involving the child in tasks that they are not emotionally ready for, and a failure to encourage social engagement with peers.

**Active emotional abuse** involves taking anger and frustration out on a child, expecting a child to meet the emotional needs of an adult, limiting opportunities for the child, expecting the child to take on responsibilities not appropriate for their age, being emotionally unavailable, and forgetting to provide the child with praise.

A perpetrator of emotional abuse may:

- Ignore their victim.
- Display excessive control.
- Manipulate their victim.
- Refuse to say kind comments or acknowledge positive behaviour.
- Blame or scapegoat the child.
- Criticise, threaten, and/or humiliate the child.
- Use sarcasm and cruel jokes to mock the child.
- Make the child perform degrading acts.
- Push a child beyond their physical, mental, or emotional limitations.
- Expose the victim to distressing events such as domestic abuse, drug taking, verbal fights, etc.
- Refuse to have an emotional life with the child, also known as emotional unavailability.

## SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

When a child is sexually abused, it means that they have been forced or manipulated into taking part in sexual activities. The exploitation of children sexually isn't always physical; it can happen online too. There are a number of warning signs of child sexual exploitation that you need to be alert to, such as behavioural changes and health issues.

The effects of sexual abuse include:

- Promiscuity at a young age.
- The use of sexual language inappropriate for their age.
- Knowledge of sexual information that you wouldn't expect.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Pregnancy.
- Trauma.
- Unusual discharge.
- Anal or vaginal soreness.
- Avoiding being alone with certain people like family members or family friends.
- Appearing afraid to socialise or interact with a certain person.

## SIGNS OF CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION/COUNTY LINES

Young people who are involved in criminal/county lines activity often display a number of signs that indicate their involvement.

Some signs that may indicate this are:

- Persistently going missing from home or school, and/or being found out of their local area.
- Unexplained money, clothes, jewellery, or mobile phones.
- Receiving an excessive amount of texts and/or phone calls, and/or having multiple handsets.
- Relationships with controlling or older people or groups.
- Leaving home, or care, without explanation, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- Unexplained injuries, refusing to get medical help, and signs of physical assault.
- Parental concerns about a child.
- Carrying weapons, such as a knife or acid.
- Drug use, or being found with large amounts of drugs on them.
- A notable decline in school results and performance.
- Disruptive or aggressive behaviour, and/or using violent, sexual, or drug-related language that you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Associating with gangs or isolating from others.
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.
- Significant changes in emotional wellbeing.

## SIGNS OF RADICALISATION

Signs to be wary of include a child:

- Isolating themselves from family and friends, or developing a completely new circle of friends.
- Speaking as though they are reciting a scripted speech, talking about terrorism, and using extremist terminology.
- Being unwilling to discuss their own - or listen to others' - opinions.
- Developing a sudden disrespectful and dismissive attitude towards others.
- Becoming increasingly angry.
- Becoming more secretive, especially surrounding their internet use.
- Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups.

## SIGNS OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Indicators that FGM might be about to occur include a child talking about getting ready for a special marriage ceremony, or 'becoming a woman'. Their family might be preparing to take an extended trip abroad, or be visited by a relative or 'cutter'. Additionally, the child's sibling or cousin might have undergone FGM.

Indicators that FGM has **already** occurred include:

- Unexpected, repeated, or prolonged absences from school and other activities.
- Behavioural changes on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn, appearing subdued, and achieving lower grades.
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable, or complaining about pain between the legs.
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves or mentioning that something has been done to them that they can't talk about.
- Repeated urinal tract infections, or bladder or menstrual problems. They might also spend a long time in the bathroom or toilet.

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# HOW TO REPORT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS



## HOW TO REPORT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If you have any safeguarding concerns about a child, you must report them.

If you believe the child is in immediate danger, don't delay. Call the police on 999 straight away. Furthermore, under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, you must call the police if you're informed that a girl under 18 has undergone FGM.

You can also report concerns in the following ways:

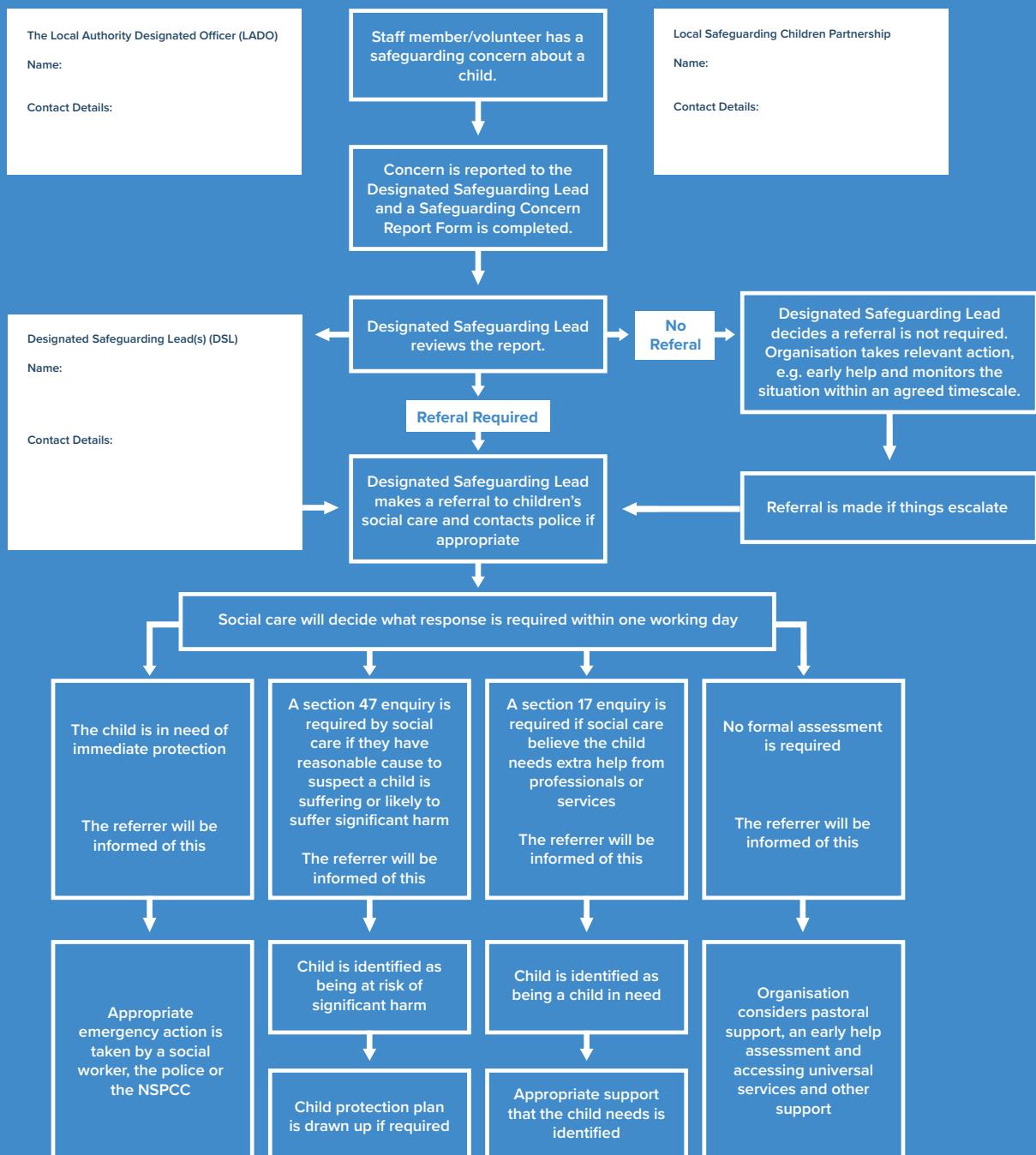
- Contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000. They will then pass the concern onto the local child protection team who will investigate it.
- Report your concern directly to your local authority child protection team. You can find your local team here.
- Report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead. (If you are the DSL, choose one of the above two steps).
- Call the NSPCC's Whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285 or email them on [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). They offer free advice and support to anyone who's concerned about how child protection issues are handled in an organisation.

