

Safeguarding and child protection: awareness raising and update for staff and governors

September 2023

Session Objectives

By the end of the session you should understand:

- your role in safeguarding children from harm
- how to identify the signs and indicators of child abuse in order to respond appropriately in accordance with the school's child protection policy and the established school procedures
- the current guidance and information available to staff and governors in relation to safeguarding, including the most up to date version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)
- how to respond to child welfare concerns – the processes at your school

Further references and website addresses

Essex Safeguarding Children Board

<http://www.escb.org.uk/>

Includes a link to the **SET procedures** (May 2019)

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

www.nspcc.org.uk

The **NSPCC Helpline** is a service for anyone concerned about the safety or welfare of a child. You can contact the helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week by phone, email or online. 0808 800 5000

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

0800 1111

Ofsted website

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

Educate Against Hate

<http://educateagainsthate.com>

Essex Schools Infolink safeguarding resources

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/Safeguarding.aspx>

Essex Effective Support for children and families - referrals and guidance

<https://www.escb.co.uk/media/2701/escb-effectivesupportbooklet2021v7.pdf>

Corona Virus (Covid-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

NSPCC Corona Virus support

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

ThinkUKnow <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Brook Sexual Behaviours traffic light tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

NSPCC PANTS campaign

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

Publications:

Keeping children safe in education –statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2023)

What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2015)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) www.tso.co.uk

When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges (June 2020)

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (January 2021)

Essex Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements 2021

Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex – guidance for all practitioners to provide early help and targeted and specialist support (October 2021)

No one noticed, no one heard: a study of disclosures of childhood abuse (NSPCC)

How safe are our children online? NSPCC report 2019

PREVENT Duty – DfE guidance July 2015

PREVENT Policy for Southend, Essex and Thurrock

All on the safeguarding page Essex Primary Headteachers' Association www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

Indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as peer on peer abuse) in education and **all** staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

How many children are abused or neglected in the UK

Headline facts and figures - 2022



The figures relate to the initial category of abuse assigned to the child protection plan rather than the most recent category of abuse.

Children in Need are a legally defined group of children (under the [Children Act 1989](#)), assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. This group includes children on child in need plans, children on child protection plans, children looked after by local authorities, care leavers and disabled children. Children in need include young people aged 18 or over who continue to receive care, accommodation or support from children's services and unborn children.

As well as looking at longer time-series trends, this commentary compares the latest year to 31 March 2022 figures with 2021, which was particularly affected by coronavirus (COVID-19), and 2020 which (mostly) pre-dates the pandemic in England.

The rates for 2022 have been calculated based on 2020 ONS mid-year population estimates (for children aged 0 to 17 years) as 2021 estimates were not available at the time of publication.

In 2022:

- compared with 2021, when restrictions on school attendance were in place for parts of the year due to COVID-19, referrals from schools increased, in turn driving the overall rise in referrals. This has likely contributed to the increases seen in the other headline measures.
- compared with 2020, which (mostly) pre-dates the pandemic in England, the number of children in need and the associated rate (per 10,000 children) also increased, as did the number of referrals. However, the number of children on protection plans and the associated rate decreased, as did the number of assessments.
- the number of children in need and the associated rate (1 in every 30 children) were the highest since 2018. The number of referrals was the highest since 2019 and the number of referrals from schools was the highest since recording began in 2014.
- Neglect remained the most common initial category of abuse recorded for children on protection plans in 2022, accounting for almost half of children. The next most common category continued to be emotional abuse, accounting for over one-third of children.
- In 2022, the number of children with emotional abuse, neglect, or physical abuse recorded as the initial category of abuse increased. In contrast, the number with sexual abuse was unchanged and the number with multiple categories of abuse decreased.

