

7 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people: Unit CYP Core 3.3

All settings working with children and young people should establish and maintain a safe environment and deal with circumstances where there are welfare concerns. Through their protection policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people, settings which work with children and/or young people have an important role in the detection and prevention of abuse and neglect. This includes helping children and young people to protect themselves from abuse, as

well as dealing with bullying (both physical and through communication technology) and understanding e-safety.

Legislation, guidelines, policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people

All practitioners working to safeguard children and young people must understand fully their responsibilities and duties as set out in government legislation, regulations and guidance.

Current legislation, guidelines and policies

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989* (UN, 1989) was ratified by the UK on 16 December 1991. It includes children's rights to protection from abuse, the right to express their views and be listened to, and the right to care and services for disabled children or children living away from home. Although different British governments have said that it regards itself bound by the Convention and refers to it in child protection guidance, it has not become part of UK law. There is no single piece of legislation that covers safeguarding children and young people in the UK; different laws and guidelines cover different parts of the UK – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (NSPCC, 2010; page 1).

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter you will:

1. Understand the main legislation, guidelines, policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people.
2. Understand the importance of working in partnership with other organisations to safeguard children and young people.
3. Understand the importance of ensuring children and young people's safety and protection in the work setting.
4. Understand how to respond to evidence or concerns that a child or young person has been abused or harmed.
5. Understand how to respond to evidence or concerns that a child or young person has been bullied.
6. Understand how to work with children and young people to support their safety and wellbeing.
7. Understand the importance of e-safety for children and young people.

Safeguarding children in England

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) applies to those working in education, health and social services as well as the police and the probation service. It is relevant to those working with children and their families in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors. The document covers the following areas:

- A summary of the nature and impact of child abuse and neglect.
- How to operate best practice in child protection procedures.
- The roles and responsibilities of different agencies and practitioners.
- The role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs).
- The processes to be followed when there are concerns about a child.
- The action to be taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of children experiencing, or at risk of, significant harm.
- The important principles to be followed when working with children and families.
- Training requirements for effective child protection.

It is not necessary for all practitioners to read every part of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* in order to understand the principles and to perform their roles effectively. However, those who work regularly with children and young people and who may be asked to contribute to assessments of children and young people in need should read Chapters 1, 2 (relevant sections, such as schools and further education institutions), 5 and 11; it may also be helpful to read Chapters 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12.

For the full text, see this website: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/00305-2010DOM-EN.pdf>

Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) provides a systemic framework to help professionals identify children and young people in need and assess the best approach to help them and their families (see Chapter 14, Promote children's welfare and wellbeing in the early years: Unit EYMP 3 for more information on supporting

early intervention for the benefit of children and families).

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2003) is a guide for professionals working with children which explains the processes and systems contained in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*.

As a further safeguard to children's welfare, The Protection of Children Act 1999 requires childcare organisations (including any organisation concerned with the supervision of children) not to offer employment involving regular contact with children, either paid or unpaid, to any person listed as unsuitable to work with children on the Department of Health list and the Department for Education and Employment's List 99. The Criminal Records Bureau acts as a central access point for criminal records checks for all those applying to work with children and young people.

The Children Act 2004, sections 1–9, created a Children's Commissioner for England. However, the English Commissioner does not have the remit to promote children's rights, unlike the commissioners for the rest of the UK. As well as creating a Children's Commissioner for England, the Children Act 2004 placed a duty on local authorities to appoint a Director of Children's Services and an elected lead member for Children's Services, who is accountable for the delivery of services. It placed a duty on local authorities and their partners (including the police, health service providers and the youth justice system) to cooperate in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It put the new Local Safeguarding Children Boards on a statutory footing (replacing the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committees), and gave them functions of investigation and review (section 14), which they use to review all child deaths in their area as required by the *Working Together to Safeguard Children* statutory guidance.

The Children Act 2004 also revised the legislation on physical punishment by making it an offence to hit a

child if it causes mental harm or leaves a lasting mark on the skin (section 58). This repealed the section of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 which provided parents with the defence of 'reasonable chastisement' (NSPCC, 2010, page 5).

Safeguarding children in Wales

The Children Act 1989 legislates for England and Wales. The current guidance for Wales is *Safeguarding children: working together under the Children Act 2004* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). The Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001 created the first Children's Commissioner post in the UK. The principal aim of this position is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children.

In June 2010, the Welsh Assembly Government laid down the Proposed Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure, which if passed by the National Assembly for Wales, will embed the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Welsh law (NSPCC, 2010).

Safeguarding children in Scotland

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 has similar principles to the law in England and Wales, but has its own guidance: *Protecting children: a shared responsibility: guidance on inter-agency co-operation* (Scottish Office, 1998). Subsequent legislation created a Children's Commissioner for Scotland (Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003) to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children (NSPCC, 2010).

Safeguarding children in Northern Ireland

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 has similar principles and has its own guidance: *Co-operating to safeguard children* (DHSSPS, 2003). In addition, in Northern Ireland it is an offence not to report an arrestable crime to the police, which by definition, includes most crimes against children.

Subsequent legislation created a Children's Commissioner for Northern Ireland (Commissioner

for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003) to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children (NSPCC, 2010).

Keeping children safe – everyone's responsibility

There is one aspect of work with babies, toddlers and young children that must always come first: the requirement to keep them safe, and to protect them from significant harm. The guidance from the *Every Child Matters* framework reminds us that:

'all those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to safeguarding children, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'.

Schools and early years settings are places where children and young people spend a considerable amount of their lives. Early years practitioners are some of the most important adults that young children will come into contact with. As a staff team, they can create an atmosphere and ethos which profoundly affects the child's experience of being cared for, listened to, valued, guided and stimulated. Early years settings and schools therefore play a considerable part in promoting – or, sadly, sometimes neglecting – children's best interests.

- For some children, universal services like early years education and health visiting are not enough to ensure their healthy, safe and happy development. These children might, for periods of time, be vulnerable. They may experience emotional difficulties, fall behind in their development or learning, or suffer the adverse effects of poverty, poor housing or ill health. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) exists to support children and families with timely help and advice for a brief period.
- There are also **children in need**, who are judged to be unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development unless they are offered additional services. This group includes children with disabilities.

- Finally, there are children who are subject to an inter-agency **child protection plan**. These children are judged to be at risk of significant harm without the provision of additional services, as well as close and careful monitoring by specialist children's social workers.

