

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 South Thames Colleges' Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to ensuring that action is taken to support them if they are at risk of significant harm. The Group requires all staff, governors, volunteers and those contracted to provide services to share this commitment.
- 1.2 The Group requires all staff to demonstrate high standards in their management of risk and in the active protection of children and vulnerable adults from discrimination and avoidable harm. Staff are required to fulfil their duties for young people under 18 in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016), The Prevent Strategy and Duty (HM Government, 2015) and support vulnerable adults in accordance with the National framework of standards for safeguarding adults, (ADSS, 2005).
- 1.3 The Group recognises that the welfare of the learner is paramount and that all learners regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm or abuse. Working in partnership with children, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of individuals.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with individual College's versions of Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults: Procedures and Guidelines for Staff and related staff and student policies.

2 Purpose and principles

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that informs procedures relating to the College's legal obligations to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults who are suffering forms of abuse or are at risk of radicalisation.
- 2.2 This policy provides clear direction to all members of the college community to ensure child protection and vulnerable adult concerns, referrals and monitoring of actions are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that promote the welfare of the learners and support their needs e.g. learners are encouraged to talk and are listened to. The policy also makes a commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures.
- 2.3 Accordingly, all staff receive a copy of this policy and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016 (Appendix 1).

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2.4 The following principles underpin the application of this policy:

- The Group follows the statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (DfE, 2016) which covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; along with non-statutory guidance ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ (HM Government, March 2015) and ‘Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services’ (DfE, March 2015).
- Safeguarding also covers vulnerability to violent extremism and the specific need to safeguard children and young people from potential radicalisation. Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 places a duty on colleges to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.
- Safeguarding also encompasses issues such as learner health and safety, bullying, arrangements to meet medical need, provision of first aid, college security, access to and use of information technology.
- The Group’s policy and procedures for safeguarding mirror Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures and are based upon the London Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance (5th Edition 2016, <http://www.londoncp.co.uk>) and the Local Authorities Multi Agency Adult Protection Policy, Guidelines and procedures.

3 Scope

3.1 The policy applies to all learners, governors, staff and volunteers working for the College in all locations where education and training is delivered to children and vulnerable adults. It applies also to those situations where learners are in a workplace setting undertaking vocational training or studying for vocational qualifications. The policy also covers collaborative provision and staff employed directly by contractors supplying services on behalf of the College.

3.3 A ‘child’ is defined as a person aged up to 18. ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2016 recognises the additional vulnerabilities of ‘looked after children’ and care leavers. The Children Act 2004 also covers vulnerable adults with a disability up to the age of 25. A vulnerable adult is defined as “a person aged 18 or over who is, or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation” (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

4 Main Elements

The 3 main elements of the Policy are to:

Prevent

- Raise awareness of child protection issues amongst all staff and volunteers and of what to do if they have concerns

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- Provide training for all staff to proactively engage in preventing radicalisation and extremism, as part of the Government’s “Prevent” strategy
- Ensure that all adults within the College who have access to children, young people and vulnerable adults have been subject to appropriate checks using safer recruitment practices
- Maintain and review a central record of DBS checks and comply with the duty of employers to inform the DBS of any individual (paid employee, volunteer or other) who poses a threat to children or vulnerable adults
- Ensure appropriate response to any concern or allegation about a member of staff or volunteer
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences and core group meetings.

Protect

- Establish and maintain a safe environment in which students feel secure and are encouraged to talk freely about anything that concerns them
- Ensure students know that they can approach their tutor or other members of staff if they are worried about anything, including issues related to radicalisation and extremism
- Provide early intervention and support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in the young person’s or vulnerable adult’s life
- Include opportunities in the curriculum to develop and equip students with the skills needed to recognise risks and stay safe from abuse
- Support students who have been abused or may be at risk of harm, including self-harm, in accordance with any agreed child protection plan
- Ensure staff follow accepted health and safety practices when working with students and that, where appropriate, risk assessments are carried out
- Help students who are over 18 and not defined as vulnerable adults if they feel they are at risk through creating an environment, where they are encouraged to talk to the Police and/or other specialist services.