## SAFEGUARDING FLOWCHART

The safeguarding flowchart on the next page shows you the process involved when you report a concern about a child. You could display this flowchart in your organisation to help visually remind staff of their responsibilities on a regular basis. This will be especially beneficial for people in your organisation who are new and may not be completely aware of safeguarding procedures. It will provide a reference point for them if they're unsure of who to report a concern to or how the concern will be handled.

You can download the flowchart [here](#).

## Flowchart of Procedures for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns



All concerns and correspondence will be kept in a secure, confidential file. The child's circumstances will be kept under review at all stages and a referral will be made again if it is appropriate for improving the child's circumstances. The child's best interests must always come first.

If the concern is about a staff member/ volunteer in your organisation, the DSL should refer this to the LADO who will determine the best route of action to be taken.

If your concern would involve a Prevent/Channel referral, contact:

If you have a concern that a girl has undergone, or is about to undergo, FGM, contact:

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## HELPING TO PREVENT ABUSE

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## INTRODUCTION

You can help to prevent or minimise the likelihood of abuse or neglect occurring by knowing the signs and acting on your concerns as soon as possible. However, there are other proactive measures that you could take. We will explain a few of the most topical of these measures, such as teaching children about healthy relationships (now part of the curriculum), handling online challenges effectively, and contextual safeguarding.

Relationships are an incredibly important part of a child or young person's life. Healthy relationships have a lot of benefits, such as making them feel secure and supported, but unhealthy relationships can have a long-term negative impact. As a result, it is vital that children and young people are aware of what an unhealthy – or even abusive – relationship might look like, the early warning signs, and how to maintain healthy boundaries.

Below, we will outline the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and give you some tips for teaching children and young people about this subject in an age-appropriate way.

## WHAT IS CLASSED AS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

A healthy relationship is made up of the following characteristics:

- **Mutual respect.** You should value each other as you are, and not try to change each other. This involves respecting each other's boundaries, whether these are emotional, digital, sexual, or other types of boundaries.
- **Trust.** You should not feel as though someone has to 'prove' that they are trustworthy; in healthy relationships, you believe what they have to say. You also don't worry about what they are doing when you aren't there.
- **Equality.** You should make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards. Neither of you should have more control over the other.
- **Honesty.** In a healthy relationship, you need to be able to be honest with each other. Sharing your feelings should not lead to negative consequences. However, this does not mean that you need to tell each other absolutely everything; you can keep some things private.
- **Good communication.** You should be able to talk openly about any problems that you have, rather than letting them build up and cause resentment. Communication also involves listening to each other and respecting each other's opinions, even if you don't agree. You may sometimes have to compromise so that both people feel valued.

Healthy relationships are inherently positive – children and young people should always feel respected, valued, supported, and encouraged. They should also be free to make choices about how they act and what they say; they should not be controlled, coerced, or manipulated into anything.

Benefits of healthy relationships include having a positive sense of wellbeing and experiencing less stress. You might also have more purpose to your life and increase your social development.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

There are four main reasons why it is important to teach children and young people about healthy relationships:

### 1. Many of them do not understand what a healthy relationship is

The research project Boys to Men found that 49% of boys and 33% of girls aged 13-14 thought that hitting a partner would be 'okay' in at least one of twelve scenarios they were presented with. Lack of experience of healthy relationships, as well as peer group norms – adolescents in particular tend to be more accepting of relationship abuse, according to research – leads to children and young people finding it difficult to judge behaviour as abusive. For example, they often view forms of sexual harassment as normal and even inevitable; they might also have been groomed to believe that a relationship is healthy.

### 2. They are just as likely, if not more likely, to experience abusive relationships as adults are

A key study showed that 75% of girls and 50% of boys aged 13-17 had experienced some form of emotional relationship abuse, with 25% of girls and 18% of boys experiencing physical abuse, and 1 in 3 girls and 16% of boys experiencing sexual abuse. The transition from childhood to adulthood, with all its associated cognitive and physical changes, is a particularly vulnerable time of life. Barnardo's has also found that 1 in 6 children experience sexual abuse before their 18th birthday. These negative experiences can have serious outcomes, including depression, decreased cognitive ability, serious harm, or suicide.

### 3. They want to learn about it

Studies have found that young people want to be taught about the emotional aspects of relationships. It is not enough to have sex education alone.