All this work with children and families falls under the umbrella term of safeguarding. The Government has defined safeguarding as:

'the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.'

You might already be starting to understand how complex this can be. No two people will be able to agree on exactly what is meant by 'optimum life chances' for a child, or having a 'successful adulthood'. Different families, communities, cultures and indeed individuals will disagree about what makes for 'sound development' or 'good health'. In this chapter, we explore some of these complexities, and also explain how judgments might be reached by professionals on the basis of the best possible assessments. Although there is much that is complex and worthy of debate, it is a priority for professionals to take swift action where necessary.

This chapter offers concise, useful and accurate information about safeguarding. If you have any doubts or concerns about a child, however trivial you might think they are, we strongly advise you to speak to the manager or headteacher of the early years setting or school where you are working. Always ask for information and guidance.

Key term

Safeguarding – This term includes all the steps you would take in an early years setting or school to help children and young people to feel safe and secure; protecting children and young people from neglect or abuse; ensuring that children and young people stay safe, healthy and continue to develop well.

The child's interests are paramount

All the legislation and guidance in recent decades, including the Children Act 2004, make it clear that the child's interests must come first. All professionals must work together to promote the child's welfare before all else. For example, imagine that you found out that a father has slapped his child on the face, leaving a mark. You may have developed a very close relationship with this parent and you may be very sympathetic to the difficulties he is experiencing. You may feel that this incident is a 'one-off', that he genuinely loves and cares for the child, and that he would be devastated if you did not keep this to yourself. All the same, you are required to put the child's interests before your feelings about the family. The actions you might take are discussed later in this chapter (page 000).

All early years settings and schools must nominate a member of staff to oversee safeguarding and child protection. This person must be specifically trained to undertake this role. The whole team (including volunteers and students) must work together to promote children's welfare and keep them safe. The whole team will need regular training and updating, and it is best practice that such training provides staff with time to explore different experiences, attitudes and opinions as steps towards agreeing policy and practice.

Inquiries and serious case reviews

Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 requires LSCBs to undertake reviews of serious cases. These reviews are known as serious case reviews (SCRs). Chapter 8 of *Working together to safeguard children* (2010) sets out the purposes of and processes for undertaking SCRs.

SCRs are undertaken when a child or young person dies (including death by suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the death. Additionally, LSCBs may decide to conduct an SCR whenever a child or young person



Figure 7.1 Helping children to feel safe and secure is the cornerstone of safeguarding

has been seriously harmed in any of the following situations, and the case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people (including inter-agency and inter-disciplinary working):

- A child or young person sustains a potentially life-threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment of physical and mental health and development through abuse or neglect.
- A child or young person has been seriously harmed as a result of being subjected to sexual abuse.
- A parent or carer has been murdered and a domestic homicide review is being initiated under the Domestic Violence Act 2004.
- A child or young person has been seriously harmed following a violent assault perpetrated by another child, young person or an adult.

The purpose of SCRs is to:

- establish what lessons are to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

- identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result
- improve intra- and inter-agency working, and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. (DfE, 2010)

Sharing information to safeguard children and young people

Safeguarding children and young people raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by everyone within the setting. You must be absolutely clear about the boundaries of your legal and professional role and responsibilities, with regard to the confidentiality of information relating to abuse and neglect. A clear and explicit confidentiality policy that staff, children, young people and parents can all understand should ensure effective practice throughout the setting.

Practitioners have a legal duty of confidence with regard to the personal information they hold about children, young people and their families. Any information you receive about children/young people

(and their families) in the course of your work should only be shared within appropriate professional contexts.

All information including child protection records should be kept securely. The law allows the allegation of confidential personal information in order to safeguard a child or children. Usually personal information should only be disclosed to a third party (such as social services) after obtaining the consent of the person to whom the information relates. In some child protection matters, it may not be possible or desirable to obtain such consent. The Data Protection Act 1998 allows an allegation without consent in some circumstances, for example to detect or prevent a crime, to apprehend or prosecute an offender.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people must always be your first consideration. You cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality, especially if there are concerns that a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of, significant harm. You have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and young people with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies such as social services and the police. If a child or young person confides in you and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that you explain to the child in a sensitive manner that you have a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for their sake. Within that context, the child or young person should however be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Understand the importance of working in partnership with other organisations to safeguard children and young people

It is important to work in partnership with other organisations to safeguard children and young people in order to share relevant information and to take appropriate action to safeguard and protect. A wide range of professionals and organisations share the responsibility to safeguard and protect children and young people.

When working with other organisations to safeguard children and young people, it is important to have a child-centred approach. Any procedures should take the child's feelings and experiences into account and should avoid causing further distress to an already hurt or confused child. However, remember that no matter how concerned you are about a child or young person's welfare, you must always act within the law (Lindon, 2008).

What is partnership working?

Partnership working is important to ensure that children and young people's welfare is safeguarded regardless of where they are and who is looking after them. For example, where children receive education and care in more than one setting, practitioners must ensure continuity and coherence by sharing relevant

Activity

- What are your role and responsibilities for reporting information on possible abuse to a senior colleague or external agency?
- How and to whom should you pass on information from a child or young person's personal allegation of abuse? For example, your role and responsibilities for providing information on the allegation to a senior colleague or external agency.
- Find out about your setting's policy and procedures with regard to the confidentiality of information in child protection matters.

information with each other and with parents or carers.

Patterns of attendance should be a key factor in practitioners' planning. Close working between early years practitioners and parents is vital for the identification of children's learning needs and to ensure a quick response to any area of particular difficulty. Parents and families are central to a child's wellbeing, and practitioners should support this important relationship by sharing information and offering support for extending learning in the home. Practitioners will frequently need to work with professionals from other agencies, such as local and community health services, or where children are looked after by the local authority, to identify and meet needs and use their knowledge and advice to provide children's social care with the best learning opportunities and environments for all children (DCSF, 2008; page 10).