Online abuse

Children have been spending more time online with potentially less supervision, and less intervention from over-stretched online moderators. This has exposed children to an increased risk of online abuse. Data compiled by Europol shows significant increases in activity relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation, including a rise in the number of referrals from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to Europol about child sexual abuse material. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) received 44,809 reports from members of the public about child sexual abuse material online between March 23 and July 9 2020, compared to 29,698 reports over the same time period in 2019, an increase of over 50 per cent.

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices

It can happen anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as:

- social networks
- text messages and messaging apps
- email and private messaging
- online chats
- comments on live streaming sites
- voice chat in games.

Children and young people can be revictimised (experience further abuse) when abusive content is recorded, uploaded or shared by others online. This can happen if the original abuse happened online or offline.

Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online:

- [bullying/cyberbullying](#)
- [emotional abuse](#) (this includes emotional blackmail, for example pressuring children and young people to comply with sexual requests via technology)
- [sexting](#) (pressure or coercion to create sexual images)
- [sexual abuse](#)
- [sexual exploitation](#).

Whether abuse happens online or offline it can have a long-lasting impact on a child's overall wellbeing. Online abuse can lead to:

- anxiety
- self-harm
- eating disorders
- suicidal thoughts
- (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Home Office, 2020).
- Research shows that cyberbullying has similar effects to offline bullying. It can lead to:
- falling behind at school
- depression
- anxiety
- other mental health difficulties.

Cyberbullying can make children feel more frightened and helpless than bullying that happens offline. Contact from cyberbullies can happen at any time, anywhere and this can make children feel like they can't escape (Munro, 2011).

Recognising online abuse

It can be easier for perpetrators to initiate, maintain and escalate abuse through digital technology because it gives them:

- easier access to children and young people through social media and digital messaging
- anonymity – it's relatively easy to create anonymous profiles on online platforms or pretend to be another child
- children may have a false sense of safety online which means they're more likely to talk to strangers than in the offline world

(Hamilton-Giachritsis et al, 2017).

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know as well as from strangers. Online abuse may be part of abuse that's taking place in the real world such as bullying or an abusive relationship. Or the abuse may happen online only.

A child who is experiencing abuse online may:

- spend much more or much less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- be withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

Risks

EU Kids online has developed a framework of risks called the 3Cs. This outlines the risks a child may experience when they are online.

Content

- Age-inappropriate content that a child may come across online could be:
- commercial – such as adverts, spam or sponsorship
- aggressive – such as violent and hateful content
- sexual – inappropriate or unwelcome sexual content
- content that promotes negative values – for example biased, racist or misleading information.

Contact

- If a child is actively engaged in the online world, they may become involved in interactions that could be harmful to them. This could be:
- commercial – such as tracking the sites a child has looked at or harvesting their personal information
- aggressive – for example being bullied, harassed or stalked
- sexual – receiving sexualised requests from others or being groomed
- contacts who promote negative values – for example making 'friends' who persuade a child to carry out harmful activities.

Conduct

- Without meaning to, a child may behave in a way that puts them and/or others at risk. For example they may become involved in:
- inappropriate commercial activity - illegal downloading, hacking, using the dark web or getting involved in financial scams
- aggressive behaviour – bullying or harassing someone else
- sexualised behaviour – creating or uploading indecent images
- creating content that promotes negative values – providing misleading information to others

(Hasebrink et al, 2009).

Vulnerability factors

There's no clear set of factors that make children and young people more likely to be affected by online abuse. Different circumstances in a child's life may combine to make them more at risk. But some factors can make children and young people more vulnerable to abuse.

Pre- and early teens are an especially vulnerable age for children online. From 11-12, children start to explore and take risks online, but they haven't yet developed the skills needed to recognise danger or build resilience against things that might upset them (Munro, 2011; Livingstone and Palmer, 2012).

Children aged 9-16 are particularly vulnerable to:

- seeing sexual images online
- seeing online content that promotes potentially harmful behaviour, such as pro-anorexia or self-harm sites
- being bullied online (Mascheroni and Cuman, 2014).