### 4. Understanding healthy relationships can impact the rest of their lives

If children are taught about healthy relationships early on, this could decrease the likelihood of them staying in unhealthy or abusive relationships later. In turn, the high levels of domestic abuse in adults might drop – in 2019-2020, 2.3 million adults were victims of this sort of abuse. Moreover, healthy relationships can impact lives positively by improving your health, lengthening your life, and advancing your academic career.

Therefore, giving children and young people the right advice, teaching them healthy attitudes and behaviours, and training them to identify and deal with unhealthy relationships is vital.

Including healthy relationships as part of school curriculum has been shown to be an effective preventative measure against future relationship abuse. By talking about relationships, you also provide children with the opportunity to open up about any experiences of abuse – domestic or otherwise – and get them help to deal with this.

## WHAT IS CLASSED AS AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

Where healthy relationships are inherently positive, unhealthy relationships are inherently negative; they are based around an imbalance of power and control. There is a lack of respect; you might be forced or coerced into doing things that you aren't comfortable with, or behaving in a certain way. You might feel that you aren't good enough, and experience anxiety, depression, or physical health symptoms such as headaches (Woman's Aid, 2015).

In an unhealthy relationship, a child or young person might:

- Only spend time with one particular person, and lose contact with their other friends or family.
- Be prevented from working or going to school.
- Have their money taken away or controlled.
- Be restricted in accessing food, drinks, and day-to-day items.
- Have their time controlled or heavily monitored.
- Have their social media accounts controlled or heavily monitored. For example, someone might monitor which posts they 'like' and who they have been messaging.
- Be told what to wear.
- Feel pressured to do things they are not comfortable with.
- Be criticised or put down.
- Experience threats of violence if they don't behave a certain way.
- Be threatened with damage to their personal property, loved ones, or pets.
- Not be able to talk about problems or their feelings without having an argument or being punished for it.
- Lack trust in the relationship – they might be accused of lying or cheating, or might frequently be lied to.
- Have their boundaries disrespected – if they speak up about an issue, they might be told that they're overreacting, 'clingy', or 'needy'.

## ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Unhealthy behaviours might start off seeming relatively insignificant, but it is important to recognise them because they are often symptomatic of a person trying to exert power and control over you. This could lead to a **categorically abusive relationship** as they attempt to gain more and more control. This type of relationship involves physical abuse (hitting, slapping, pushing, or choking), threats and insults, humiliation, gaslighting, and regularly forcing you to do things you don't want to do.

Abusive or unhealthy relationships involving children are often exploitative. Exploitation is a complex issue – training will help you to better understand why it happens, who is at risk, and what you can do to help.

## TIPS FOR TEACHING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

We have put together 7 tips for teaching healthy relationships in the classroom. These are:

### 1. Talk about boundaries

Boundaries help to protect children and young people from abuse, as well as helping them build healthy relationships that meet their needs and values. Get children to think about their personal views so they can identify what their boundaries are. In early years, this might be talking about their likes and dislikes in general. For older teenagers it might involve a private reflection activity around their views on sex and when this should or shouldn't happen in a relationship.

You can then practise articulating boundaries clearly. Young children should be taught that it's OK to say no if they don't want to do something – for example, hug a family member or join in with an activity – and that you will respect this. Older children could roleplay scenarios, with one of them reacting when the other oversteps their boundaries. For example, if the other person tries to make fun of them, they should tell them to stop, and if they don't, they should walk away and tell them that they don't want to talk while they're doing that.

Remember to note that both people in a relationship have their own boundaries that need to be respected; students should be able to see it from both sides.

### 2. Think about how you expect to be treated in a relationship

If children can identify how they would like to be treated and their rights in a relationship, this will make them more alert to unhealthy relationships that don't meet these criteria. They could make a list of what they expect, with some scaffolding to prompt them. For example, being treated fairly, being respected and supported, being able to say no at any time (even if they've said yes before), and being free from violence and abuse are good expectations.

You could also practise recognising that someone is being exploited or abused, and talk about what to do in these situations. Useful resources that include different red-flag scenarios are the [NSPCC](#) and [Love Is Respect](#) websites. Having group discussions about the healthiness of relationships in books or films could also be an effective teaching tool.

### 3. Teach them how to communicate effectively

Many people say that communication is key to a healthy relationship. Effective communication involves being able to express your thoughts and feelings, but also being able to listen, understand other people's points of view, and compromise.

Younger children (5-11 years old) should be helped to resolve conflicts; encourage them to think about how other people are affected by their actions. You could also practise expressing opinions in different ways; show them how changing your words can change how you make someone feel. For example, making statements with the words 'I' and 'we' rather than 'you' can make the other person feel less defensive.

Older children and young people could think about:

- How they feel in different situations, and ways that they could react that would be positive and non-violent – for example, going for a walk when they feel angry so they calm down and think about what's wrong. You could roleplay talking about feelings using scaffolded sentences, such as "When (someone) did (action), I felt angry because...". Jealousy is another important emotion; emphasise that it's normal to feel jealous, but that doesn't mean you need to act on it. Telling someone not to talk to a certain person because you feel jealous is unhealthy.
- Compromising when you disagree. Talk about how it's important to find a middle ground that both people are satisfied with. Point out that you don't need to agree on everything, but if you can't compromise on an important issue then you may not be compatible.
- The 48 hour rule: if your partner upsets you or makes you angry, you should tell them about it, but it doesn't have to be straight away. See if you're still hurt 48 hours later, and if so, say something.

#### 4. Don't forget digital abuse

This is particularly important now that young people spend a large amount of time connecting with each other online.

It may be difficult for young people to know what is normal in terms of online behaviour, because some adults don't understand how technology is used, nor give them relevant guidance. For example, young people should be told that it's not normal or healthy to ask a partner to share their password to social media accounts with you, or to go through their messages to check who they've been talking to. Other harassment that can occur through technology includes constant unwanted calls or texts, cyberbullying, pressure to sext, and being monitored through social media.

Responses to digital abuse should not simply be to 'turn the phone off' or 'delete their account'. It's much better to advise children to report abuse on the site, screenshot any upsetting messages to keep as evidence in case it escalates further, or to set their profiles to 'private' so that strangers can't see where they live or go to school. You could take our course in [Internet Safety](#) if it would help you to feel more confident in this area.