Record and monitor

- Ensure staff are aware of the need to record any concerns held about the learner within the College, the need to keep safeguarding records separate to tutorial records and secure, and when they should be passed on to other agencies.

5. Group Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for Safeguarding within the group is given to the Corporation, the Principal/CEO and the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer. They ensure that structures and staffing are in place to ensure the effective delivery of safeguarding procedures within the individual Colleges.

5.1 Responsibilities of the Corporation

The Governing Body will ensure that each College in the Group:

- Raises awareness of issues relating to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of

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- children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Provides a safe environment in which students learn
- Identifies children and young people who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe
- Ensures students at risk of radicalisation are identified and supported
- Has procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers
- Operates safe recruitment procedures
- Designates a member of staff with sufficient authority to take lead responsibility for child protection across the Group
- Remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to the Governing Body's attention.

The Governing Body will approve and annually review the Group Policy and individual College's procedures.

5.2 Responsibilities of the Principal/CEO

The Principal/CEO will:

- Ensure the Group's Policy for Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and associated College procedures are in place and implemented to ensure the welfare of learners
- Delegate operational responsibility and implementation of procedures to a senior Designated Lead for Safeguarding
- Receive immediate notification of any changes affecting the policy or procedures and ensure the policy is reviewed and amended as appropriate.

5.3 Responsibilities of the Head of College/College Principal

The Head of College/College Principal will:

- Ensure the Group's Policy for Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and associated College procedures are implemented in their College to ensure the welfare of learners
- Be responsible for receiving allegations against members of staff, contractors and volunteers and passing them on to the Director of Human Resources and Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer.

5.4 Responsibilities of the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer

The Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure that child and vulnerable adult protection procedures are in place, are updated as appropriate and as advised and coordinate safeguarding practices across the Group
- Liaise with Heads of College/College Principals and the Director of Human Resources to deal with allegations against members of staff, contractors and volunteers

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- Consult with the Designated Officer from the relevant Local Authority as appropriate, in order to ensure that all allegations against staff, contractors and volunteers are dealt with in an objective and transparent way
- Ensure that the Director of Human Resources records details of any allegations against staff, contractors and volunteers and carries out any agreed actions with the Designated Officer from the relevant Local Authority and reports on outcomes
- Act as an external contact person within the College, providing advice and support and ensuring that all staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers and members of the Governing Body) are aware of their role
- Work with the Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officers and College Lead Safeguarding Officers to co-ordinate action within the each College on child protection issues
- Ensure staff are familiar with this Policy and Procedure, the London Child Protection Procedures, DfE guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2016) and the Prevent Duty and know how to recognise any concerns regarding abuse and radicalisation
- Oversee the planning of any curricular or other provision in relation to child protection and safeguarding matters and the Prevent agenda
- Ensure students are aware of the issues around safeguarding and Prevent, through enrichment and tutorial activities and know who to talk to if they have any concerns
- Raise awareness about safeguarding and child protection on an on-going basis
- Arrange updates on safeguarding training for staff on an annual basis and induction training on child protection for new staff
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Lead Officers, the College Lead Safeguarding Officers and the Safeguarding Nominates and Officers receive update training on a regular basis, at least annually.

6. Review

The policy will be subject to annual review. The review will be initiated by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

7. Access to the policy

The policy will be published on each College's Intranet and website.

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Appendix 1 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (May 2016) Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

What school and college staff should know and do

A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

1. Schools and colleges and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children.
2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.
3. No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
4. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
5. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The role of school and college staff

6. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
7. **All** school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
8. Each school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care.
9. **All** school and college staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.³ Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage

³ Detailed information on early help can be found in Chapter 1 of Working together to safeguard children

years. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.

10. **Any staff member** who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in paragraphs 21-27. Staff may be required to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.
11. The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.⁴

What school and college staff need to know

12. **All** staff members should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include:
 - the child protection policy;
 - the staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct); and
 - the role of the designated safeguarding lead.

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one of this document (Keeping children safe in education) should be provided to staff at induction.

