

# Safeguarding INSET Pack

Secondary



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# Statutory safeguarding guidance

## Keeping Children Safe in Education

KCSIE 2025 will come into force on 1st September 2025.

We have summarised the changes using the headings, subheadings and paragraph references from the guidance.

### Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

No changes made.

### Part two: The management of safeguarding

**Page 36, paragraph 128** - Added a note to say that the DfE expects to publish revised guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education this summer and if published, will signpost to this guidance in September 2025.

**Page 38, paragraph 135** - The four areas of online risk have been updated to clarify 'misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories' are safeguarding harms.

*Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.*

**Page 40, paragraph 142** - A link has been added to the plan technology for your school service.

*Schools can use the department's '[plan technology for your school service](#)' to self-assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.*

**Page 41, paragraph 143** - A link has been added to DfE guidance on the use of generative AI in education (2025) at end of filtering and monitoring (FM) section to support schools and colleges.

*The Department has published [Generative AI: product safety expectations](#) to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely, and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education.*

**Page 41, paragraph 144** - The wording has been amended in the cybersecurity standards for schools and colleges advice to clarify that it was developed to help schools improve their cyber resilience.

*Education settings are directly responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Guidance on e-security is available from the [National Education Network](#).*

# Statutory safeguarding guidance

## Part two: The management of safeguarding (continued)

In addition, schools and colleges should consider taking appropriate action to meet the [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#) which were developed to help them improve their resilience against cyber-attacks. Broader guidance on cyber security including considerations for governors and trustees can be found at [National Cyber Security Centre – NCSC](#).

**Page 47, paragraphs 169 and 170** - Information has been added that clarifies and reflects existing AP Guidance.

169. The cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to. Schools should obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment (i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff). This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

170. Schools should always know where a child is based during school hours. This includes having records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. They should regularly review the alternative provision placements they make. Reviews should be frequent enough (at least half termly) to provide assurance that the child is regularly attending and the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement should be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

**Page 49, paragraph 177** - Working Together to Improve School Attendance is now specified as statutory guidance.

The department's statutory guidance on school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) which sets out how schools must work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

**Page 54, paragraph 199** - This has been amended to clarify that the role of the virtual head has been extended to include responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care.

In September 2024, the role of Virtual School Heads was further extended to include a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of all children in kinship care. Non-statutory guidance on [Promoting the education of children with a social worker](#) and children in kinship care arrangements contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of Virtual School Heads.

# Statutory safeguarding guidance

## Part two: The management of safeguarding (continued)

**Page 56, paragraph 204** - Added a note to say that the DfE expects to publish the revised guidance on gender questioning children this summer and if published, will signpost to this guidance in September 2025.

**Page 56, paragraph 205** - The terms “spectrum” and “disorder” have now been replaced with the term “autism” to align with the [SEND code of practice](#).

*However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.*

## Part three: Safer recruitment

**Page 74, paragraph 260** - reference to TRA's Employer Access Service removed and replaced with new link to GOV.UK page.

**Page 75, paragraph 266** - references to TRA's Employer Access Service removed and replaced with new link to GOV.UK page.

**Page 85, paragraph 319** - reference to Employer Secure Access removed and replaced with link to GOV.UK for S128 checks.

**Page 87, paragraph 331** - Information has been added that clarifies and reflects existing AP Guidance.

*Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil, (further information provided in part 2).*

- Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.



# Statutory safeguarding guidance

## Part four: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

**Page 106, paragraph 422** - This has been amended to correct the title of the Information Commissioner's employment practice guidance.

*The Information Commissioner has published guidance on employment records in its, [The Information Commissioner Employment Practices Code](#) which provides some practical advice on record retention.*

## Part five: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

**Page 140, paragraph 545** - A link has been added to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's 'Shore Space'.