#### 5. Debunk stereotypes

Stereotypes can lead to unhealthy relationship expectations and abuse – for example, if people are punished for not acting the way they're 'supposed' to. As a result, it's important that you avoid stereotyping from children's earliest years right the way through; embrace individuality, encourage boys and girls to play alongside each other, and always challenge gender stereotypes when you hear children repeating them. Adolescents might be particularly susceptible to stereotyping; try to make them aware of how this can be harmful and unhelpful.

Additionally, make it clear that unhealthy relationships and abuse can happen to – or be perpetrated by – anyone, regardless of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation or background. Accepting that this is true can help victims in all different situations to feel comfortable speaking out.

#### 6. Make sure they know where to go if they have problems

Make it clear that you're available to talk if anyone has a concern, but also signpost students to websites and helplines such as Childline (0800 1111 – free to phone) and Stop It Now! (0808 1000 900).

Children and young people should know that they will be listened to and not judged. They should access these resources – or talk to a teacher or other trusted adult – if they ever feel uncomfortable or concerned about a relationship. Spread the word amongst your colleagues so that they are also aware of the warning signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships, and the possible consequences that they can have.

## **7. Report any concerns as usual**

If you think a child or young person is in immediate danger, phone the police on 999. If you are worried, but you don't think they are in immediate danger, follow your safeguarding policy. Talk to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or contact your local child protection services (details will be on your local authority website). Unhealthy and abusive relationships are a child protection concern and should always be treated seriously.

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## RESPONDING TO ONLINE CHALLENGES



## INTRODUCTION

The popularity of social media and the internet has led to the development of a new craze: children and young people have recently been completing a slew of online challenges. While many of these challenges are fun and light-hearted, others are harmful and dangerous. As an educator, you may need to face both types in your school or educational setting.

Below, we will discuss the potential dangers associated with internet challenges, outline the crazes that you should be aware of in order to better support students, and provide advice on how to respond effectively to any challenge-related incidents that occur.

## WHAT IS AN ONLINE CHALLENGE & HOW CAN IT BE DANGEROUS?

An online challenge generally involves an individual recording themselves completing a challenge and distributing the video through social media channels. The challenge is often something difficult or daring, which they then invite others to complete themselves.

After the creation of apps like TikTok, online challenges have become increasingly popular. Different challenges are created every day, and there is a continuous wave of them trending and going viral (being widely and rapidly shared online). Children and young people are constantly exposed to these challenges via their phones and other electronic devices, which can be extremely problematic.

This is because some internet and social media challenges are dangerous. In extreme cases, young people have died attempting them – for example, in the case of [Joshua Haileyesus](#) in March 2021 – and others have experienced consequences such as seizures, comas, safeguarding issues, and third-degree burns (for the latter, see [Abbie Quinnan](#), also in March 2021).

Children and young people do not always perceive the risks involved in a challenge, and this – combined with factors such as peer pressure – leads them to complete a task which has the potential to harm them.

However, it is important to stress that not all online challenges are harmful. Some, such as the ASL Ice Bucket Challenge, were created to raise money for a good cause. In fact, the great majority of TikTok crazes revolve around recreating different dances, which is generally risk-free.

## HOAXES

Additionally, some of the most extreme internet challenges are actually hoaxes – those that are deliberately made up and designed to seem truthful. Rumours about these sorts of challenges can spread and cause panic. For example, several years ago ‘blue whale challenge’ was reported to be an online suicide game aimed at teenagers, linked to numerous deaths around the world. However, [investigation](#) has revealed that the game didn’t really seem to exist at all.

As a result, you should always do your research and remain level-headed when facing a supposed challenge.

## WHY ARE INTERNET CHALLENGES POPULAR?

There are a few potential reasons behind the popularity of viral internet challenges, including:

- **Socialising.** They give children and young people opportunities to socialise with friends in different ways, and give them the feeling of being part of a community. The apps also allow them to make new friends across the world; children often 'duet' each other's videos as a way to interact.
- **Getting creative.** Online challenges help children and young people to express themselves, try new things, and show off their skills.
- **Peer pressure.** Young people – particularly teenagers – might feel pressured to join in with online challenges because all their friends are doing it – the challenges might give them a means to become part of the 'in crowd'. Being able to interact with people across the world could also contribute negatively, as peer groups are now much larger, and young people are looking for mass approval. This is much more difficult to obtain than the approval of a few school friends.
- **Social media addiction.** Creating posts – including challenge videos – that other people can like, share, and interact with can feed social media addictions. The format of these websites is such that it makes children and young people constantly want more.

## WHY ARE DANGEROUS SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES POPULAR?

Dangerous online challenges might also appeal for other reasons, such as:

- **The need to be noticed.** Young people often want to stand out from the crowd, and dangerous challenges give them a way to get people's attention, as well as their validation. With the amount of entertainment freely available online, people now need to go further and further in order to be noticed.
- **Impulsiveness.** Teenagers are often drawn to risky challenges. Part of being a teenager is testing boundaries, experimenting, and making impulsive decisions. Dangerous challenges might appeal to them simply because of this.
- **Defying their parents.** Finally, online challenges might be used as a way for young people to kick back against their parents' rules and suggestions about their lives.

Thinking about these reasons will help you to better understand the logic behind why children get involved in online challenges.

# WHICH CHALLENGES AND VIRAL CRAZES SHOULD TEACHERS BE AWARE OF?

## CHALLENGES IN 2020 AND 2021

Potentially dangerous trending social media challenges in 2020 and 2021 include:

- **Coronavirus challenge** – this challenge involves children licking various items that they encounter in public places, from handrails to public toilet seats. Naturally, this increases their likelihood of catching coronavirus or another illness.
- **Silhouette challenge** – here, an individual films themselves in casual clothes and then the video transitions to a view of their silhouette (while they are either wearing lingerie or nude). The issue with this trend is that some videos have been edited by viewers, allowing them to see more than just the silhouette. They have then been reposted on the internet in this form – an extreme safeguarding issue.
- **Nutmeg challenge** – this challenge involves mixing large quantities of nutmeg with a drink and drinking it, in an attempt to achieve a high. There can be dangerous side effects to this, including hypothermia, hallucinations, comas, and death.
- **Benadryl challenge** – here, young people take excessive amounts of medication to try to experience a high or hallucinations. This could lead to serious heart problems, seizures, comas, or death.
- **Blackout challenge** – this involves temporarily cutting off blood flow to the brain in an attempt to experience light-headedness and euphoria. It is extremely dangerous, and there have been recent reports of children dying after trying it. This trend did not originate on TikTok, and might also be known as the choking game or pass-out challenge (amongst other names).
- **#standupchallenge** – this challenge involves one individual standing on another's back while they lie flat on the ground. The person lying on the ground then attempts to slowly stand up, while the second person tries to jump up onto their shoulders and balance there. This could cause serious damage to both people involved, with the potential of breaking necks or damaging spines.