Responding to online abuse

All organisations that work with children should have a child protection policy and procedures that set out what action staff and volunteers should take if they have concerns about a child's safety online.

Everyone who works or volunteers for the organisation should read and understand these documents.

Reporting

- If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns.
- Follow your organisational child protection procedures. Organisations that work with children and families must have [safeguarding policies and procedures](#) in place.
- Contact the NSPCC Helpline on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk. Our trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.
- Contact your local child protection services. Their contact details can be found on the website for the local authority the child lives in.
- Contact the police.
- If your concern is about online sexual abuse, you can make a report to the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\)](#) command.

The police and NSPCC will assess the situation and take action to protect the child as appropriate. This may include making a referral to the local authority.

Services will risk assess the situation and take action to protect the child as appropriate either through statutory involvement or other support. This may include making a referral to the local authority.

Reporting online child abuse images

It's against the law to produce or share images of child abuse, even if the image was self-created. This includes sharing images and videos over social media.

If you see a video or image that shows a child being abused:

- Don't comment, like or share the video or image, as this will distribute it further.
- Report it to the website you've seen it on.
- Report it to the police.
- Contact the NSPCC helpline on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) and we'll report it to the police for you.
- If the image or video involves the sexual abuse of a child, report it to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) who will take steps to get it removed from the internet.

Young people under 18 who are worried that a sexual image or video of them may have been shared online can use Childline and IWF's [Report Remove tool](#) to see if it can be taken down. The tool can be used with the support from a trusted adult, and support is available from Childline.

Some images and videos may appear old but it's still important to report them. You can help prevent the video being shared further by alerting the person sharing the video that it's been reported to the authorities.

Responding to cases of online abuse

When responding to cases of online abuse, it's important for adults to understand the impact it can have on a young person's wellbeing. They should:

- listen calmly to what the child has to say
- remember that the young person may be embarrassed and/or ashamed
- be non-judgmental and make sure the child knows that abuse is never their fault.
- It's also important for adults to understand that online and offline abuse are often entwined and ask tactful questions when the child is ready to understand the context of the abuse. This will enable them to provide the child with the right support.
- Parents should be informed about cases of online abuse unless to do so would put a child at further risk of harm. They may need additional support to understand what has happened and how best to help their child.

In cases where the child or young person has gone to the police about online abuse, it's important for them to:

- fully explain the legal process in a way the child or young person can understand
- be friendly, reduce formalities as much as possible and make the child feel comfortable
- offer the child choice where possible, for example:
- how they want to give evidence
- the gender of the key police officer(s) involved
- what other professionals they would like to be involved
- provide a consistent officer to work with the child throughout the case
- keep in contact with the child and their family regularly and provide regular updates on the progress of the case (Hamilton-Giachritsis et al, 2017).
- Children who have experienced online abuse need to be provided with ongoing support.

Teaching online safety in school (DfE, June 2019)

The government has published a guidance document 'Teaching online safety in school (DfE, June 2019). It outlines to schools the importance of helping children and young people not only use the internet safely, but also give them opportunities to learn how to behave online. Throughout, the guidance emphasises the importance of teaching that is always age and developmentally appropriate. The guidance is non-statutory and applies to all local authority maintained schools, academies and free schools. The advice may also be helpful to nurseries and FE colleges.

Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2023

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. Schools and colleges in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

For the purposes of this guidance children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The DfE uses the terms “**must**” and “**should**” throughout the guidance. It uses the term “must” when the person in question is legally required to do something and “should” when the advice set out should be followed unless there is good reason not to.

A whole school and college approach to safeguarding

The guidance emphasises that governing bodies should ensure they facilitate a whole school or college approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Part 1: safeguarding information for all staff

All staff working directly with children are expected to read at least part 1 of KCSIE (those who don't work directly with children can read the condensed version of part 1, in Annex A).

