



Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Hannah Pallôt or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Matt Collinge or Sam Shainberg immediately with any concerns.

MARU: 0300 1231 116 LADO: 01872 326536

Seven Minute Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding

What is Contextual Safeguarding?

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families ([University of Bedfordshire](#), 2020). These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, on high streets, public transport or other community spaces, from within peer groups and from the wider community and/or online. [It Was Hard to Escape](#) (DfE 2020) states that 'being drawn into exploitative situations where children can be both victims and perpetrators can have severe consequences for them, their friends, families, and communities'.

Why is Contextual Safeguarding important?

Increasingly, children and young people are facing challenge and risk to their safety and wellbeing from outside the home. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking; online abuse; teenage relationship abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), DfE 2023.

Education providers also play a vital role in sharing and contributing to key information about children, including attendance data, exclusions, concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, and wider social and environmental factors including extra-familial contexts, which are a key aspect of keeping children safe. Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE 2023 goes on to state that young people who may be perpetrators should also be supported to understand the impact of contextual issues on their own safety and wellbeing.

Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children's social care.

What to know more?

Try watching this 15 minute [TEDx Talk](#) by Dr Charlene Firmin (founder of [contextualsafeguarding.org.uk](#))

TEDx
x = independently
organized TED event

What does this mean for us?

Remember the old adage, 'be curious not furious'? That sums it up. We need to be curious about our children's lives beyond the school gates. We need to ask those follow up questions, show some professional curiosity and take an interest in the things children tell us.

Do they mention hanging around with older children at the park? Do they keep referencing an adult visiting the house that you have never heard mention of before? Be curious, not furious.