## PRIOR CHALLENGES

In addition to the challenges above (and the creation of new ones), past challenges are sometimes brought back. As a result, it is worth being aware of these challenges too, including:

- **Tide pod challenge** – in this trend, children consumed inedible laundry detergent pods. These are poisonous and pose serious health risks to anyone who tried it.
- **Neck Nominate (or Neknominate)** – here, young people are challenged to drink an alcoholic beverage (sometimes mixed with other things, such as household cleaning items) in one go in a dangerous situation, such as jumping off a bridge.
- **Kylie Jenner lip challenge** – to mimic Kylie Jenner's full lips, young people have tried putting a glass or bottle over their mouth and sucking out the air, creating a vacuum. This causes their lips to swell and appear fuller, but can also cause pain, swelling, bruising, scarring, and even disfigurement.

## POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SOCIAL MEDIA APPS

Whilst it is important to be aware of online challenges, you also need to be familiar with lesser-known social media apps in order to safeguard effectively. These apps are potentially dangerous to children, and some are purposefully masked to appear more harmless than they are.

- **Calculator%.** This app looks like a calculator but is actually a place where secret photos, videos, and files can be stored.
- **Omegle.** This is a free online ‘chat roulette’ site where users are randomly paired with strangers to have one-on-one conversations. As well as chatting through text, you can choose to be shown on video.
- **Ask.fm.** On this app, young people can ask each other questions anonymously and get an answer. It has been linked to severe cases of cyberbullying.
- **Sarahah.** This is another anonymous app, where users can send anonymous messages to people they may know.
- **Whisper.** Here, users are encouraged to post and share photo and video messages anonymously, sharing their secrets and meeting new people.
- **Wishbone.** In this app, users can compare people against each other and rate them on a scale.
- **Burn Book.** Here, anonymous rumours about people can be posted through audio messages, texts, and photos. Some app stores have now taken this app down.
- **Hot or Not.** This app allows strangers to rate your profile in the aim of hook-ups.
- **Kik.** This is a messaging app that allows you to talk to strangers based on your common interests.

## HOW CAN SCHOOLS HELP TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE?

We have collated eight tips for dealing with viral challenges and crazes effectively.

### 1. Only share accurate information

Before you take any action or share warnings about viral challenges with parents or colleagues, it is important to do your research. In the past, schools have acted too quickly and inadvertently spread panic about challenges which turned out to be hoaxes, the Momo ‘suicide challenge’ being one such challenge. Searching for evidence in a critical manner helps you to respond proportionately – always check the factual basis of any harmful online challenge using a known, reliable source (such as the [Professional Online Safety Helpline](#)).

### 2. Don’t refer to challenges by name

It is unhelpful (and unrealistic) for teachers and parents to describe a harmful online challenge to children, tell them its name, and then instruct them not to search for it. Rather than reducing the risk of the challenge, this drives curiosity and traffic towards it, causing more people to search for and become aware of it, and a greater likelihood that children encounter it on the internet. In the case of hoaxes, much of the content is actually created by those attempting to give warnings. It can also be needlessly upsetting for children to hear explicit details of these challenges.

Instead, schools should focus on giving general advice and strategies to help children navigate the risks of the internet – encourage children to talk to adults about any distressing content they see, as well as reporting and blocking the content. Talk about how to identify whether a challenge could be harmful, and whether or not it could be a hoax.

You could also discuss more generally whether completing online challenges and being popular on social media is important in life. Ask young people to think about whether it is something they could be proud of years in the future, how likely it is that they will become an internet celebrity, and whether putting themselves in danger is worth the risk.

### **3. Acknowledge peer pressure**

Peer pressure is an important factor in young people's decisions to participate in social media trends – they are often drawn into it because all their friends are doing it. Acknowledging this, explaining that it is unhealthy, and teaching children how to set boundaries and communicate effectively could help to reduce the risk of them being pressured into completing dangerous challenges.

### **4. Keep parents and carers up to date**

It is important to ensure that parents and carers are kept in the loop about potential dangers to their child and how to handle them. You could include this information in a newsletter or other regular correspondence to follow up on any information that you have given to the children in school.

Again, don't refer to online challenges by name, and reinforce that parents should not do this either. Ask them to focus on teaching their children positive, empowering online behaviours such as critical thinking and reporting concerns about harmful content. You could also suggest that parents monitor their children's online activity (particularly younger children).

### **5. Give pupils an opportunity to come and talk to you about concerns**

You should make it clear that pupils are welcome to discuss their concerns discreetly with you or another member of staff. Being able to talk to you and ask questions will reduce any anxiety that they feel, and if they come to you about a particular challenge, you might be able to stop it from escalating further. Give them a particular time, place, and person in school to go to, and display this information in key areas of the school, such as the lunch hall, toilets, classrooms, and foyer.

### **6. Have appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place**

The statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' outlines how schools should have appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. For example, children should not be able to access harmful or inappropriate material from the school or college's IT system. Filters may be limited in preventing access to harmful online challenges and hoaxes, but they should always protect children from extreme content.

Your school should also have mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate incidents where appropriate.

## **7. Pre-plan your formal response**

If you are your school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), then you have a responsibility to respond effectively to incidents. This includes those involving harmful online challenges. It would be helpful to plan your response in advance, thinking about your policies relating to child protection, behaviour, staff behaviour, and mobile devices. Protecting children from harmful online challenges is a type of contextual safeguarding.

If any incidents do occur, undertake a case-by-case assessment, establishing the scale and nature of the possible risk, and reporting it to the authorities where necessary.

