



Staff Guide to Child Protection & Safeguarding



The Cornerstone Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Named Persons of Responsibility



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Although the school has named persons of responsibility for safeguarding, it is **everyone's** responsibility to safeguard children.

All schools have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils by:

- Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children; and
- Identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate.
- Schools also contribute through the curriculum by developing children's understanding, awareness and resilience.

Disclosure

When a child discloses that they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, the initial response should be to **listen carefully** to what the child says and to **observe** the child's behaviour and circumstances.

The DO's:

- Do inform them that the disclosure will have to be shared
- Do listen carefully to what the child has to say
- Do clarify the concerns if necessary
- Do use open questions, *if you need to clarify the concerns* -
Why? How? Where? Who? When?
- Do offer re-assurance

The DON'T'S:

- Don't promise to keep the disclosure confidential
- Don't press the child for more information or cross examine them
- Don't investigate the concern yourself
- Don't use leading or closed questions
- Don't make false promises about what can be done
- Don't ask the child to sign and date any records you make

Reporting Concerns

Recording

- Record the concern on CPOMs **as soon as possible** after disclosure; on the same day
- Include: - Date and time of any incident
 - What the child said and what you said
 - Your observations e.g. child's behaviour/ emotional state
 - Any action you took as a result of your concerns

Confidentiality

- All staff must be aware of the school's policy on confidentiality
- **Disclosures cannot be kept confidential**
- Only share information with those who need to know.

Policies and Documents

There are a number of policies and documents relating to safeguarding practices at The Cornerstone Academy.

These include:-

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025/2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners
- Safeguarding Reporting at Carter
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- United Learning Safeguarding Children Policy and Child Protection
- E-safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Lockdown Procedures
- The Use of Physical Intervention
- Medical Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Please see the Team Drive for all Important Documents, Guidelines and Advice. You can find all these documents, leaflets and posters in the following place:

Teams — All Staff — File— Safeguarding and E Safety—Important Documents and Leaflets.

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to make themselves aware of these policies.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse can be a single incident, or a number of different incidents that take place over time; and which **cause harm** to a child. Under the Child Protection Act 1989, it does not matter how much a child is harmed, but whether a child:

- has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at risk of suffering harm
- does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm

Harm is defined as any detrimental effect of a **significant** nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. (Section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1989).

For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on a child's wellbeing must be

substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child's presentation, functioning or behaviour.

There are different types of child abuse:

Physical abuse

Verbal Abuse

Emotional / Psychological abuse

Domestic Abuse

Sexual abuse

Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury or where physical aggression has been shown. Physical abuse doesn't always leave visible marks or injuries.

Physical abuse can include:

- **Beating, slapping, hitting, pushing, kicking, or throwing.**
- **Pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling**
- **Burning/ scalding**

Visual Signs of Physical Abuse

- **Injuries in unusual areas or with well defined edges**
- **Burns, scalds, bite marks.**
- **Fractures, Breaks or sprains - refusal to discuss injuries/ inconsistent explanations**
- **Talk of excessive punishment**
- **Reluctance to remove clothing**
- **Resistance to going home.**
- **Fear of adults.**

Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is interacting with the child causing distress or upset. When verbal abuse happens, the person is attempting to control and punish.

Verbal abuse can include:

- **Shouting, screaming, swearing and threats**
- **Negative comparing to siblings, parents or other members of the family.**
- **Verbal Criticism**
- **Public humiliation**

Signs of Verbal Abuse

- **Lack of emotional stability or withdrawal**
- **Abnormal attachment to parent / carer**
- **Lack of confidence/ low self esteem**
- **Anxiety or attention seeking behaviour**
- **Inappropriate emotional response**
- **Repeating bad language heard**
- **Bullying others around them**

Emotional Abuse

Emotional child abuse is any attitude, behaviour, or failure to act that interferes with a child's mental health or social development. Surprisingly, emotional abuse can have more long-lasting negative psychiatric effects than either physical abuse or sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse can include:

- It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:
- Rejection/ dismissiveness/ prolonged silence
- Name calling/ hostility/insults/ belittling
- Exposure of a child to domestic and family violence

Signs of emotional abuse

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment to parent / carer
- Lack of confidence/ low self-esteem
- Anxiety or attention seeking behaviour
- Inappropriate emotional response
- Involvement in drug or alcohol related activities

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can be any form of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship or in the home. Children can also be seen as causing domestic violence in the home. Both men and women can be abused or be the abusers.