Different professionals and agencies should work together to help the child/young person and family early on when there are difficulties. They should not wait until something serious happens before taking action. For example, a health visitor might notice that a mother is getting very stressed by the behaviour of her toddler and is struggling to cope. Early intervention might involve talking to the mother, showing sympathy, and perhaps finding some support for her at the local children's centre or setting up a programme of home visits. This would be much better than waiting to see if the situation becomes worse before doing anything. Although there is still a common view that social workers swoop in to take children away from their families, in reality, the vast majority of social work is about helping different agencies work together to support

Key term

Early intervention – This approach seeks to offer extra help and support to a family before the child starts to lag behind in development or experience neglect or abuse. Early intervention is about working cooperatively with parents and carers, giving them a chance to make choices about which services they need.

the family, so that the child or young person's safety and wellbeing are assured.

Inter-agency child protection

You may have heard about children being 'on the child protection register', but technically they should be described as having an **inter-agency child protection plan**. To give an idea of the scale of child protection work in England (comparable statistics are not easy to discover for the other countries in the UK):

- There were 547,000 referrals to children's social care departments in the year ending 31 March 2009.
- These referrals led to social workers completing 349,000 **initial assessments**.
- 37,900 children became the subject of an **inter-agency child protection plan** – this is fewer than 0.5 per cent of all children, or fewer than one child in 200.

Initial assessment

Initial assessments are undertaken by specialist children's social workers in response to referrals made by schools, doctors, nurses and early years settings, for example. The initial assessment informs the decision of what to do next. Possible decisions include the following:

- **Offering services** to support the child and family, if it is judged that the child is not at immediate risk of harm but is at risk of poor developmental outcomes.
- **Urgent action** to protect the child from harm – for example, applying for a court order to take the child into care. Social workers cannot take children away from their parents; only the courts can direct this. However, a police officer can take a child into police protection in an emergency.
- **Holding a strategy discussion**. This would happen where the assessment indicates that the child may be suffering significant harm. Other professionals who know the child and family, such as GPs, health visitors, teachers and early years practitioners, may be invited to this discussion. Specialist police officers must always be represented in strategy discussions. Where

appropriate, a **child protection conference** will be arranged (see below).

It is important to remember that staff in early years settings and schools should *not* investigate possible abuse or neglect. The role of the early years practitioner is to refer concerns to children's social care, to contribute to the initial assessment and to attend meetings as requested.

The initial assessment can lead to:

- further work and assessment being undertaken by specialist children's social workers – this is called the **Core Assessment**
- help being offered to the child and family on a voluntary basis, usually coordinated under the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**
- a **child protection conference** being convened: key staff working with the family, along with the child's parents, will be invited to this conference. The meeting will be organised by an independent chairperson who has not previously been involved in the case in any way, and who reports to the Director of Children's Services.

Child protection conference

The child protection conference seeks to establish, on the basis of evidence from the referral and the initial assessment, whether the child has suffered ill-treatment, or whether his or her health or development has been significantly impaired as a result of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or neglect. A professional judgement must be made about whether further ill-treatment or impairment is likely to occur. It is possible to hold a child protection conference prior to birth if there are significant concerns that the newborn baby will be at risk of immediate harm; for example, in a family where there has been significant previous child abuse, or where a mother has abused drugs or alcohol during pregnancy.

If this is established, the child will be made the subject of an **inter-agency child protection plan**. The child's early years setting or school should be involved in the preparation of the plan. The role of the school or early years setting to safeguard the child, and promote his or her welfare, should be

clearly identified. Examples of this role might include:

- carefully monitoring the child's health or wellbeing in the setting on a daily basis
- making referrals to specialist agencies – for example, educational psychology
- offering support and services to the parents – for example, a parenting class run at the setting
- monitoring the child's progress against the planned outcomes in the agreed plan.

- One of your key children is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan, under the category of neglect. During the day, you notice that the child looks rather grubby. Other children are avoiding him because he smells.
- Discuss how you would talk to the parent at the end of the day, and what information you would pass on to the child's social worker.

Drawing up an inter-agency child protection plan

The core group of professionals and the child's parents must meet within ten working days of a child being made subject to a child protection plan. The group will be called together by the child's social worker in the role of the **lead professional** (sometimes called the key worker), and will then meet regularly as required. This group should include a member of staff from the child's early years setting or school.

The core group develops the child protection plan into a more detailed working tool, outlining who will do what and by when. Both this working plan and the overall child protection plan should be based on the assessments undertaken by the specialist social worker and others, and should address the issues arising in relation to:

- the child's developmental needs
- parenting capacity
- family and environmental factors.

There should be a **child protection conference review** within three months of the initial conference. Further reviews should be held at least every six months while the child remains subject to a child protection plan. The plan may be ended if it is judged that there have been significant improvements to the wellbeing and safety of the child. These improvements might have taken place as a result of:

- a change in circumstances – for example, the abusing parent has moved out of the family home and no longer has unsupervised contact with the child
- the family is responding positively to the requirements set out in the plan, and following advice given
- the child is being given the medical or other treatment that he or she needs.

At this stage, there might be no further involvement from Children's Services, or the family may continue to be offered further help and support by the different agencies, usually coordinated under the CAF. This only happens once Children's Services are satisfied that their involvement is not required

Key term

Inter-agency protection plan – If a child's health or development has been significantly impaired as a result of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, an inter-agency protection plan may be drawn up. The plan will identify the steps that the family needs to take to safeguard the child, with the support of Children's Services and other agencies. The child's safety, health, development and wellbeing will be regularly monitored throughout the plan.



Progress check

- Working in a team, you should help work towards the plan in a CAF, or offer additional help to a child who has been identified as being vulnerable.
- Know about the definition of a child in need.
- Know who can take children into protective care if they are in immediate danger.
- Understand why a child might be made subject to an inter-agency child protection plan.

because the child is no longer considered to be 'in need'.

Understand the importance of ensuring children and young people's safety and protection in the work setting

Why children and young people must be protected from harm in the work setting

Ensuring children and young people's safety and protection in the setting is an essential part of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Every adult working in the setting must be a suitable person to work with young children, and must have been checked by the Independent Safeguarding Authority. This includes students on placements and regular volunteers.

Practitioners need to actively promote the wellbeing of every child. This includes providing opportunities for children and young people to develop and learn, to play, communicate and socialise with each other in the setting. Children and young people also need healthy, nutritious and enjoyable food, and opportunities to move and exercise their bodies. They need to be able to make decisions and develop a level of independence that is appropriate to their age and development.