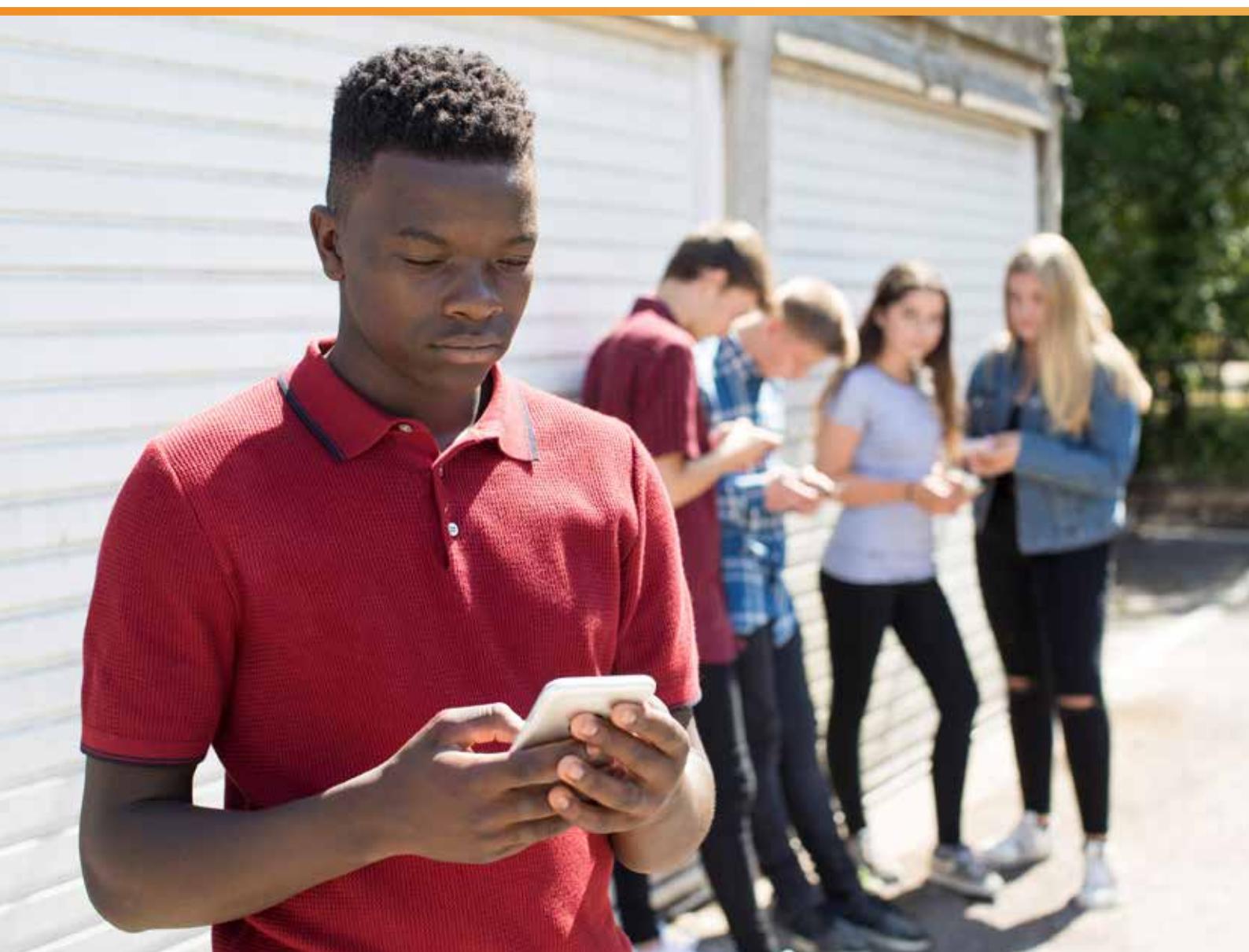
## **8. Be aware of helplines**

We have already mentioned the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline \(POSH\)](#), which is available to those working with or for children in the UK who need help with online safety issues.

There are also helplines available to both children and parents or carers – make sure that students and their families are aware of this.

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## CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING



## INTRODUCTION

Contextual safeguarding is a topic which is mentioned frequently in local authorities' strategy discussions. Following a substantial amount of research, the term was first added to the government's Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance in 2018, and has become increasingly recognised and implemented in safeguarding policies across the country. As a result, it is important for you to understand exactly what it is, and how it influences your role in keeping young people safe.

## WHAT IS CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING?

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding that recognises that young people may be at risk of significant harm not only within their home environment, but also outside it. The traditional safeguarding approach does not consider extra-familial contexts, which has led to cases of abuse and exploitation falling under the radar.

Extra-familial contexts include young people's peer groups, support networks, online contacts, and local community or neighbourhood. Safeguarding concerns in these contexts could consist of harassment or violence from their peers, a risk of grooming – whether online or in person – high levels of crime or gang violence in your local area, or even a local park where frequent incident reports have been made.

As well as involving wider consideration of contexts, contextual safeguarding entails a different method of intervention from the traditional approach. In the past, all interventions have taken place with the young person and their family, regardless of where the harm originated from. However, it has been shown that this is inadequate in cases of extra-familial abuse; parents do not have any control over these outside contexts, and cannot change them.

A more effective method is to intervene with the outside environment itself, to prevent harm from occurring in the first place. For example, if you know that a certain park has high levels of criminal activity, you could contact the council and ask for bushes to be cut back, higher levels of lighting, and more patrols by park wardens. This is an example of a contextual safeguarding provision in practice.

## WHY IS CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING IMPORTANT?

Contextual safeguarding does not just focus on one individual, but on how to protect all young people from environments that cause safeguarding issues. In other words, it addresses the underlying causes, not just the effects. It uses partnerships between educational settings and other public sector services, but also with retailers, transport providers, and communities, so that everyone is aware of possible warning signs and how to report them.

Additionally, this ensures that all those who have influence over extra-familial contexts – for example, bus and taxi drivers, and shop owners – use their influence to make these settings safer. As a result, young people are protected by ensuring that the potential for harmful situations is reduced.

Contextual safeguarding is particularly important for adolescents, because as young people age, they spend more time socialising away from their families. Consequently, their social networks – and any harm associated with them – become more significant.