Domestic abuse can include:

- Physical/ verbal aggression and threats
- Controlling behaviour
- Withdrawal from socialising

Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse can include:

- anti-social behaviour, aggression , physical violence
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking or complete withdrawal
- Fear

What is Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, child or adolescent involves a child in any form of sexual activity. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include:

- **Kissing, touching or holding a child in a sexual manner**
- **Having sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age. Penetrating the child's vagina or anus by penis, finger or object. Oral sex, rape, and incest**
- **Sending obscene messages, text messages/ emails to a child. Showing pornographic films, magazines or photographs to a child**
- **Having a child pose / perform in a sexual manner**
- **Exposing children to adult sexuality.**
- **Sexual exploitation through child prostitution/ child pornography**
- **Violations of bodily privacy - Forcing a child to undress.**
- **Up skirting**

Visual Signs of Sexual Abuse

- **Aggression**
- **Being withdrawn, bed wetting, nightmares or insomnia**
- **Self harming and eating disorders**
- **Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts.**
- **Seductiveness/ Promiscuity / Precociousness**
- **Avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or body**
- **E-safety concerns**
- **Reluctance to remove clothing for swimming or PE**
- **Regular infections or illnesses**

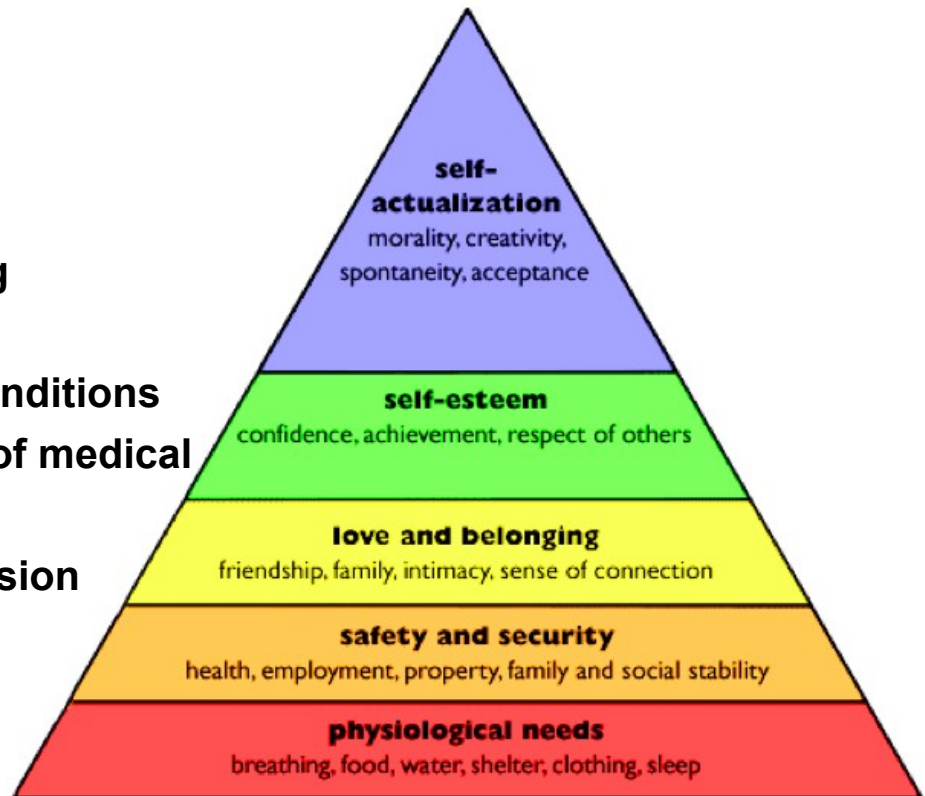
Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a consensual relationship. Some children and young people are trafficked into or the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

What is Child Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected.

Basic needs include:

- Food
- Housing
- Health care
- Adequate clothing
- Personal hygiene
- Hygienic living conditions
- Timely provision of medical treatment
- Adequate supervision



Signs of Neglect

- Inadequate clothing for the child's size, weather, or time of year
- Underweight or overweight for age / begging, stealing/ hoarding food
- Lack of food and drink and no means to buy any
- Frequent school absences and lateness
- Poor health/ untreated injuries
- Emotionally needy
- Persistently dirty, with a body odour/ unwashed clothing
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Comments from a child that no one is home to provide care
- Being constantly tired
- Untreated wounds/ infections

General Indicators of Child Abuse

Some general indicators of child abuse include:

- Showing wariness/distrust of adults
- Wetting or soiling
- Demanding or aggressive behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Mental health issues
- Difficulty relating to adults and peers
- Risk taking behaviour/ drugs, alcohol, promiscuity
- Self harming/ feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Being withdrawn
- Being overly obedient
- Being reluctant to go home
- A change in behaviour or demeanour
- Isolated from peers
- Sleeping difficulties; often being tired and falling asleep

Risk Factors

Parental factors:

- Parent has already abused a child
- Pregnancy was not wanted
- Parent has a background of abuse when growing up
- Unsupported parent, often with low education
- Parents have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Parents have poor parenting skills or lack parenting knowledge
- Parent has a mental illness or abuses drugs/ alcohol

Environmental factors:

- Overcrowding in the house
- Poverty or lack of opportunity
- Family violence is present
- Family is experiencing multiple stresses

Child factors:

- Child has a physical/ developmental disability
- Child is the product of an abusive relationship
- Lack of attachment between child and parent
- Child is isolated from peers

'County Lines' or 'OT'

Criminal exploitation is also known as '**county lines**' and is when gangs/ organised crime networks groom and exploit children to sell drugs and travel across counties, using dedicated mobile phone 'lines'.

What are the signs of criminal exploitation and county lines?

- **Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing**
- **Being found in areas away from home**
- **Drug use/ being found to have large amounts of drugs.**
- **Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going/ unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery**
- **Unexplained absences from school**
- **Disruptive/ aggressive behaviour**
- **Using gang, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know**
- **Injuries/ looking particularly dishevelled**
- **Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.**

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is when a stranger takes over another person's home, usually a vulnerable person, and uses it as a place to sell, supply or store drugs. Often they will target homes that appears unkempt or that have young children in. They may threaten that person to leave their own home.

The children in the home will also be used by the predator to deliver drugs or collect and have been manipulated against their parents.

Spotting the signs of Cuckooing:

- **An increase of people calling at a local address - often at unsociable hours**
- **Suspicious vehicles or people at an address**
- **A neighbour that has not been seen for a while**
- **Possible increase in anti-social behaviour.**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

FGM is sometimes known as 'female genital cutting' or female circumcision.

Risk Factors

- **Mother or other close family member who has undergone FGM**
- **A visiting female relative, family friend, or elder from the country of origin**
- **Being taken on a long holiday to the family's country of origin**
- **Request for authorised absence just before or just after the summer holiday**
- **Talk about a 'special' event to 'become a woman'**

Post FGM Symptoms

- **Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing up**
- **Spending longer in the toilet**
- **Reluctance to undergo medical examinations**

Extremism and Radicalisation

Extremists hold views that are intolerant of people who are of a different ethnicity, culture, religion, gender or sexual identity. In some cases, they believe that these views justify the use of violence in order to achieve certain aims. 'Radicalisation' is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and the extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Signs of radicalisation

- **Out of character changes in dress, behaviour / changes in their friendship group.**
- **Secretive behaviour**
- **Owning two or more mobile phones**
- **Showing sympathy for extremist causes**
- **Glorifying violence / advocating extremist messages**
- **Accessing extremist literature and imagery**
- **Appearing angry about government policies, especially foreign policy**

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Signs of radicalisation

- **Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and changes in their friendship group; losing interest in previous activities and friendships**
- **Secretive behaviour and switching screens when you come near**
- **Owning two or more mobile phones**
- **Showing sympathy for extremist causes**
- **Advocating extremist messages**
- **Glorifying violence**
- **Accessing extremist literature and imagery**
- **Showing a mistrust of mainstream media reports**
- **Having a belief in conspiracy theories**
- **Appearing angry about government policies, especially foreign policy**



Prevent

Prevent is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes.

The Prevent strategy covers all types of terrorism and extremism, including the extreme right wing, violent religious groups and other causes.

All school staff are required to undergo Prevent training.

Online Safety and Grooming.

The wonders of the web are not always known. Parents are often innocent minded when talking about how they use the internet and whether they know what their children do online. It is so important to understand the internet as it is so dangerous and corrupt in the wrong hands. Children are often the victims of the internet.

- **Have they suddenly become very secretive?** People who abuse will try to stop young people telling their friends and family about the abusive relationship.
- **Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?** If something is going on with a child online it might be really upsetting them. They might feel trapped like they can't talk about it.
- **Do they seem distracted?** We can all get caught up in ourselves if things are worrying us. If a child is unusually preoccupied it might be because things are weighing on them which they feel they can't talk about.
- **Do they have sudden mood swings?** Mood swings are not uncommon in adolescence but they can be a sign that someone has built a relationship with the child which is affecting their moods.
- **Are they unable to switch off from the internet, their phone or social media?** Lots of us find it hard not to check our phone or the internet, but if a child gets particularly worried or stressed when they can't, this can be a sign someone is controlling them.
- **Are they planning to meet up with an online friend?** Offenders may try and persuade a child to meet up with them in person in order to contact abuse them.