The changes to part 1 are:

Emphasis on filtering and monitoring:

As part of their safeguarding and online safety training, staff need to understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring systems (paragraph 14). This new emphasis is repeated several times throughout the guidance

This section also now links to the latest version of the [behaviour in schools guidance](#).

Part 2: the management of safeguarding

This sets out the responsibility of governing bodies, proprietors and management committees.

Around filtering and monitoring:

- Your governing board should make sure the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) takes responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place as part of their role (paragraph 103)
- Your board should also make sure all staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of their safeguarding training (paragraph 124)
- Your child protection policy should include how your school approaches filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks (paragraph 138)
- Governing boards should review the DfE's [filtering and monitoring standards](#). Your board should discuss with your IT staff and service provider what needs to be done to support your school in meeting the standards (paragraph 142)

New wording added for clarification:

- That some children are at greater risk of harm than others, both online and offline (previously, it didn't make reference to online) (paragraph 170)

- Around how the term 'children missing education' is different from 'children absent from education'

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The guidance specifies it's important that your school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying any abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risks of them becoming a child missing education in future (paragraph 175)

A new line has been added into the section on elective home education (EHE):

If the parent/carer of a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has expressed their intention to educate their child at home, local authorities will need to review the plan and work closely with parents/carers (paragraph 178)

When thinking about information security and access management, your school should consider meeting the [cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#) (paragraph 144)

When out-of-school-setting providers use your school premises for non-school activities, guidance on [keeping children safe in out-of-school settings](#) lists the safeguarding arrangements you should expect these providers to have in place (paragraph 167)

For further support on children with special educational needs, schools can use the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS) (paragraph 202)

Part 3: more details on safer recruitment measures

You should:

- Inform shortlisted candidates that you might conduct an online search as part of due diligence checks in the recruitment process (paragraph 221). Schools were prompted to consider doing these checks in KCSIE 2022, and now KCSIE 2023 adds that it's good practice to let shortlisted candidates know about these checks
- As part of ongoing vigilance, create the right culture so staff feel comfortable discussing safeguarding matters in and outside of work – the guidance has added that this includes online (paragraph 343)

Part 4: handling allegations against staff

There's a new heading and paragraph in this section titled 'organisations or individuals using school premises'. It says that if your school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using your school premises for running an activity for children, you should follow your safeguarding policies and procedures and inform the local authority designated officer (LADO), as you would with any safeguarding allegation (paragraph 377).

Part 5: child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

The word 'sanction' has replaced the word 'discipline' to reflect the most recent behaviour guidance:

Paragraphs 542 and 544 now say that teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them

The heading above paragraph 544 has been tweaked to 'sanctions and the alleged perpetrator(s)'

Annex A: safeguarding information for school and college staff

The changes here reflect the changes in section 1 of the guidance: all staff should receive appropriate safeguarding training that includes understanding their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of online safety (page 136).

Annex B: further information

Children who are absent from education

This section has been updated to reflect the difference between children absent from education and children missing education. It says that children being absent from school repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, as well as children missing education, can act as a warning sign of potential safeguarding issues. Early intervention is essential to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future

Note: it isn't completely clear, but the guidance implies that 'children missing education' is the next step up from children being absent from education (pages 144 and 145, also see paragraph 175)

Mental health

Attendance has been added to the list of things which can be impacted by mental health (page 148)

Radicalisation, the Prevent duty and Channel

The section on preventing radicalisation says children may be 'susceptible' to extremist ideology and radicalisation, rather than 'vulnerable' on preventing radicalisation (page 149)

The section on Channel has also removed the term 'vulnerable', and now refers to people as 'susceptible' and 'at risk' of being drawn into terrorism (page 151)

There's more clarity around the fact that someone referred to Channel will be required to provide their consent before any support through the programme is provided (page 151)

Forced marriage

Since February 2023, it's been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. This applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages (pages 155 and 156)

Annex C: role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The only change here is that the DSL's responsibilities have been updated to include their role in taking the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place in school (page 164).