*The Lucy Faithfull Foundation in collaboration with the Home Office, has developed '[Shore Space](#)', an online resource which works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour. Shore Space offers a confidential chat service supporting young people who are concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviour.*

## Annexes A, B, C, D and E

**Annex B, page 157** - Header removed

**Annex B, page 163** - A link has been added to the CSA Centre's [Resources for education settings | CSA Centre](#).

**Annex B, page 164** - A link has been added to the [Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation | The Children's Society](#).

 You can read more about the 2025 changes and access the full guidance [here](#).

# Statutory safeguarding guidance

## Working Together to Safeguard Children

The December 2023 version of the guidance is split into chapters which cover the following topics:

### Chapter one: A shared responsibility

This chapter, newly introduced for the 2023 update, outlines how safeguarding should feature a child-centred approach, with the whole family remaining well-informed and involved. It sets out principles for working with parents and carers to build strong and trusting relationships and looks at how agencies are expected to collaborate, including sharing information. It also identifies the need for a strengths-based approach to effect positive change.

### Chapter two: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

In this chapter, the roles and responsibilities of those working with children are outlined in more detail, including leadership roles and accountability. It looks at roles within various agencies alongside those in education, voluntary organisations and sports clubs. The chapter also examines how effective multi-agency working can be achieved alongside multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA).

### Chapter three: Providing help, support and protection

This chapter is split into three sections:

**Section one: Early help.** This section looks in particular at the role of education and childcare settings and examines how children in need of support can be identified.

**Section two: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.** This section focuses on children in need or at risk, such as children with disabilities, children suffering abuse and young carers. The procedures for assessment, referral and providing support to meet the needs of the child and their families and achieve good outcomes are outlined in detail.

**Section three: Child Protection.** In this section, the national multi-agency practice standards for child protection are set out. It covers the entire process of creating a child protection plan.

### Chapter four: Organisational responsibilities

Here, the list of organisations that must conform to this statutory guidance is examined in detail, outlining their specific roles and responsibilities. It examines practice guidelines specific to each setting and clarifies the expectations for effective safeguarding and child protection. It also looks at how allegations against those in 'positions of trust' should be dealt with, including considering their future suitability to work with children should they be dismissed from their post. The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is also outlined in relation to this.

# Statutory safeguarding guidance

## Chapter five: Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents

This chapter explains the responsibilities placed on local authorities to report safeguarding incidents. It includes guidance for Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panels, including the review process and subsequent reports. By reviewing serious safeguarding incidents, lessons can be learnt and future practice can be improved as a result.

## Chapter six: Child death reviews

The final chapter outlines the entire review process. It also examines the statutory requirements and responsibilities of child death review partners alongside the responsibilities of other organisations and agencies who have a role to play.

## Changes from the 2023 guidance

The 2023 guidance update emphasises securing 'positive, trusting and cooperative relationships' with parents and carers. In all versions of WTSC, the importance of information sharing amongst agencies has been highlighted, and the most recent version recognises that improvements must be made to involve families more closely. It also explains the importance of considering the needs of the whole family. For example, families with English as an additional language (EAL) may require more specialist support to keep them involved and informed.

This version also outlines new roles within the local authority, the police and health services. It states that the head of each sector will be named the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP), and they must appoint a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP). It is expected that LSPs will form close relationships with representatives from the education sector, who should also be involved in any strategic decisions and planning.

The changes also include:

- Guidance on considering the wider context of a child's situation when making social care assessments.
- New multi-agency practice standards to strengthen cooperation between services.
- An explanation regarding a need for local authorities to appoint lead practitioners with the capabilities to act upon referrals by completing assessments and coordinating services.
- An outline of the need for local authorities to appoint a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) to improve collaboration between social care services and the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.
- Revised guidance on improving provision for disabled children and their families.
- Guidance on recognising and responding to risk of harm to children outside the home.

 You can read more about the 2023 changes and access the full guidance [here](#).



# Types of abuse

## The four main types of abuse and signs to look out for

The **four main types of abuse** are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. There is often significant overlap between these - rarely would you be able to apply a single label to a child's situation.