Practitioners also have responsibilities for providing extra support to children and young people whose needs are not being met, working with parents and other professionals. Some children in an early years setting may present with delayed development, or emotional and social difficulties. These may result from adverse early experiences, like witnessing domestic violence, or growing up with a parent who has mental health difficulties. Extra support could include helping a mother join a 'Stay and Play' group, to make friends and find support, or working

Policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people

Working in an open and transparent way	Physical contact
Listening to children and young people	Intimate personal care
Duty of care	Off-site visits
Whistle-blowing	Photography and video
Power and positions of trust	Sharing concerns
Propriety and behaviour	Recording/reporting incidents

Table 7.1 Policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people

with the clinical psychology service to give advice about bedtimes or mealtimes. This work can be coordinated under the CAF.

Practitioners also need to protect the small number of children and young people who may be at risk of significant harm as a result of their home and family circumstances. Some children and young people are at risk because of the actions of their parents – for example, physical abuse like hitting, or sexual abuse – or because their parents fail to act to keep them safe and well – for example, neglect. In these cases, the different agencies still work together to provide support and help to the parents, but there may also be actions that the parent is required to take, which can be checked through unannounced visits and compulsory medical, developmental and psychological assessments.

Policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people

It is important to have clear policies and procedures to ensure children and young people's safety and protection in the setting. Table 7.1 lists the different policies and procedures which should be in place for safe working.

The setting's policy for safeguarding (or child protection) should state the following:

- The name of the setting and the type of service(s) provided for children, young people and/or families; the name of the setting's designated child protection officer.
 - The importance of child protection with an outline of the main legislation and guidance relevant to that part of the UK.
 - The responsibility of everyone within the setting to be active in safeguarding and preventing abuse or neglect.
 - How the setting will meet this obligation, for example through safer recruitment of staff or active support for children and/or young people.
 - The safeguarding commitment works together with other policies such as equal opportunities, behaviour and partnership with parents. (Lindon, 2008; pages 143–4)
- The procedures should set out how the policy will be put into practice on a daily basis. The procedures should make clear the responsibilities of the setting's designated child protection officer, and the responsibilities of practitioners both as individuals and as members of the team. The procedures should be clear about the following points:
- The obligation to respond appropriately, and in a timely way, to any concerns, whomsoever raises them.
 - A brief summary of signs that should concern practitioners with a reference to the relevant guidance document.
 - The steps that should be taken when there are concerns, and the boundaries to the role of a familiar practitioner or the designated child protection officer.
 - Details of the services, including names and telephone numbers of those who should be contacted or consulted locally.
 - Specific guidance about how to behave if a child or young person alleges an abusive experience.



Figure 7.2 Children need to be cared for by suitably qualified staff who enjoy their company

- How a safeguarding procedure is supported by other procedures such as written records or dealing with allegations of abuse or malpractice.
- Effective safeguarding includes helping children and young people to learn skills of personal safety, for example, explaining the rules about internet use and e-safety.

(Lindon, 2010; page 145)

Whistle-blowing

Sometimes a person inside an organisation knows that something is going wrong and is being covered up. This could affect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Examples of this in early years settings and schools include the following:

- A member of staff has reported a number of concerns about a child's welfare. The child's parents are on the management committee of the nursery, and the manager says, 'They are not the sort of people who would harm their child.'
- There are consistently too few staff on duty in the nursery. When the local authority come to visit, supply staff are hired, and during an Ofsted inspection, management and office staff are brought into the room so that legal ratios are met.

In cases like these, it is very important that action is taken before there is a serious incident. If a member of staff has spoken to the manager, headteacher or other appropriate person, made clear that a situation is dangerous and illegal, and no action is taken, it is necessary to 'blow the whistle' and report the concerns directly to an outside body, such as the local Children's Services, Ofsted or the NSPCC.

If you act to protect children and young people and to keep them safe, you are clearly protected by the law. In general, employees who blow the whistle are legally protected against being bullied, sacked or disciplined, if they have acted in good faith.

Research Activity

- Find out more information about whistle-blowing at this website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/ResolvingWorkplaceDisputes/Whistleblowingintheworkplace
- Search online for 'Protection of whistle-blowers'.

Allegations made against staff

Schools and settings are usually some of the safest places for children and young people to be. However, sadly there have been incidents when children and young people have been harmed or abused by the adults who work with them and care for them. Cases include the murders in 2002 of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman by their school caretaker Ian Huntley, and the discovery in 2009 that a nursery nurse, Vanessa George, had taken and distributed indecent pictures of some of the children in her care.

Generally, a setting or school keeps children safe by having effective procedures around safer recruitment, management and its general operating policy; for example, if children and young people are encouraged to speak out when they feel unhappy or uncomfortable, they will be much less vulnerable to abuse. Children's intimate care (nappy-changing, toileting, dressing and undressing) should be coordinated by a key person. This means that children should not expect that anyone can take them aside and undress them; their right to privacy is upheld.

It is effective practice, where developmentally appropriate, to ask children to consent to offers of intimate care and to give them as much control as possible. So you might say to a toddler in the toilet, 'Would you like me to help pull your pants down?' rather than just going ahead and doing it.

However, no system alone can protect children and young people: what matters, beyond effective policies and procedures, is that adults are confident to raise concerns, and that children and young people are encouraged to say if they are unhappy or uncomfortable with anything that happens to them.

All early years settings and schools are required to have a policy to deal with allegations made against staff. This will cover cases where a child makes an allegation, or an adult is seen or overheard behaving in an inappropriate way. But there are other examples that might give rise to a concern, without a specific allegation being made:

- a child who seems fearful of a particular member of staff
- a member of staff trying to develop a very close relationship with a child – for example, offering small presents and special treats, or arranging to meet the child outside of the setting or school
- a parent expressing a general concern about how a member of staff relates to their child, without being able exactly to say what is wrong.

In cases like these, you will need to discuss your concerns with the named person for safeguarding. Discussions like these are awkward, but it is important to share any concerns you have: the child's welfare is paramount.