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Essex

In Essex there are five organisations who are jointly responsible by law for the partnership arrangements for keeping children safe:

- Essex County Council
- Essex Police
- Three Integrated Care Boards covering the county of Essex

These are known as the Statutory Partners and they have identified relevant agencies which are legally required to cooperate with [local safeguarding arrangements](#), including Education, Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS), District, City & Borough Councils, Office of Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company.

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education 2019

Keeping Children Safe in Education states that schools must have a staff code of conduct, and that this is explained to new staff at induction. Although non-statutory, the document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education' is an excellent starting point to understand professional conduct towards children and young people. The Safer Recruitment Consortium has brought the guidance up-to-date and published the revised version in May 2019.

Keeping Children Safe in Education says that schools should have 'A staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the code of conduct) which should, amongst other things, include – acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media'. All staff should be aware of the code of conduct and have it explained to them during induction. The Guidance for Safer Working Practices covers all the required aspects of the staff behaviour policy. The document is particularly useful in that it has many examples of what the guidance means. The new version has a forward by Nadhim Zahawi, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Children and Families.

Ofsted review of sexual abuse within schools

Recommendations for school leaders

School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people. In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them. This should include:

1. A carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This should include time for open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'
2. High-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
3. Routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse
4. A behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
5. Support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)
6. Training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:
 - better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
 - consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse

Key questions for staff and governors

- Do our safeguarding and pupil behaviour policies address harmful sexual behaviour and peer on peer abuse and are they well understood by everyone?
- Are staff and other adults trained to recognise the signs of peer on peer abuse?
- Are staff and other adults clear about procedures where they are concerned that a child may be a victim of peer-on-peer abuse?
- Do pupils feel safe and protected from peer-on-peer abuse? How do you know?

Additional guidance and further reading

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework>
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions;
- associate with other children involved in exploitation;
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- misuse drugs and alcohol;
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education.

CSE can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners

The Role of Child Exploitation (CE) Champions

As part of Southend, Essex and Thurrock's approach to tackling CSE, the concept of CE Champions was introduced in 2013. Since then the ESCB has trained over 600 champions.

The role is non-statutory. The purpose of having Champions within each organisation is to

- Have a key contact for people within your organisation to go to for support and advice in relation to CE
- Have a key contact for ESCB to share updates, resources and examples of good practice

The role of the CE Champion is to:-

- keep up to date with Essex CE arrangements
- share relevant information and resources internally
- keep up to date with policy and procedures in relation to CE
- to act as a focal point within their organisation
- to provide advice and signposting in relation to individual cases

The CE Champion in our school is

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism¹⁰³ should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the [Home Office](#).

What to do if you are concerned

Anyone working with a vulnerable child or young person who they think may be at risk of

county lines and/or criminal exploitation should follow their local safeguarding guidance and share this information with local authority social care services. If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm you should contact the police. In a primary school staff might be aware of older siblings being at risk of / involved in county lines, therefore raising the risk for their younger brother or sister, as well as themselves.

As a member of staff in school, your first step will be to discuss your concerns with your designated safeguarding lead. The DSL has the responsibility for linking in with social services and the police.

Preventing Radicalisation - “the Prevent duty”

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children’s services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism - “the Prevent duty”.

Since July 2015, schools and a range of other public bodies have a legal responsibility to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty.

[Prevent duty guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Themes

There are four themes within the Prevent duty:

- Risk assessment
- Working in partnership
- Staff training
- IT policies

Identifying ‘at risk’ pupils

Local authorities and police will have contextual information

No single way to identify a young person who is at risk.

Small changes in behaviour might indicate there are concerns about their wellbeing.

Even very young children might show signs of radicalisation

Schools should act ‘proportionately’: the prevent duty does not require teachers to ‘carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life’.

Working in Partnership

LSCBs to co-ordinate local agencies responses to safeguarding children from extremism or radicalisation.