**Physical abuse** → A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

- |                         |                               |   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Signs to look out for → | • Bruises                     | • Keeping the body covered, even in hot weather |
|                         | • Fractures or broken bones   |   |
|                         | • Burns or scalds             | • Descriptions of excessive punishment          |
|                         | • Bite marks                  |   |
|                         | • Refusal to discuss injuries |   |

**Emotional abuse** → The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Signs to look out for → | • Lack of confidence                                    | • Cruelty towards other children                  |
|                         | • Being overly affectionate or clingy towards strangers | • Difficulty regulating their emotions            |
|                         | • Having few social skills and friends                  | • Lack of close relationship to a parent or carer |
|                         |   |   |

**Sexual abuse** → Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Signs to look out for → | • Soreness of the genital area                  | • Avoiding being alone with particular people |
|                         | • Recurrent abdominal pains                     |   |
|                         | • Sexually transmitted infections               | • Fear of particular people                   |
|                         | • Age appropriate sexual knowledge and language | • Pregnancy                                   |
|                         |   |   |

## Types of abuse

**Neglect** → The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

**Signs to look out for →**

- Poor personal hygiene
- Ill-fitting clothes or shoes
- Untreated injuries or medical issues
- Constant hunger
- Missing developmental milestones
- Tiredness
- Poor muscle tone
- Recurring accidental injuries or illnesses



You should remain alert to any indicators that may suggest a cause for concern. This could relate to a single event or an accumulation of concerns or patterns that only emerge over time.

**Always maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here... and may well be happening'.**

# Reporting concerns

## How we should respond to, and report any concerns

If you have any concerns about a child, or they disclose information to you, then you should follow your organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy. In the first instance, or if you're unsure about whether action needs to be taken, always talk to your Designated Safeguarding Lead about your concerns.

## Responding to a disclosure

Your organisation should aim to create an effective culture of safeguarding where children feel able to share their concerns and where they know that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

Whilst some children may not disclose information, others may.

When responding to a disclosure, you should:	You should not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Remain calm and level-headed</li> <li>✓ Reassure the child</li> <li>✓ Listen carefully and actively</li> <li>✓ Ask open-ended questions to clarify the child's version of events</li> <li>✓ Let them know that you are taking what they say seriously</li> <li>✓ Tell them what will happen next</li> <li>✓ Share the concern following procedure</li> <li>✓ Make a note of exactly what they have told you as soon as possible with dates and times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Promise to keep secrets</li> <li>✗ Rush the child's account</li> <li>✗ Ask leading questions or try to interview the child</li> <li>✗ Make assumptions</li> <li>✗ Show that you are upset or angry</li> <li>✗ Show disbelief or dismiss them</li> <li>✗ Talk negatively about the potential abuser</li> </ul>

# Reporting concerns

## What to record

When recording a concern - to pass to your DSL or to make a direct referral - you should include the following information:

- The name, age, gender, religion and ethnicity of the child.
- Any contextual information you know about the child or their life.
- Details of the concern.
- The date and time of the incident or disclosure.
- Who was involved or present at the time.
- Who said what: use their exact words.
- Your name, role and contact details as the person sharing the concern.
- Details of any immediate or agreed actions taken and whether or not a referral was made.
- Any conclusions that were drawn from the concern, incident or disclosure.

ⓘ The most important thing to remember is never to ignore any concerns. You do not have to be right or sure or have definitive evidence. There should be no reason that stops you from acting on a concern.