It is important to not accuse the children or question them with demands. You must approach the subject carefully as they may unknowingly be under control. Most of the time, children will use the internet for homework, games, social media etc, however there are a small percentage that use it wrongly.

This can also be over phone apps such as Instagram or Facebook.

To be safe, make children understand their safety comes first.

If you require any further information, Speak to the Safeguarding Lead in the school.

Social Media

The OBVIOUS!

- Don't add, or accept students, as friends on social media platforms
- Do set privacy settings to high
- Do remember that all information shared on the internet leaves a 'digital footprint' and can be traced. Once it's out there, you can't take it off!



If you get a 'Friend' request from a student, you should report it immediately!

If you want to know how else you can keep yourself safe online, You can contact your phone provider and they can support you in increasing your security on apps

Self Harm

Self-harm can take lots of physical forms, including cutting, burning, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning and overdosing.

There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. And once they start, it can become a compulsion. That's why it's so important to spot it as soon as possible and do everything you can to help.

Self-harm isn't usually a suicide attempt or a cry for attention. Instead, it's often a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions. It's a way of coping. So whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously as it can make a young person feel they're in control of at least one part of their lives. Sometimes it can also be a way for them to punish themselves for something they've done or have been accused of doing.

Physical signs for Self harm:

- **Cuts—often on wrists, arms, legs, stomach**
- **Bruises**
- **Burns**
- **Bald patches from hair pulling**
- **Starvation or Dehydration**
- **Significant levels of anger and punching walls**

Emotional signs of Self Harm

- **depression, tearfulness and low motivation**
- **becoming withdrawn and isolated, for example wanting to be alone in their bedroom for long periods**
- **unusual eating habits; sudden weight loss or gain**
- **low self-esteem and self-blame**
- **drinking or taking drugs**
- **Wearing long sleeve during hot weather**
- **Reluctance to remove clothing/ roll up sleeves.**

Child and Adolescent mental Health

It is important to know that we ALL have Mental Health.

Mental health **problems** affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

These are some of the mental health problems that can affect children and young people.

Depression affects more children and young people today than in the last few decades, but it is still more common in adults. Teenagers are more likely to experience depression than young children.

Self-harm is a very common problem among young people. Some people find it helps them manage intense emotional pain if they harm themselves, through cutting or burning, for example. They may not wish to take their own life.

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) can cause young people to become extremely worried. Very young children or children starting or moving school may have separation anxiety.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can follow physical or sexual abuse, witnessing something extremely frightening or traumatising, being the victim of violence or severe bullying or surviving a disaster.

Eating disorders usually start in the teenage years and are more common in girls than boys. The number of young people who develop an eating disorder is small, but eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can have serious consequences for their physical health and development.

Where you can go for Extra Advice

Having the right support behind you is vital and there are plenty of people who can help.

Child Safeguarding hub (MASH)

Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch: **01202 123334**

Family Information Centre:

01202 261999

Child and Young person Services:

01202 261980

NSPCC helpline

You can call our experienced counsellors whenever you need to on 0808 800 5000. They're used to dealing with the effects of self-harm and your call can be made anonymously.

Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline

Childline has trained counsellors who can help your child to talk about the emotions they may be feeling and which may be their triggers to self-harm. It's a 24/7 service that can be reached on: 0800 1111

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

Young Minds

We're leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges. The crisis in children and young people's mental health is real and it is urgent. Together, we are changing this. We're fighting for young people's mental health. Join our fight.

Website: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

01202 584600

School Nursing Team:

01202 711538

BCHA Domestic Abuse Helpline:

01202748488

Safer School and Communities team

The Safe Schools & Communities Team (SSCT) is a partnership between Dorset Police and the Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service, with a remit to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and wrong-doing amongst children and young people, and help keep them safe in a digital world. You can contact them on 01202 222844

Website: <https://www.dorset.police.uk/help-advice-crime-prevention/safety-in-your-community/safe-schools-communities-team/>

Police:

101

Shout

Shout is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

Get Help Text: 85258

<https://www.giveusashout.org/>

Your Physical, Emotional, Relationship and Mental health is Important too....

If you require any support and don't know where to go, Speak to the Safeguarding Lead who can advise you on other help for yourself.

[Contact Information For](#)
[The Cornerstone Academy](#)
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[Designated Safeguarding Officers](#)

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