13. **All** staff members should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. In addition all staff members should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
14. **All** staff should be aware of the early help process, and understand their role in it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the designated safeguarding lead, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.
15. **All** staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989⁵ that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.⁶

4 The Teachers' Standards apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period (newly qualified teachers [NQTs]); and teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools, who are subject to the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012.

5 Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need in their area for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Local authorities undertake assessments of the needs of individual children to determine which services to provide and what action to take. This can include:

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16. **All** staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality whilst at the same time liaising with relevant professionals such as the designated safeguarding lead and children’s social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about an allegation- as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

What school and college staff should look out for

17. **All** school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Types of abuse and neglect, and examples of safeguarding issues are described in paragraphs 35-44 of this guidance.
18. Departmental advice: What to do if you are worried a child is being abused- Advice for practitioners provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. Examples of potential signs of abuse and neglect are highlighted throughout the advice and will be particularly helpful for school and college staff. The NSPCC website also provides useful additional information on types of abuse and what to look out for.
19. Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **‘it could happen here’** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the **best** interests of the child.
20. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff members are unsure they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

21. If staff members have any **concerns** about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger - see paragraph 28) they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the designated safeguarding lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children’s social care. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
22. If anyone other than the designated safeguarding lead makes the referral they should inform the designated safeguarding lead, as soon as possible. The local authority should make a decision within one working day of a referral being made about what course of action they are taking and should let the referrer know the outcome. Staff should follow up on a referral should that information not be forthcoming. The online tool [Reporting child abuse to your local council](#) directs you to your local children’s social care contact number.
23. See page 10 for a flow chart setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.

Section 17- A child in need is defined under section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health or development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

Section 47- If the local authority have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm they have a duty to make enquires under section 47 to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare. This duty also applies if a child is subject to an emergency protection order (under section 44 of the Children Act 1989) or in police protective custody under section 46 of the Children Act 1989.

⁶ Detailed information on statutory assessments can be found in Chapter 1 of Working together to safeguard children

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24. If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the designated safeguarding lead (or the person that made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.
25. If early help is appropriate the designated safeguarding lead should support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.
26. If early help and or other support is appropriate the case should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving.
27. If a **teacher**⁷, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the **teacher** must report this to the police. See Annex A for further details.

What school and college staff should do if a child is in danger or at risk of harm

28. **If, a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.** Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made. Reporting child abuse to your local council directs you to your local children's social care contact number.

Record keeping

29. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead.

Why is all of this important?

30. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly

⁷ Section 5B(11) of the FGM Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) provides the definition for the term 'teacher': "teacher" means – (a) in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

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shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.⁸

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about another staff member

31. If staff members have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the headteacher or principal. Where there are concerns about the headteacher or principal this should be referred to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor of an independent school as appropriate. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, allegations should be reported directly to the designated officer(s) at the local authority. Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the school’s designated safeguarding lead and make any referral via them. Full details can be found in Part four of this guidance.