# Safeguarding issues

## Online safety

All school staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk as defined by KCSIE:

- **Content risk:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

### Online safety risks include:

- |   |                                |                          |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Adults posing as children               | • Radicalisation and extremism | • Inappropriate language |
| • Live chat                               | • Financial scams              | • Grooming               |
| • Sending and receiving explicit messages | • Child-on-child abuse         | • Cyberbullying          |
| • Fake news                               | • Artificial intelligence (AI) | • Sextortion             |

Take a look at the following links to learn more:

- ✚ [What is the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Education?](#)
- ✚ [What You Need to Know About Sextortion](#)
- ✚ [Why is Cyberbullying Harmful and What Actions Can You Take?](#)
- ✚ [Parents' Guides to Social Media Apps](#)



# Safeguarding issues

## What actions can we take to help ensure online safety?

- Build your awareness of the 'hidden' online language
  - Emojis and text abbreviations are forming a fast-growing hidden language amongst young people - of which many adults are completely unaware. By recognising that emojis and text abbreviations can carry a hidden meaning, you are more likely to be able to spot communications that may be concerning. Download a useful [emoji guide](#) and a [text abbreviations and acronyms guide](#). You can also find further guidance [here](#).
- Keep the conversation open and share online safety guidance
  - Make sure that children and young people are aware of the risks that come with online activity and know what to do if they are experiencing online harm. Work as a team to create a safe online culture in schools.
- Understand your schools filtering and monitoring systems and procedures
  - Filtering and monitoring systems are an important part of safeguarding and are designed to protect students from harm when they use the internet at school.
  - The 'filtering' part of 'filtering and monitoring' refers to the preventative measures taken to protect students from accessing inappropriate material online.
  - The 'monitoring' part of 'filtering and monitoring' refers to the reactive measures taken to keep an eye on what students are accessing online.
  - Use a downloadable [filtering and monitoring checklist](#) to ensure you fully understand your responsibilities. You can also find further guidance [here](#).
- Display, and reference, internet safety posters in the classroom
  - This can act as a constant reminder of online risks and how children can protect themselves from harm. You can find a set of internet safety posters for schools to download, print and display as you wish [here](#).

❗ As stated in KCSIE, *an effective whole school approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.*

# Safeguarding issues

## Child-on-child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age, and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It refers to any type of behaviour by a child that has the intention of harming another child, whether physically, emotionally or sexually.

Examples of child-on-child abuse include:

- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Coercive control
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Initiation, 'hazing' violence or rituals
- Sexting and sextortion
- 'Upskirting'
- Sharing naked or semi-naked photos or videos without permission

**Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment is a form of child-on-child abuse.**

The [Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges](#) uncovered that some children are facing harmful sexual behaviours so frequently that they consider them 'normal'. You can find the executive summary and recommendations from the report [here](#).

[Everyone's Invited](#) may be a useful link to take a look at. This is a charity dedicated to exposing and eradicating rape culture with empathy, compassion and understanding. They have published a variety of [primary school survivor testimonies](#) which include accounts from people who experienced sexual assault as young as 5. A number of survivor testimonies from older children can be found [here](#).

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Take a look at the following links to learn more:

- [What you Need to Know About Child-on-Child Abuse](#)
- [How to Respond to Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Schools](#)
- [What is Professional Curiosity in Safeguarding?](#)
- [What is Contextual Safeguarding?](#)

# Safeguarding issues

## How can we prevent child-on-child abuse?

- Be clear and consistent about what is considered unacceptable behaviour and language.
  - Children and teachers both should recognise what is acceptable and what will trigger consequences.
- Create an environment where children understand equality, consent and **healthy relationships**.
  - 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.
- Ensure that children feel safe and able to share their concerns about child-on-child abuse.
  - It is vital that children know that they won't be judged and will be taken seriously.
- It should never be ignored, accepted, dismissed or downplayed.
  - KCSIE guidance states that that child-on-child abuse should never be ignored, accepted, dismissed or downplayed as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys." This dismissal can lead to an unsafe environment for children and a culture that normalises abusive and unacceptable behaviour.

ⓘ It's important to practice **contextual safeguarding** and recognise that child-on-child abuse doesn't only happen in supervised educational settings, but also at home and within the community.

# Safeguarding issues

## Radicalisation and extremism

Radicalisation is the process by which someone comes to believe or support extremist ideologies.