LSCBs will refer to radicalisation or extremism concerns in their threshold guidance

Training

Home Office has developed a training package called WRAP – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent

Individual schools should decide their own training needs

As a minimum, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) should undertake Prevent awareness training

IT

IT filtering prevents extremist material being accessed in schools (be aware of pupils using community languages to circumvent filtering)

Internet safety

Develop an awareness of online risks and how extremists use social media to engage with young people

Every teacher needs to be aware of the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups

Building resilience to radicalisation

Schools should offer a 'safe environment' to explore sensitive or controversial topics.

Department for Education Helpline

Dedicated telephone helpline for extremism

Telephone: 020 7340 7264

Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

As teachers, you have a vital role to play in meeting these obligations. In order to do this, you need to be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do if you have a concern. Protecting pupils from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of your wider safeguarding duties, and is similar to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences. It is not about spying on pupils or carrying out unnecessary intrusion into family life. It is about ensuring that you know how to identify behaviour of concern and how to refer pupils who may be at risk of radicalisation for appropriate support.

As teachers, you can also build children and young people's resilience against extremism by providing a safe space for them to debate controversial issues and develop the critical thinking skills and knowledge they need to be able to challenge extremist arguments. You can find the resources to help you on the Educate against Hate website

<http://educateagainsthate.com/teachers/what-are-my-responsibilities-teachers/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-fundamental-british-values-through-smsc>

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (WHO). It is also sometimes referred to as female genital cutting or female circumcision. There are no health benefits to FGM and it is recognised internationally as a human rights violation.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 strengthened further the legislation on FGM and now includes:

- the right to anonymity for victims
- the offence of failing to protect a girl aged under 16 from the risk of FGM
- the provision of Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPO); and
- the duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

NB For school staff this will occur from a disclosure and not a physical examination

Online training is provided by the Home Office

<https://www.fgmelearning.co.uk/>

Managing a disclosure

Children experiencing distress or abuse may seek to 'tell' in school, often because this is the place where they feel most safe, secure and listened to. It is not unusual for them to choose members of staff seen to be on the periphery of the staff team such as midday supervisors, caretakers or classroom support staff because they may be perceived as having less authority, more time and be less intimidating.

It is important to make sure therefore that ALL staff know how to respond to a disclosure from a child. If a child discloses harm to any staff member it must be remembered that the school role is to recognise and refer abuse, not to investigate.

This is to avoid contamination of evidence gained in any subsequent investigation undertaken by Police and/or Social Services and to ensure that the child is not placed in the stressful position of having to repeat their story over and over again.

'Not investigating' does not mean that the staff member receiving the concern cannot ask any questions. However, careful thought needs to be given to how and what questions are asked, avoiding anything that can be interpreted as 'leading' the child. The basic rule of thumb is that staff should ONLY ask enough questions of the child to clarify whether there is a child protection concern. Once the child has clarified that they are being harmed or are at risk (or the staff member is reassured that the child is safe), no further questions are required.

If a child presents with an injury accompanied by a clear disclosure that they have been harmed, or makes a clear sexual disclosure it should not be necessary to question the child other than perhaps to clarify who was involved and when an incident took place.

The child should be listened to actively and their story carefully recorded. In this situation the staff member should ensure immediate information sharing with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is likely that such a scenario will require immediate consultation about action to be taken and an urgent referral to Specialist Children's Services may be necessary.

In other situations where the child appears to be making a possible disclosure or has a suspicious injury, it is reasonable to ask open, non-leading questions in order to establish the child's story. Examples of questions are:

"That's a nasty bruise, how did it happen?;

"Tell me about what happened?";

"You seem a bit upset and I'm worried about you, is anything troubling you?";

"Can you tell me more about that?"

You may wish to use the acronym 'TED' as a reminder that the child can be encouraged to 'Tell', 'Explain' and 'Describe' the concern. If it is necessary to seek further clarification, staff should keep to open questions such as What? When? Who? How? Where?