What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college

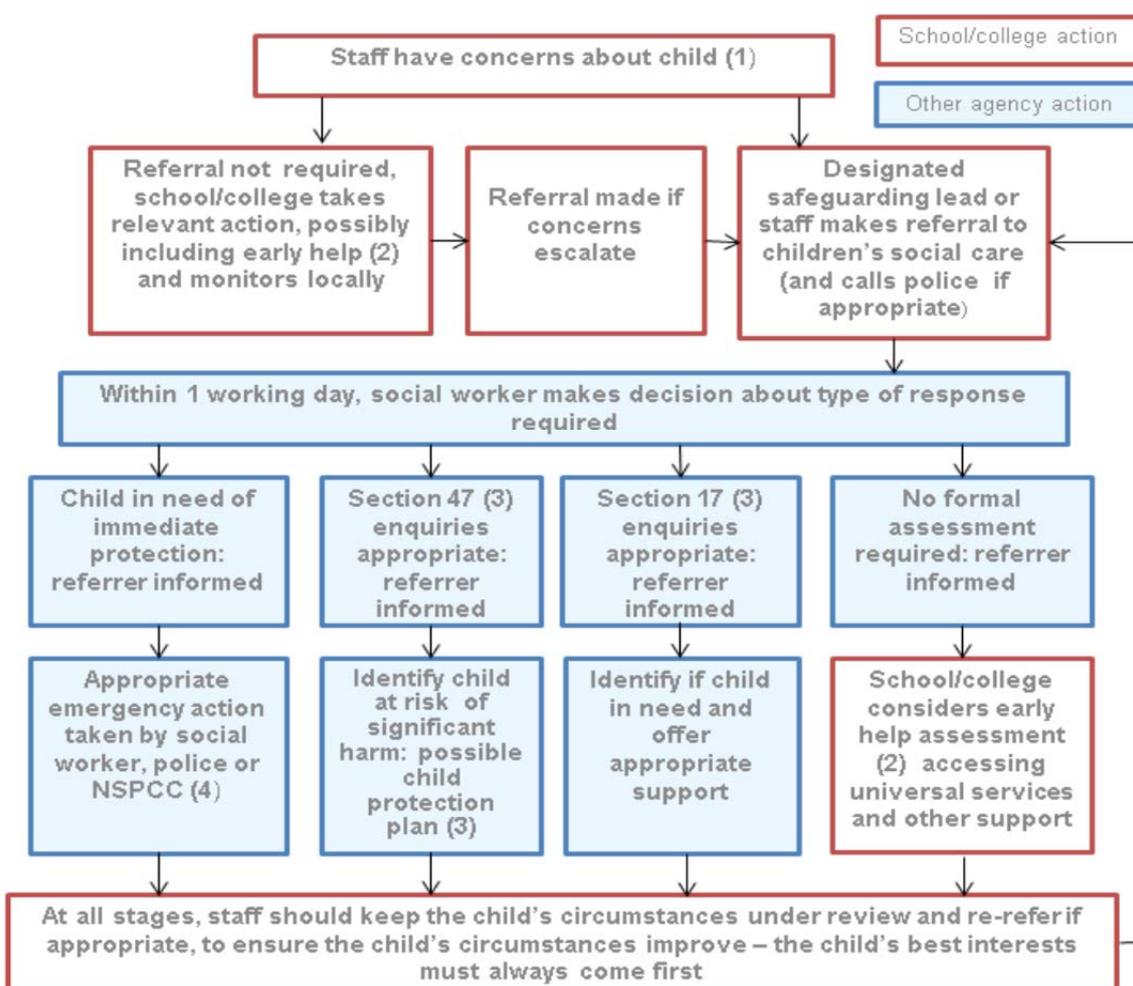
32. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college’s safeguarding regime and that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
33. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, should be in place for such concerns to be raised with the school or college’s senior leadership team.
34. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:
- General guidance can be found at- Advice on whistleblowing
 - The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.⁹

⁸ New learning from serious case reviews: a two year report for 2009-2011 **(We will update with new evidence if it is available before September)**

⁹ Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain, Road, London EC2A 3NH.

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Actions where there are concerns about a child



1. In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of Working together to safeguard children provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. This can include s17 assessments of children in need and s47 assessments of children at risk of significant harm. Full details are in Chapter one of Working together to safeguard children.
4. This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

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Types of abuse and neglect

35. **All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.**
36. **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 (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
37. **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.
38. **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 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.
39. **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
40. **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 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.

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Specific safeguarding issues

41. **All** staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues- some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger.
42. **All** staff should be aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.
43. Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example information for schools and colleges can be found on the TES, MindEd and the NSPCC websites. School and college staff can access government guidance as required on the issues listed below via GOV.UK and other government websites:
 - bullying including cyberbullying
 - children missing education – and Annex A
 - child missing from home or care
 - child sexual exploitation (CSE) – and Annex A
 - domestic violence
 - drugs
 - fabricated or induced illness
 - faith abuse
 - female genital mutilation (FGM) – and Annex A
 - forced marriage- and Annex A
 - gangs and youth violence
 - gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
 - hate
 - mental health
 - missing children and adults strategy
 - private fostering
 - preventing radicalisation – and Annex A
 - relationship abuse

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- sexting
- trafficking

44. Annex A contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School leaders and those staff that work directly with children should read the annex.

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