Off-site visits

When participating in off-site visits, all practitioners (including volunteers) have a duty to take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves and others, and to cooperate to ensure that statutory duties and obligations are fulfilled. Adults in charge of children or young people during an off-site visit have a duty of care to make sure that the children/young people are safe and healthy. Practitioners have a common law duty to act as would a reasonably prudent parent. Practitioners should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation. As a safeguard to children and young people, volunteer helpers on off-site visits must be appropriate people to supervise children/young people, should be trained in their duties, and have had a CRB check. Unqualified staff or volunteers must not be left in sole charge of children/young people except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment. There should normally be a minimum of two adults with any group involved in an off-site visit or activity; the exact ratio of adults to children/young people depends on their ages and should be appropriate for the needs of the group and in line with the relevant guidelines. Practitioners and volunteers should not be in a situation where they are alone with one child or young person away from the rest of the group.

Understand how to respond to evidence or concerns that a child or young person has been abused or harmed

Practitioners are good at recognising when all is not well with a child or young person. Historically, the biggest difficulty has not been in recognising problems, but in communicating concerns to others (including parents or carers) and acting on them. Often practitioners worry about the consequences of passing on information, and worry that it might lead to the family being split up. It is important to remember that in the vast majority of cases the different services will work *with* the family to ensure the child or young person's safety. But the decision about what is best for the child or young person should be made by a trained social worker, acting on the best possible information. When practitioners feel worried but do not communicate their concerns to others, a child or young person can be put in danger.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

'Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger, for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.' (*Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children*, DCSE, 2010)

There are four categories of abuse: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect. These are outlined below.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the most apparent form of child or young person abuse. It includes any kind of physical harm to a child or young person, which can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child, or deliberately induces illness – for example, giving a child so much salt that he or she becomes very ill, so that medical staff think the child has a gastric illness or a brain condition.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is difficult to define and can be difficult to detect. It involves continual emotional mistreatment which results in significant damage to the child or young person's emotional development. The child or young person may come to feel worthless, unloved, and inadequate or valued only if they meet the expectations or needs of another person. Emotional abuse includes:

- The parent having expectations that are beyond what is suitable for the child or young person's age and development. This includes unreasonable expectations, like continuously trying to force a child to achieve more, and then constantly criticising the child for his or her failures. At the other end of the spectrum, some parents may fail to stimulate their child adequately; for example, keeping a two-year-old child in a playpen with only a few baby toys.
- Preventing a child from participating in normal social interaction with other children, either by keeping the child at home, or by taking the child out but being so overprotective, fearful or controlling that the child cannot join in.
- Failing to protect the child from witnessing the mistreatment of others; for example, cases of domestic violence.

All children and young people will experience some emotional difficulties as part of the ordinary processes of growing up. It becomes abusive if the result is significant damage to the child or young person's emotional development. All cases of child or

young person abuse will include some degree of emotional abuse.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activities. The child may or may not be aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact (such as rape, including forced anal sex or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts like touching or masturbation.

The abuse may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images online or on mobile phones, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect means that the parent persistently fails to meet the child's basic physical needs, psychological needs or both. The result is that the child's health or development is significantly impaired.

Neglect can occur during pregnancy if the mother abuses drugs or alcohol, which can have serious effects. Neglect of babies and young children includes the failure to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- keep the child safe from physical and emotional harm or danger
- supervise the child adequately, including leaving the child with inadequate carers
- make sure the child is seen promptly by medical staff when ill
- respond to the child's basic emotional needs.

Research Activity

This section on abuse and neglect draws on guidance from *Every Child Matters*.

- Find out more by reading the guidance in full on this website: www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/workingtogether
- Search online for 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

Recognising child abuse

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

'Children and young people often find it very difficult to talk about the abuse they are experiencing. So adults have a vital role to play in looking out for the possible signs.'

The following section draws on the NSPCC's guide, *Learn how to recognise the signs of child abuse*. It is not always possible to be completely certain that a child is being abused, but there are signs and indicators that all early years practitioners should look out for:

- A baby or toddler who is always crying.
- A child who often has injuries or bruises.
- A child who is often very withdrawn. Withdrawn children are not simply quiet or shy – they shrink from adult attention, lack interest in their surroundings and try to occupy themselves without being noticed.
- A child who is often in very dirty clothes, looks unwashed for a period of time or is very smelly.
- A child who is frequently very hungry.
- A child who is often inappropriately dressed for the weather or time of year. This would include children who often come to the setting in thin T-shirts, shorts or dresses through the winter. It would also include children who come into the setting on a hot day in very warm clothes.
- Any indication that a child is being left home alone, or left unsupervised in unsafe circumstances at home.
- A child who does not receive the medical treatment which he or she needs.
- A child who is mocked, sworn at, constantly joked about and made to feel foolish or useless.
- A child who expresses fear about particular adults, seems reluctant to be picked up by a particular adult, or afraid to be left alone with that person.
- A child with very strong mood swings – anxiety, depression, uncontained anger or severe aggression.
- A child whose sexual knowledge, use of sexual words or sexual behaviour is not appropriate for their age or development.
- A child who is witnessing domestic violence.

- A child who is witnessing significant drug or alcohol abuse.

There may be valid explanations for some of these signs. Equally, there are many other indications of possible abuse, and other circumstances that could be unsafe for a child. The NSPCC advises that:

'The most important thing to remember is that if you have a gut feeling that something is not right, **trust your judgement** and take action.'

Research Activity

- Read the full NSPCC guide at this website: www.nspcc.org.uk/helpandadvice/whatchildabuse/signsofabuse_wda51231.html Search online for 'Learn how to recognise the signs of child abuse'.

Allegations

Sometimes a child or young person may allege information that leads you to think that he or she is being abused. With young children, this may happen in a number of ways. A child might tell you something directly: 'Mummy and Daddy went out yesterday, and me and Scarlet were scared because we were all alone.' Or a child might use play to communicate – for example, you might observe a child in the home corner shouting at and slapping one of the dolls.

In all cases, your role when a child or young person alleges is to listen very carefully and show concern. Reaffirm that it is good for the child or young person to tell you things that are worrying or upsetting him or her. Say that you believe them. If you are not sure about something a child has said, then ask for clarification: 'I am not sure I quite understood – did you say it was your arm that hurts?'

However, there are also some things that you must *not* do. You must not question or cross-examine a child, or seem to put words into a child's mouth. You would therefore not ask a question such as, 'Does this happen every day?' because the child might just agree with you, or repeat your words. You are there to listen and observe – you are not an investigator.

A child or young person may make an allegation to anyone – their key person, the caretaker, the dinner supervisor, a student on placement. For that reason, it is very important that everyone who comes into contact with children and young people has training on safeguarding and knows what to do if they have any reason to be worried about a particular child or young person.