The relationships that they make during this period of time influence what they expect from future relationships, so if they socialise in safe, supportive environments then they will form safe, supportive relationships (and the same applies for harmful, abusive relationships). By ensuring that young people are in nurturing environments – both within educational settings, and outside them – you can reduce the risk of future harm.

Successes that have been seen so far in this practice have led to it being embedded in social care and safeguarding systems across the country.

## EXAMPLES OF CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING SCENARIOS

The following scenarios will give you some examples to strengthen your understanding of the concept.

### SCENARIO A - ZAC, AGED 15

Zac is a popular student who seems to enjoy school, but his behaviour changes when he befriends a gang of older ex-students whom he sees every day on his walk home. He begins to skip school, and when he does attend, he mocks his former friends for not being ‘hard enough’ and being unable to relate to his new lifestyle with the gang, including theft and damaging cars.

When his parents are contacted about his frequent absences, they report that they are unable to control him anymore – when they attempt to get in contact with him, he ignores their phone calls, and often doesn’t return home for days on end. His parents are worried that he may soon become involved with more serious crime, due to his escalating behaviour.

Under a traditional approach – without considering contextual safeguarding – Zac and his family would be referred, assessed, and receive intervention for his behaviour. However, it seems that Zac’s associates in the gang currently have more influence over him than his parents do, which would make a familial intervention unlikely to have an impact.

Instead, the risk posed by the gang should itself be reduced, by referring its other members into a safeguarding system, assessing them, and intervening in their behaviour. This will, in turn, keep Zac safe. It could also be helpful to engage with the local police to ask for support in reducing the presence of local gangs.

## **SCENARIO B - BIANCA, AGED 15**

Bianca is a quiet, well-behaved student with no problems at home, and no behaviour issues in class. However, one of her fellow students reports that a group of peers is sharing a sexually indecent image of Bianca through social media.

Just as in traditional safeguarding policy, this incident should be reported to the DSL. Interviews should be conducted with those involved, parents should be informed, and any concerns about risks of harm to one of the young people should be referred to social services or the police.

The difference that the contextual safeguarding approach makes is that more than this could be done. The whole group of peers could be referred to children's services, which would not previously have been viable, due to the lack of concerns about their home environments. Children's services would accept this as a peer group referral, and begin a group assessment to understand the group dynamic, risks, vulnerabilities and strengths.

Through this, they would attempt to discover why the indecent image-sharing happened in this particular group of peers. For example, it could be the case that image-sharing has been normalised by young people within the school, and the whole school needs training to change this. Whatever the cause, through assessing and understanding it, you could prevent further similar incidents from occurring.

## **HOW DOES CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING INFLUENCE MY ROLE TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN?**

The contextual safeguarding approach is crucial for everyone with a responsibility to safeguard young people, and it is important to understand what part you play in the wider system.

While you don't need to take on all of the problems in your local area yourself, you should use your role – where you spend a significant amount of time with young people, and know and understand both them and your local community – to make a difference.

Possible actions you could begin to take are as follows:

- If you work in a school or educational environment, consider the culture of your school or college. Is it a safe and supportive environment? If not, how could you make it more so?
- Consider the location that you live and work in, and assess the risks that young people may be exposed to outside their school or college, as well as inside it.
- Create a safe space for young people and/or their families to talk to you about their experiences. What they tell you about their community and the context that they are growing up in could help you to spot concerns that you may not have been aware of otherwise. Additionally, you could do 'safety mapping' with them, where you help them to identify safe adults that they could turn to when they feel vulnerable outside their school or college.
- When completing social care assessments, Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance advises that you should provide as much information as possible on wider environmental factors, so that all available evidence and contexts of abuse can be considered.
- You could also help to increase awareness for parents or those in your local community about how to recognise signs of exploitation or abuse, how young people can stay safe online and offline, and who to contact if they notice any warning signals.

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## CHECK YOUR PRACTICE



## | SAFEGUARDING CHECKLIST

We've developed a safeguarding checklist to help your school keep on top of your safeguarding responsibilities.

The checklist outlines the minimum measures that your school should be considering in terms of safeguarding - it can give you a brief overview of all your responsibilities and help you to keep on top of your safeguarding requirements in a quick and digestible way. It is a self-assessment tool and must be considered alongside your other safeguarding procedures. It is brief enough to help you keep on top of your responsibilities but not detailed enough to cover all safeguarding procedures and responsibilities.

Use this checklist as a resource, ticking things off where appropriate and making a note of the things that you identify as missing.

You should aim to use this safeguarding checklist at least once a year, such as every September before the start of the new school year.

You can download the checklist [here](#).

## | SAFEGUARDING SCENARIOS AND ANSWERS

The safeguarding scenarios that we have created should help you to understand the possible issues you may be confronted with. You must be able to identify the warning signs that could indicate a child's welfare is at risk.

As well as understanding how you must deal with concerns, you need to know what actually constitutes a safeguarding issue. Our example scenarios demonstrate just how complicated some issues can be. They will also explain why certain incidents could be safeguarding issues.

As a leading provider of safeguarding children training courses, we often receive queries from our customers about their safeguarding responsibilities. We have created the following scenarios with schools in mind, although many will be applicable or adaptable to other settings. You may find it helpful to add these scenarios to your bank of safeguarding training resources. They will be useful for employers to share with all members of staff who are in a child-facing role, particularly during training exercises. Staff can consider and discuss the examples, and compare similar instances that they have experienced.

The most important thing to remember is to report any suspicions you have, even if you aren't certain. You must know which member of staff you should be reporting these concerns to and the procedures that are in place.

### **SCENARIO A - BETH, AGED 8**

Beth is known for being an inquisitive and chatty member of the class. Recently, however, you have noticed a complete change in her behaviour. For the last couple of weeks, Beth has been much quieter and more withdrawn. You also notice that although it is a very hot summer and Beth wore dresses a few weeks ago, she has recently been consistently wearing clothes that cover her whole body.

### **Safeguarding Issue?**

⚠ This has the potential to be a safeguarding issue.