Recognising signs of radicalisation and extremism is part of your safeguarding duty. Any concerns regarding radicalisation and extremism may result in a Prevent referral.

### Indicators of radicalisation include:

- Seeming withdrawn, isolated or excluded
- Changing their friendship groups
- Expressing a disregard for differing opinions
- Experiencing family pressure or upheaval
- Lying to their family or other trusted adults
- Drawing symbols linked to extremist ideologies
- Fixated on one new subject, such as immigration
- Appearing to make less effort at school
- Adopting speech that sounds scripted
- Showing signs of being influenced or controlled by a group or individual

## Misogynist and incel ideologies

Incel ideology includes elements of racial hatred, alongside the characteristic misogyny. It centres around the notion that incels are denied sexual and romantic relationships, and that women are to blame for this. This promotes an extremist ideology, and presents a risk of radicalisation.

A [recent report](#) revealed that 60% of primary school teachers said that they were extremely concerned about the influence of **online misogyny** in their school.

When young pupils see sexist content online and then come to school to share and discuss it, they echo the same views and biases. If this is then left unchallenged, the attitude is normalised and female pupils are subjected to increasingly misogynistic behaviour. This contributes to the normalisation of rape culture.

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Take a look at the following links to learn more:

[!\[\]\(fe3aebe81acea8d45108cd2768939da7\_img.jpg\) \*\*Misogyny in Schools: Guidance for Teachers\*\*](#)

[!\[\]\(626ce8ac21792b9405bfddfea8e0c96a\_img.jpg\) \*\*How to Tackle Incel Culture in Schools\*\*](#)

# Safeguarding issues

## How can schools prevent radicalisation and extremism?

- A whole-school, zero tolerance approach to raise standards and set expectations.
  - By implementing a whole school, zero tolerance policy you can raise standards across the entire school and set the expectation from a young age that extremist views will not be tolerated.
- Develop pupils critical thinking, media literacy and resilience skills.
  - When taught in schools, **critical thinking** can provide a student with life long transferable skills that can help them to identify extremist content and misinformation before it causes harm. By developing children's **media literacy skills**, you are better enabling them to both recognise, and respond to, online risk and harm.
- Promoting British values should be embedded throughout the school curriculum and at every stage of education.
  - You should have a clear strategy for promoting these values in your work, as well as methods of showing how this strategy has been effective (for example, through lesson plans or pupil voice).
- Make sure that you understand your Prevent duty.
  - The Prevent duty requires all education providers 'to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. This includes safeguarding learners from extremist ideologies and radicalisation.

ⓘ It's important to look out for the signs, symbols, acronyms and phrases that may indicate affiliation with an extremist ideology. You may see these in the form of graffiti, doodles in books, tattoos, stickers or badges.



# Safeguarding issues

## Mental health

Young people's mental health is something we all must take seriously.

### Signs to look out for include:

- Destructive behaviour
- Having emotional difficulties
- Tiredness and stress
- Heightened emotions, such as excessive crying or hyperactivity
- Lack of confidence
- Changes in eating habits
- Withdrawal and lack of enthusiasm for things previously enjoyed

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The statutory guidance for relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education covers what needs to be taught in schools with regards to mental wellbeing. You can access the full guidance [here](#).

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### How can we support positive mental health?

- Make mental health known.
  - Consider how you might discuss the topic in lessons, address it in assemblies, and celebrate awareness days, like world mental health day, to let students know they're not alone.
- Have an open-door policy and ensure your pupils know you're always there to listen.
  - Talking to the child is often the first step in helping them. In doing so, you can discover what's troubling them and what you can do to help.
- Work with parents, remembering that the needs of the child should be considered as the priority.
  - Remember that mental health is a sensitive subject. Parents may have their own struggles with mental health. The child's privacy and trust is important and they should be confided in if their difficulties are being discussed.
- Stay involved in the child's progress and recovery.
  - Continue to talk to the child (or encourage them to talk to their assigned mental health professional) and ask them how they're doing.