Key term

Allegation – This is when a child or young person alleges information that causes an adult to be concerned about their safety and wellbeing. This might happen through children talking, acting things out in their play, or drawing and painting. It is essential that early years practitioners listen and watch very carefully, but do not question the child or put words into the child's mouth.

Procedure for when abuse is suspected

If a child or young person alleges to you, or if you are worried for one or more of the reasons listed by the NSPCC (see page 000):

- Make a note that is as exact as you can make it, recording exactly what the child or young person said, and anything you noticed (signs of an injury, child or young person seeming upset, stressed, angry or ashamed while talking to you). If you have had ongoing concerns, summarise what these are; again, be as accurate as you can.
- Discuss your concerns as a matter of urgency with the named member of staff for safeguarding, however busy that person seems to be.

In most cases, the named member of staff will discuss the concerns with the parent or carer and then make a judgement about what to do next. You should be told what action (if any) is being taken, and why. Responses might include:

- **No action** – for example, in a case where a parent gives a reasonable explanation for their child's injury or behaviour.
- **Advice given** – for example, a parent is advised on what sort of clothes will keep their child warm enough in winter. Staff can then check that the child is appropriately dressed on subsequent days.

- **Support offered** – for example, a parent might agree that she is finding it difficult to manage the child or young person's behaviour, and might welcome the offer of support from a parenting group or an appointment with a clinical psychologist.
- **Referral to family support at the local children's centre** – this will provide structured support and help for the family on a voluntary basis. A similar type of referral might be made to a specialist social work team (Disabled Children's Team, Domestic Violence Project).
- **Referral to Children's Social Care (social services)** – if the named person judges that the child or young person is at risk of significant harm, a written referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

If you have raised a concern and you think that the action being taken is inadequate, meet the named person again. Explain your opinion, referring to what you have observed or heard. Although such conversations are very difficult, they are essential if we are to uphold to the principle that the child or young person's welfare and safety comes first.

If you are a learner, discuss your concerns in confidence with your tutor. Any worried adult is also entitled to contact Children's Social Care or the NSPCC directly. If you have reason to believe your concern is not being acted on, you should do this.

Research Activity

Read the summary document, *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*. It is available on this website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/6841-DfES-ChildAbuseSumm.pdf> for search online for 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'.

Confidentiality and 'need to know'

In general, you must keep sensitive information confidential. If information circulates too freely, parents can feel very exposed and vulnerable. They may stop sharing information with staff.

Where appropriate, seek consent before you share information

You might find out on a home visit that a child's mother has a serious mental health difficulty, which is well managed by medication and therapy. However, the medication can make her feel rather tired first thing in the morning, and she tells you that she can struggle to take on information or hold a conversation then. So you might say, 'I will need to tell my manager this, but shall we also let the staff team know, so that they can talk with you at the end of the day and not in the morning?' The parent can then give or withhold consent freely.

Activity

1 What are the four categories of child abuse?

2 What should you remember to do, if a child or young person alleges to you? What should you avoid doing?

3 Why would early years staff share concerns about a child's welfare or wellbeing with the child's parents, rather than just keeping a record or making a referral?

Do not disclose information inappropriately

Never disclose any information about a child or young person's welfare in an inappropriate way to people outside the setting or school. For example, you would not tell friends or family about a child protection conference you had attended.

Put the child or young person's interests first

If sharing information will help to ensure a child or young person's safety, you must do this. In nearly all cases, you would start by explaining to the parent why you wish to share the information and how this would help their child. If a parent refuses, ask for advice and guidance from the named person for safeguarding or the manager/head of the setting. If a parent or carer says something like, 'I did smack her round the head, but you won't tell anyone will you? They'll take her into care,' you will need to explain clearly that you are legally required to pass on information like this.

Progress check

- Working in a team, you should discuss your concerns about children in meetings or with senior staff, as appropriate.
- Understand why you would ask a parent for consent before sharing confidential information with another professional.
- Understand that there are times when you would share information without consent.

Understand how to respond to evidence or concerns that a child or young person has been bullied

Research suggests that 85 per cent of children aged five to eleven years have experienced bullying in

some form, such as name-calling, being hit or kicked. In 2000 a survey of 11 to 16-year-olds found that:

'36 per cent of children said they had been bullied in the last 12 months; 26 per cent had been threatened with violence and 13 per cent had been physically attacked.' (ATL, 2000)

As bullying occurs both inside and outside of schools and settings, the setting should have an anti-bullying policy which clearly sets out the ways in which they try to prevent or reduce bullying, and deal with bullying behaviour when it happens.

Different types of bullying and the potential effects on children and young people

Bullying can be defined as behaviour that is deliberately hurtful or aggressive, repeated over a period of time and difficult for victims to defend themselves against. There are three main types of bullying:

- 1 physical:** hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- 2 verbal:** name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- 3 indirect:** spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious emails or text messages on mobile phones.

Name-calling is the most common type of bullying. Children and young people can be called nasty names because of their individual characteristics, ethnic origin, nationality, skin colour, sexual orientation or disability. Verbal bullying is common among boys and girls. Boys experience more physical violence and threats when being bullied than do girls. However, physical attacks on girls by other girls are becoming more common. Girls tend to use indirect types of bullying, which can be more difficult to detect and deal with (DfES, 2000).

Any child or young person can experience bullying, but certain factors may make bullying more likely. While there is *never* an acceptable excuse for bullying behaviour, children and young people are more likely to experience bullying if they:

- are shy or have an over-protective family environment
- are from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority of children and young people
- appear different in some obvious respect, such as stammering
- have special needs, such as a disability or learning difficulties
- behave inappropriately or have less developed social and interpersonal skills
- possess expensive accessories, such as mobile phones or computer games.

Policies and procedures for dealing with bullying

Certain types of bullying may amount to unlawful discrimination, such as bullying on the grounds of age, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation or disability. All settings need to have in place effective systems to deal specifically with the problem of this type of bullying. Anti-bullying policies and procedures are required which include specific reference to bullying in all its forms, including the following:

- bullying on grounds of body image/size/obesity
- homophobic bullying
- racist bullying
- faith-based bullying
- ageist bullying
- disability bullying
- sexist bullying. (www.nasuwat.org.uk: see the useful resources section on page 000 for their anti-bullying literature)

Children and young people should be provided with information about sources of help and support, such as Barnardo's, Childline, The Samaritans and the National Youth Advocacy Service.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires that:

'children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs'.