It is important to remember that questions should only be asked to help clarify whether the child is at risk of harm. Once clarification is achieved, no further questions should be asked. Sometimes children choose to disclose concerns through a third party such as a friend 'telling' on their behalf, or indirectly e.g. sounding out information and reaction by asking 'what if my friend.....?' If such concerns arise they should be taken equally seriously and be followed up with the DSL in the same manner as a direct disclosure.

Children may also seek to disclose and share their experiences through drawings, writing and play. If concerns arise, it is appropriate to talk further with the child to allow wider discussion and clarification. This might involve inviting the child to “tell me more about what is happening in your picture/ story / game”.

There is helpful information on responding to an initial disclosure in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (paragraphs 466 onwards)

The updated procedures explain that staff:

- Don't need to wait for a child to make a disclosure, they should act on any concerns immediately.
- May overhear a conversation that suggest a child may have been harmed or a child's behaviour may be an indicator.
- May confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the police, if the report includes an online element.
- Can ask children outright if they've been harmed and what the nature of the harm was.
- Should keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Should reflect back, using the child's language, when hearing a report.
- Should recognise it may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.

So, what do I do as a member of staff if a child asks to talk to me about a problem?

- Do not promise them confidentiality
- Listen to the pupil
- Write down the initial details of the disclosure on the Concern Form in the words used by the pupil
- Do not say words for them, however embarrassed they are to say them
- Do not get them to give too much detail but sufficient to make you concerned about the nature for their disclosure.
- Immediately after the conversation, give the Concern Form to
- Never leave any situation for a few days to allow you or the child to ‘think about it’ – the child could be at risk. Act immediately.

How do I prepare for the meeting?

Collect a disclosure form from

Where do we hold the meeting?

If a child asks to talk to you about something personal, please make sure of the following:

- Go somewhere quiet but make sure there are people near to the room you are in.
- Do not shut the door – make sure it stays open

How do I conduct the meeting?

- Listen to the child - let them do the talking and try not to say things for them
- DO NOT PROMISE that you will not tell anyone else – even if it means the child may stop talking to you. You may need to explain that it depends upon what they are going to tell you and that you may not be able to help them unless you DO involve someone else.
- After the child has told you the problem, try to record the exact words used by the pupil when disclosing to you and complete the Concern Form

How much detail do they need to give me?

- Just enough to support your concerns that they have a serious issue/are at risk.
- If taken further they will have to go over the incident(s) again in more detail with the Police and/or Social Services, so basic detail is all that is needed to save the child more stress.
- Save any drawings and artwork. This information may need to be shared with Children's Social Services and the police.
- Just make sure you have the basic facts that caused your concern in the first place to complete the Concern Form.

NOTE: Disclosures relating to allegations against colleagues and members of staff should be treated in the same way. This information must be passed immediately to the Headteacher who will ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Person was specified in the Children Act 2004 and ensured that every organisation had a "named person" for safeguarding children and young people. Prior to that, the role had frequently been known as the Child Protection Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Person has a responsibility at both a strategic level within the organisation and on a day to day basis.

The school/academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the first point of contact for any member of the school staff who has a concern about the safety and well-being of a pupil.

Our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is
Our Deputy DSL is
and
and

Key Aspects of the Designated Person role includes:

- Making sure all staff are aware how to raise safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring all staff understand the symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Referring any concerns to social care
- Monitoring children who are the subject of child protection plans
- Maintaining accurate and secure child protection records

Governing bodies, proprietors and management committees should appoint an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school or college leadership team, to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This should be explicit in the role-holder's job description. This person should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. They should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding leads. Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this **lead responsibility** should not be delegated.

What school staff need to know

All staff should be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction.

I have **received, read and understood** the following information from my school:

	Yes	If no – next steps
Child protection policy		
Behaviour policy		
Staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)		
Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education		
(At least) Part 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education		
The role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputy DSLs)		

I need more information about...

Next steps for me...