For more information, take a look at [How to Promote Positive Mental Health in Schools](#).

# Safeguarding issues

## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse refers to the abuse that a person suffers in a domestic setting from a partner, spouse or family member. It refers to any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse. Anyone can be subjected to domestic abuse regardless of their age, gender or sexuality.

Signs that a child is being exposed to domestic abuse can include:

- Bullying other children
- Frequent sickness and/or truancy
- Anxious about being away from home because they have to 'protect' their parent who is the victim of domestic abuse
- Replicating or replaying what they see at home in school or clubs
- Becoming aggressive or having violent outbursts
- Being easily startled
- Difficulty communicating feelings and needs
- Nightmares or insomnia

How can we support a child who is being exposed to domestic abuse?

- Create a safe and supportive environment.
  - Children and young people are more likely to share concerns about their home life in a safe environment.
- Teach children what a [healthy relationship](#) looks like.
  - If children are exposed to domestic abuse at home they may not realise that this behaviour is in fact abuse as it has been normalised throughout their childhood. Teaching children and young people what a healthy relationship looks like will help them to recognise signs of abuse in their own relationships and seek help before the situation escalates.
- Seek advice from professionals and colleagues.
  - Share any concerns that you have with colleagues and anyone else who comes into contact with the child. They may be able to provide further insight or they may share similar concerns. You can also seek advice from professionals such as the [NSPCC](#) or [Barnardos](#).
- Maintain an ongoing relationship.
  - If a child has disclosed that they are being exposed to domestic abuse then you must ensure you maintain open communication with that child. This enables you to monitor the situation and assess whether it is escalating or placing the child in immediate danger. It also ensures that the child feels like they have an adult they can trust and turn to.

! You can find further guidance on the impact of domestic abuse on children [here](#).

# Safeguarding culture

## Creating and maintaining an effective safeguarding culture

A safeguarding culture means that safeguarding is key to **every aspect of a setting**.

This helps to ensure that children and young people are able to learn and play in a safe environment where they feel secure. It will empower staff to recognise if a child might be at risk of harm, and to be able to take appropriate action if they are concerned.

Considering the following can help you take steps towards creating and maintaining a culture of safeguarding in your setting:

### Vigilance

An effective safeguarding culture should be one of vigilance, and the cornerstone of vigilance is accepting that issues can occur in your setting.

Whilst uncomfortable, appreciating the fact that you **will** be working with some children who are experiencing abuse, neglect or other safeguarding issues, means that your levels of vigilance will be higher.

### Policies and procedures

In addition to your core safeguarding policy, there are a range of **policies** that will impact upon, and reflect, your culture of safeguarding. It is essential that all policies and procedures are clearly understood, accessible and communicated effectively.

### Communication and effective relationships

Clear lines of communication help to make sure all members of the school community are aware of safeguarding expectations, issues, policies and procedures – including how to raise concerns and access help. This includes relationships with pupils, staff, **parents or carers**, and other agencies or professionals.

### Training

High quality, regular **safeguarding training** for all staff is essential. Revisiting your safeguarding knowledge is an important part of your continued professional development.

# Safeguarding culture

## Continuous learning

Conversations should be ongoing, and include opportunities for reflection and evaluation. This could be through regular sessions during staff meetings, email bulletins, organising specific staff development (for individuals or groups) or by sharing [articles](#), guidance and research.

## Pupil voice

Part of establishing an effective culture of safeguarding is regularly evaluating the safeguarding procedures that you have in place. It is impossible to do this properly without asking the [pupils for their views](#). A setting may have all the correct statutory policies and procedures in place but if students do not feel safe or confident that they can access support, then the safeguarding is not effective.

## 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. Create a safe space for young people 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.

## Professional curiosity

Showing [professional curiosity](#) means actively looking to understand a child's full circumstances, maintaining an open mind, engaging with children and their families and proactively asking questions, seeking help and challenging decisions.