Schools are also legally required to have policies and procedures in place to identify and prevent bullying. Every early years setting needs to develop a policy

around the support of children's behaviour and the prevention of bullying.

Adults can help to prevent bullying in the following ways:

Encouraging a culture where children and young people can express how they feel

Sometimes it may feel like a particular child or young person keeps coming to you for help, and this may become wearing. It is however important that on every occasion you listen with sympathy and try to help the child or young person.

Developing effective communication with parents or carers

If a child or young person is being bullied, it may be the parent who first notices that there is something the matter when the child or young person is at home. By working together, you may be able to find out what is happening and take steps to help the child.

Clearly telling children when their behaviour is not acceptable

Some young children bump into others, grab for equipment first, give others an aggressive look or generally intimidate other children. Sometimes children may deliberately exclude a child from playing within a group. Behaviour like this can quickly escalate to more serious forms of bullying like open aggression, which is either physical (hitting, pushing) or verbal (name-calling). It is important that adults look out for this sort of behaviour and encourage other children to say confidently how it affects them.

Take firm action when necessary

You may have to remove a child or young person from a situation if necessary, but you can help the child or young person by saying clearly which part of their behaviour is not acceptable, while not being negative towards them personally. This is why you would not say to a child, 'You're being naughty'. It is

important that you would follow this up by settling the child back into the play and then spend time in that area, helping all the children to play together.

If bullying is persistent despite your attempts at positive management, you will need to seek advice from the SENCO in your setting or school.

Research Activity

Find out more about bullying by going to www.kidscape.org.uk or searching online for 'Kidscape'.

Supporting a child, young person and/or their family when bullying is suspected or alleged

Children and young people who are experiencing bullying may be reluctant to attend the setting may therefore be often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, have fewer friends and often feel unhappy and lonely. They can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image; seeing themselves as failures, stupid, ashamed and unattractive. Possible signs that a child or young person is being bullied include:

- suddenly does not want to go to the setting when he usually enjoys it
- unexplained cuts and bruises
- possessions have unexplained damage or are persistently 'lost'
- becoming withdrawn or depressed but refusing to explain.

While the above signs may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied, they may also be symptomatic of other problems such as child abuse (see above).

We have already looked at factors which make bullying more likely. The **behaviour** of some children and young people can also lead to them experiencing bullying, although this does not justify the behaviour of the bullies. For example, some children and young people may:

- find it difficult to play/enjoy leisure with others
- be hyperactive
- behave in ways that irritate others
- bully other children and young people
- be easily roused to anger
- fight back when attacked or even slightly provoked
- be actively disliked by the majority of children and young people using the setting.

Practitioners and the child or young person's parents or carers should work together to identify any such behaviour. The child or young person needs help to improve personal and social skills, including assertiveness techniques and conflict resolution. You may be able to provide support for a child young person who is being bullied by:

- encouraging the child or young person to talk
- listening to their problems
- believing them if they say that they are being bullied
- providing reassurance that it is not their fault; no one deserves to be bullied
- discussing the matter with a senior colleague
- taking appropriate action, following the setting's policy on anti-bullying.

Dealing with persistent and violent bullying

Where a child or young person does not respond to the strategies to combat bullying, the setting should take tough action to deal with persistent and violent bullying. The setting should have a range of sanctions to deal with bullying. Everyone within the setting should know what sanctions will be taken.

These sanctions should be fair and applied consistently. You can help deal with bullying behaviour by:

- knowing the setting's policy and strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour
- using appropriate sanctions for such behaviour, such as exclusion from certain activities
- providing help for the bully so they can recognise that this behaviour is unacceptable; for example, discussion, mediation, peer counselling
- working with childcarers and parents to establish community awareness of bullying

Activity

- 1 Outline your setting's anti-bullying policy and main strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour.
- 2 Give a reflective account of how you have handled concerns about bullying. Remember confidentiality.
- 3 Devise an activity to encourage children to speak up about bullying, such as story, discussion, roleplay, drama or poster-making.

- making sure all children and young people know that bullying will *not* be tolerated
- understanding that the setting can permanently **exclude** children and young people who demonstrate persistent bullying behaviour, especially physical violence.

Understand how to work with children and young people to support their safety and wellbeing

In recent decades, a number of attempts have been made to design programmes for children under five years to help protect themselves against abuse. These have included lessons on 'stranger danger', working with children in groups to explore times when they feel uncomfortable, and teaching children not to keep 'bad secrets'.

There is little or no reliable evidence that such programmes have protected children aged under five years from abuse, and it has been argued that the children merely end up feeling confused, frightened and alarmed. It has also been argued that these approaches can make young children feel some responsibility if they are being abused, because they were unable to do or say what they were taught.



Figure 7.3 Example of child's anti-bullying poster

It is worth remembering that children in the EYFS do not generally learn effectively through group discussions, or through being shown pictures of dangerous situations. These approaches are most suited to older children in the primary and secondary phases of their education. There are some tried and tested programmes available from the NSPCC, Barnardo's and Kidscape for older children. In the EYFS, a more successful approach is likely to be one which is built into the daily lives of the children in their early years setting or school.

Research Activity

Research and compare different programmes offered by NSPCC, Barnardo's and Kidscape to support the safety and wellbeing of older children.

Supporting self-confidence and self-esteem in young children

The self-confidence and self-esteem of young children can be greatly boosted by a strong key person approach in the setting. Many aspects of this approach support the safeguarding of children.

Listening and tuning in to a child

This will include the key person noticing changes in a child's behaviour and emotional wellbeing, and developing a trusting relationship so that the child can tell you if things are upsetting him or her. Taking a child's concerns seriously is important. Often, when a child has been bullied or abused in some way, he or she will try to communicate what has happened. The child needs to know that you are there to listen and, most importantly, that you will believe what he or she tells you.

Allowing a child to express his or her feelings

If a child is allowed to express sadness and anger as well as happiness and enjoyment, she may feel more confident that she can have a range of emotions. The child will therefore be more likely to tell other people how she is feeling.

