



Current legislation

Child protection legislation (Children Act 1989 and 2004 in England and Wales, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) has been established to ensure the safeguarding of children. The legislation aims to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young adults and ensures that people with responsibilities for health, safety, education and the well-being of children are trained in the understanding of their responsibilities in relation to the law and have a duty of care to ensure their protection.

Every local authority has a duty to protect children from significant harm. As someone who works with children in a school or other education setting, you have a crucial role to play in preventing children from suffering and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to protect them.

Keeping children safe in education, 2015 is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. Schools and colleges must consider the guidance.

The document contains information on what schools and colleges should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools and colleges must comply with when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

It is a requirement that all staff in schools and colleges read at least part one of the guidance. A link to the guidance can be found on TimePlan's website. It should be read alongside statutory guidance **Working together to safeguard children, 2015** which applies to all the schools.

In addition to the guidance and information, you need to familiarise yourself with individual school policy documents and procedures. It is therefore important that you seek advice from the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow the school's procedures should a child protection issue occur whilst on assignment. It is important to keep your local TimePlan office informed if an incident happens at school that involves yourself.

What is Child Abuse?

The following definition of child abuse has been formulated from a number of ideas.

"Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse." - NSPCC

Abuse can occur in any child/adult or child/child relationship and can involve more than one child. Child abuse can be categorised as physical, emotional, sexual or neglect. Although bullying is not seen as a specific form of abuse, it is often seen as a symptom of a culture where abuse goes unchallenged. It is important to familiarise yourself with a school's anti-bullying policy.

In many cases, children are subjected to a combination of abuse types. Child abuse can take place within any setting and is just as serious whether occurring due to ignorance or as a deliberate act. The impact on the child is just the same.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the child protection officer/senior management/ head teacher should they occur in the school setting. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation; these feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare. It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. TimePlan will be able to offer advice and support should the need arise.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the ill treatment of a child or young person, which may or may not cause injury or discomfort but which will affect the health, emotions, well-being or development of the child.

Physical abuse may involve:

- hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child
- a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a child.

Physical signs include:

- injuries which the child cannot explain, or that cannot be fully explained
- injuries that have not been treated or have been treated inappropriately
- injuries which are in different stages of healing
- unexplained bruising and/or cuts on face, lips, mouth, chest arms, back, buttocks or thighs
- clusters of injuries with regular patterns or reflecting the shape of an implement
- marks on the body including, hand, finger or bite marks
- fractures that are inconsistent with the child's developmental stage
- burns and scalds affecting unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders, buttocks and soles of the feet which could have been caused by hot water, friction, cigarettes and electrical appliances

Emotional/behavioural signs include:

- a wariness of adult contact
- flinching when approached or touched unexpectedly
- reluctance to have their parents contacted for further clarification of injuries and / or reluctance to go home at the end of the school day
- attention seeking / aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- poor attendance record
- reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities
- the covering of arms and legs even when hot
- reluctance to leave the security of the classroom at break times
- depression or moods which are out of character with the child's general behaviour
- withdrawal or an unnatural compliance with others

The Department for Education's statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities

Working together to safeguard children, 2015

www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Keeping children safe in education, 2015

www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

Keeping Children safe in education, 2015 (part 1)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447596/KCSIE_Part_1_July_2015.pdf

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation

www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation

Multi-agency guidelines on FGM for those with statutory duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only because they meet the needs of another person
- imposing expectations that are inappropriate to the age or development of the child - eg, over-protecting the child, limiting their exploration and learning, preventing them from taking part in normal social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else
- serious bullying which causes the child frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- overuse of inappropriate language
- shouting and developing a culture of fear and rejection
- exploitation or corruption

Physical signs include:

- a failure to grow or to thrive, particularly if the child thrives when away from home
- sudden speech disorders, headaches, changes in appetite and possible loss of bladder control
- delayed development, either physical or emotional

Emotional/behavioural signs include:

- compulsive nervous behaviour or obsessive compulsive behaviour
- an unwillingness or inability to play with others
- an excessive fear of making mistakes
- depression and suicidal tendencies
- reluctance to have parents contacted
- an excessive deference towards others, especially adults
- an excessive lack of confidence
- an excessive need for approval, attention and affection
- an inability to cope with praise

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or young person is pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any type of sexual activity including prostitution with an adult or young person, irrespective of whether the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual Abuse may involve:

- physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Physical signs include:

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- diagnosis of any sexually transmitted disease and or pregnancy
- recurrent genital discharge or urinary infections without apparent cause
- excessive masturbation/rubbing against objects (this can be exhibited by both male and female students)
- stomach pains or discomfort when the child is walking or sitting down
- presence of 'love bites'

Emotional/behavioural signs include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- an apparent fear of adult contact
- self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- abuse of drugs or other substances
- eating problems such as anorexia or bulimia
- sexualised behaviour or knowledge in young children
- sexual drawings or inappropriate language
- possession of unexplained amounts of money
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal



Government Information & Guidance

Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners

www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2

Guidance to help practitioners identify the signs of child abuse and neglect and understand what action to take.

Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty

www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty

Guidance for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism.

What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited

www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-you-suspect-a-child-is-being-sexually-exploited

Departmental advice on the national action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation.

Drugs: advice for schools

www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools

Guidance for school leaders and staff on managing drugs, drug-related incidents within schools and pastoral support for pupils.