Here, you have no evidence that Beth is at risk of harm. However, as her teaching assistant, you know the child well. You have your suspicions that Beth's drastic change in personality may be a result of physical abuse occurring. This is coupled with the fact that Beth is standing out, wearing what is considered winter uniform in hot temperatures, when a few weeks before she was wearing summer dresses.

### **SCENARIO B - JAMES, AGED 16**

James is a popular student and is part of a large friendship group. A new pupil, Matthew, has joined the school. You observe how, in the last month, the two of them have been spending a lot of time together separate from James' usual group. Jenny, one of the girls from James' old friendship group, has approached you after class with some concerns. She says that when she tried to approach James to ask why he had suddenly broken off all contact with the group, he got very annoyed and angry. James apparently said that 'everyone else is blind to what is going on in Britain' and made comments about how Matthew had made him 'see sense'. He allegedly made what Jenny interpreted as a threat, saying, 'just you wait and see what we have planned'.

### **Safeguarding Issue?**

⚠ This has the potential to be a safeguarding issue.

Although you have not directly heard James making these types of comments yourself, you must take Jenny's claim seriously. While it may be that Jenny is simply annoyed at James for leaving the group, her claims must not be dismissed. You should already be aware of some of the potential behavioural indicators of radicalisation. This does include distancing from old friends, being argumentative, and sympathetic to extremist ideologies. If what Jenny is saying is true, then James may have been radicalised, possibly by or alongside Matthew. This has the potential to cause harm to other people if the threat of potentially violent action is carried out.

### **SCENARIO C - A'ISHA, AGED 13**

A'isha is known to be disruptive during class. Behavioural concerns have been raised in the past. The DSL believes that due to her parents' recent divorce A'isha has been acting out at school as a way to get attention from others. During breaktime, you witness A'isha showing her friends her new mobile phone and telling them how her boyfriend bought it for her as a gift. As you leave work later that day you see A'isha kissing someone who looks at least 18 years old. A'isha and her friends then all get into the car and the 'boyfriend' drives off.

### **Safeguarding Issue?**

⚠ This is a safeguarding issue.

Because A'isha's 'boyfriend' drives a car you know that he is at least 17 years old, though you suspect he's older. Because A'isha is under 16, she cannot give consent to a potentially sexual relationship with someone who is significantly older. It appears that the potential abuser is grooming A'isha through the excessive gifts and attention that she is being given. You know that A'isha is a vulnerable child seeking attention and you are concerned she may be a victim of sexual exploitation.

## **SCENARIO D - FREDDIE, AGED 17**

Freddie is one of your Sixth Form pupils who you have taught History lessons to for the last five years. You notice how he has recently become more vocal and has seemingly gained confidence in class. During a lesson, Freddie and his friends are talking loudly amongst themselves. As you go over to them, you see that they are looking at a picture of one of the school's female teachers on a mobile phone. The photo is sexually explicit and when you ask who the phone belongs to, you learn that it is Freddie's. After class, Freddie tells you that the teacher sent the picture to him and that they have met up outside of school on a few occasions.

### **Safeguarding Issue?**

⚠ This is a safeguarding issue.

Here, a teacher is abusing their position and behaving inappropriately with Freddie, a pupil in their care. It is against the law for a person aged 18 or over to have any sexual contact with someone under 18 if the older person holds a position of trust. As Freddie is 17 years, and a student of the teacher with whom he is romantically involved, he is considered as a vulnerable individual who has been taken advantage of.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN EDUCATION QUIZ

1. When should you report a concern about FGM?

- (A) When the student discloses information
- (B) Immediately after you have the concern
- (C) Within a fortnight
- (D) When you have gathered evidence

2. What is the name of the strategy that aims to help stop students being drawn into terrorism?

- (A) Pursue
- (B) Protect
- (C) Prepare
- (D) Prevent

3. Being secretive, having an older boyfriend/girlfriend and having expensive new possessions may be indicators of what?

- (A) Grooming
- (B) Self-harm
- (C) Radicalisation
- (D) Modern slavery

4. If a student discloses information about abuse to you, what should you do?

- (A) Promise to keep the information secret
- (B) Tell the student that everything will be fine
- (C) Listen carefully, thank the student for telling you, share the information with the DSL as soon as possible
- (D) Listen carefully, thank the student for telling you, share the information with the DSL when you're less busy

5. Which of the following is a potential indicator of CSE?

- (A) Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies
- (B) Repeated sexually transmitted infections
- (C) Living in unsuitable housing
- (D) Displaying anti-social behaviour

6. Which of the following is not your responsibility, as someone who works with young people?

- (A) Investigating issues and gathering evidence
- (B) Challenging poor or ineffective practice
- (C) Raising awareness of exploitation
- (D) Safeguarding

## DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD QUIZ

1. What's the name of the guidance document which defines safeguarding, the different types of abuse and the responsibilities of children's services?

- (A) The Children and Social Work Act
- (B) The Education Act
- (C) Working Together to Safeguard Children
- (D) The Childcare Act

2. What is the aim of an Early Help Assessment?

- (A) To learn whether there is risk of significant harm
- (B) To identify what kind of support the child/family needs
- (C) To help determine the Child Protection Plan
- (D) To decide whether further assessments are needed

3. If social care chooses not to take further action but you disagree with their decision, what should you do?

- (A) Abandon your concerns, as social care's decision is final
- (B) Ask the child questions about your concern
- (C) Continue with the safeguarding process on your own
- (D) Monitor the case and contact social care again if concerns arise

4. Which of the following is an example of a low level need?

- (A) The child is pregnant
- (B) The child is homeless
- (C) The child lives in a family unit that is likely to break down
- (D) The child isn't reaching their developmental milestones

5. Which of the following is an example of an emerging need?

- (A) The child has poor behaviour at school
- (B) The child is regularly missing days of school
- (C) The child appears to be misusing substances
- (D) The child is a young carer and needs help

6. Which of the following is an example of a complex need?

- (A) The child has significant health needs
- (B) The child's family needs help accessing services
- (C) The child has problematic family circumstances
- (D) The child discloses that they are being abused

## QUIZ ANSWERS

### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN EDUCATION QUIZ

1. **B**   2. **D**   3. **A**   4. **C**   5. **B**   6. **A**

### DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD QUIZ

1. **C**   2. **B**   3. **D**   4. **D**   5. **C**   6. **A**