Preventing bullying

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Guidance for schools on preventing and responding to bullying.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure, whether intentional or unintentional, to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs resulting in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It is also the failure to intervene in dangerous situations.

Neglect may involve a parent or a carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter – such as excluding the child from home
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate carers
- provide a structured and caring environment
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- give encouragement to develop and grow

Physical signs include:

- being constantly hungry and sometimes stealing food from others
- failure to thrive including loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- obesity due to poor diet
- unkempt appearance, frequently dirty or smelly (poor hygiene)
- being dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- untreated medical conditions

Emotional/behavioural signs include:

- frequently missing school or being late
- having few friends
- being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis
- compulsive stealing or scavenging, especially of food
- seeking inappropriate affection and attention
- appearing to take on adult responsibilities
- poor communication skills
- defensive and temperamental behaviour

Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence has often been seen as just a problem between adults, having no detrimental affect on children. It is now a known fact that even if a child is not physically harmed, children may suffer lasting emotional and psychological damage as a result of witnessing violence. Witnessing domestic violence is actually child abuse. As domestic abuse usually takes place in the family home, it is difficult to know whether a child has been subject to it or not.

Signs of domestic abuse include:

- display of anti-social behaviour, changes in play
- increased aggressive behaviour, angry outbursts
- withdrawal and a loss of interest in friends, school and other activities

Online Abuse

Online abuse includes cyberbullying, online grooming and child sexual exploitation online. Online abuse can have a devastating impact on childrens' lives.

Signs of online abuse include:

- withdrawn, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- secretive about who they have been talking to and what they have been doing online
- spending significantly more or less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
- eating and sleeping problems and self harm

Schools have an important role in teaching children to protect themselves from online abuse and many schools communicate the "risks and threats" of social media abuse and internet safety including sending inappropriate images through PSHE. In addition many schools run information evenings for parents on how to keep their children safe online.

The government has produced a range of guidance and support materials available on the gov.uk website including an online abuse and bullying prevention guide www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-abuse-and-bullying-prevention-guide.

Organisations

The following organizations provide a wealth of information and resources regarding safeguarding and child protection.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

www.nspcc.org.uk

The National Crime Agency CEOP Command (formerly the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre)

<https://ceop.police.uk>

Thinkuknow

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Kidscape

www.kidscape.org.uk

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

Child Protection Training

Statutory guidance states that all staff members of a school or college should receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

TimePlan provides child protection courses throughout the year to ensure that all staff have access to CPD and training in respect of the protection and care of children.

TimePlan's child protection training courses are delivered by BlueLight Child Protection Ltd. BlueLight provide high quality, accredited safeguarding children and child protection training for anyone who works with children in education, leisure and the healthcare sector.

BlueLight's course meets all relevant government guidelines and is OFSTED level 1 compliant and CPD accredited. It covers legislation and guidance, the types of child abuse, and responsibilities to report concerns.

All of their trainers were previously police detectives with many years of experience as safeguarding practitioners preventing and investigating child abuse.

Disclosures of Abuse

There may be occasions when a vulnerable person discloses to you about abuse that she/he has suffered. In this situation you must remember that it is not your job to investigate allegations. The child protection officer will make the decision if and when to involve external organisations such as specialist police officers and social workers. It is important to follow the school/institution child protection policy and to liaise immediately with the nominated child protection officer. If you have reported any concerns it is prudent to provide your local TimePlan office with a copy of your notes, so that ongoing advice and support can be given.

It is important to:

- remain calm, accessible, receptive and listen carefully without interrupting
- communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference - this is especially important for disabled children and for children whose preferred language is not English
- be aware of the non-verbal messages you are giving
- make it clear that you are taking them seriously
- acknowledge their courage and reassure them that they are right to tell
- reassure them that they should not feel guilty
- let them know what you are going to do and what may happen as a result
- make a note of what was said and who was present using the child's actual words wherever possible

Do not:

- allow your shock or distaste to show
- probe for more information than the child offers
- speculate or make assumptions
- ask leading questions or put words in to the child's mouth
- physically examine the child or young adult or remove, look under or open their clothes
- make any comments about the alleged abuser
- make any promises that you cannot keep
- agree to keep the information a secret
- delay getting emergency help if needed

Recording and Reporting Child Abuse

If you see, hear or are told something that makes you concerned about a child's safety or welfare, record it and report it to the designated member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding children. They will decide what action to take if they believe that the child may be in need or at risk of significant harm and will follow this up with a written referral.

You will need to know:

- who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is
- who you can report to if the designated person is unavailable
- where the safeguarding/child protection/ whistle blowing policies and procedures are kept

It is important at this stage to ensure that the information is only shared with other individuals on a purely need to know basis. From this point onwards it is important to act only on the advice from the DSL.

If a child tells you he/she has been abused you should immediately make a note of what was said. Date and sign the record and pass to the DSL, who will store the information securely.

When recording disclosures the following points need to be considered:

- any records made at the time of the disclosure can become court evidence, it is therefore important that such records are clear, legible, free from biased opinion and a true reflection of what actually happened
- use the child's own words/phrases and vocabulary even though they may not make sense, and not your interpretation of them. Record words/phrases that are repeated.
- record your verbal and non verbal responses
- record the environmental context in which the disclosure was made and the emotional state of the child

Once concerns have been referred to children's social services, it is their responsibility to assess the needs of the child and, if necessary, undertake a child protection enquiry. They have a responsibility to inform the school of the action they are taking and the outcomes of any enquiry. The designated member of staff will share with you what you need to know to continue to work with the child.