Increasing a child's confidence

This involves making a child feel a sense of belonging, and that he is special for many unique qualities. It is important to show a genuine interest in what a child has to say, and to praise him for any achievements. A quick, 'That's lovely, Shivan', is really not enough to show a child that you value him.

Observing a child and keeping regular records of behaviour

You are in a strong position to note any changes of behaviour or signs of insecurity that could result from child abuse.



Figure 7.4 This toddler is able to explore the environment confidently because of the security he gains from the presence of his key person

Working with parents

The emphasis in the key person approach on developing a close relationship with parents is also important. A key person can:

- help a parent to appreciate that a child is finding a particular situation upsetting or difficult
- support a parent with practical advice on general care and clothing
- offer emotional and practical support in cases of family conflict or domestic violence.

Empowering children and young people to support their own wellbeing and safety

An effective child and young person protection policy will promote a caring and supportive environment in the setting and create an atmosphere in which children and young people feel that they are secure, valued, listened to and taken seriously. The setting's child protection policy should support children and young people's development in ways which foster their security, confidence and independence.

Protecting themselves

Child protection not only involves the detection of abuse and neglect but also the **prevention** of abuse by helping children and young people to protect themselves. As part of this preventive role you should help children and young people to do the following:

- understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour towards them
- stay safe from harm
- speak up if they have worries and concerns
- develop awareness and **resilience**
- prepare for their future responsibilities as adults, citizens and parents.

Being actively involved in prevention helps children and young people to keep safe both now and in the future. Children and young people need to know how to take responsibility for themselves and to understand the consequences of their actions. Children and young people should know and understand:

- that they all deserve care and respect
- their rights and how to assert them
- how to do things safely and how to minimise risk
- how to deal with abusive or potentially abusive situations
- when and how to ask for help and support.

Critical thinking and decision-making are also essential for helping children to keep themselves safe. You can help them to develop these skills by encouraging them to participate in decision-making within the setting and providing opportunities for cooperation.

You should also encourage children and young people to trust their own feelings and judgement in difficult situations. By learning to trust their inner feelings, they can avoid many potential risky situations. Use roleplay to help them think about what they should do if their friends want them to do something they dislike or feel uncomfortable about, such as going to a party, getting drunk, having sex, shoplifting, taking drugs, etc. Peer pressure can be very strong; encourage them to decide and set limits about what they will or will not do, so that they know how to cope before the situation arises. Make sure that children understand the dangers of situations that may put their personal safety at risk, such as:

- being left at home alone
- playing in deserted or dark places
- being out on their own
- getting lost, for example on outings
- walking home alone, especially in the dark
- talking to strangers
- accepting lifts from strangers, including hitchhiking.

Risk-taking and developing independence

As children and young people get older, they need opportunities to explore their environment and to develop their independence. To do this safely they will need to know and understand about acceptable risk-taking.

This issue can be explored through stories (such as *Jack and the Beanstalk* for young children) and

television programmes. Children can think about and discuss the risks taken by their favourite characters. Encourage them to identify some of the risks they take in their own lives and look at ways in which they can minimise risk. Puppets and roleplay can be used to help them deal with potentially risky situations. Ensure that the children and young people know and understand **The Keepsafe Code** (see www.kidscape.org.uk).

Seeking help

Children and young people need to know where to go for help and support in difficult situations. They should be encouraged to identify people in the setting and the local community who help them to keep safe. For example, worries about bullying or problems at home may be discussed with a trusted adult; if they get lost they can ask a police officer for assistance.

Encourage children and young people to think of a trusted adult (such as parents or carers, another relative, best friend, teacher, key worker) to whom they could talk about a difficult situation (for example, abuse, bullying, negative peer pressure, etc.). Ensure that they understand that if they go to an adult for help, especially within the setting, they will be believed and supported. Provide them with information about other sources of help and support, such as Childline, The Samaritans.

Understand the importance of e-safety for children and young people

With the continuing development of new and mobile technologies, the setting has a responsibility to help children and young people to stay safe online. E-safety is a safeguarding issue as part of the wider duty of care for all who work with children and young people. You should have a good understanding of e-safety issues and risks, and how these might relate to the children you work with, including data protection and child protection.

Discuss ways in which your setting helps children and young people to protect themselves. What sources of help and support are available for children and young people in your setting and the local community?

Child protection and ICT

The setting has a duty in relation to children and young people to monitor their use of the internet and email in order to protect them from inappropriate, malicious or offensive material, as well as to protect them from paedophiles preying on children via the internet.

Chat rooms and social networking sites

Children and young people should only be given access to educational chat rooms which should be moderated to ensure that discussions are kept on-topic, and that there is no language or behaviour that is inappropriate.

Guidelines for using **chat rooms** or **social networking** sites in the setting should be included in the setting's policy for using ICT. Children and young people should be taught never to give out personal details that would identify who they are, and never to arrange to meet anyone they have 'met' in a chat room or social networking site. Additionally, children and young people should also be taught not to rely on anyone they have met in a chat room or social networking site for important advice, and if anything makes them feel uncomfortable, not to reply to the message but instead seek advice from a familiar adult such as their key worker, teacher, parent or carer (Becta, 2004).

Using the internet

The setting should have filtering systems in place to prevent children and young people from accessing inappropriate materials. There should be procedures in place for children and young people to report accidental access to inappropriate material.

The setting should also provide appropriate opportunities within the curriculum to teach internet safety. There should be procedures in place to deal with 'personal alleging' by a child or young person as a result of internet safety education. The setting must have nominated a member of staff who has responsibility for child protection issues. Children and young people's use of the internet, email and/or chat rooms should be regularly monitored to ensure that inappropriate use is not being made. There should be sanctions in place to deal with children and young people who deliberately access inappropriate sites or post bullying or offensive messages (Becta, 2004).

E-safety for the setting

A setting may have its own website which demonstrates the work of the setting, provides a source of information to parents and develops links with the wider community. The setting website should protect the identity of children; where a child's image appears, the name should not, and vice versa; parental permission should be obtained before using images of children on the website (Becta, 2004).

Buying online

With a number of internet payment options to choose from (such as debit cards, top-ups and pre-paid cards), children and young people can buy goods and services online even if they do not own a credit card. It is important that they know about e-safety when buying online, especially possible dangers such as being tricked into buying something on a fake website or accidentally giving their personal information to a fraudster. Young people should be made aware of the following important points about buying online:

- Be aware of the potential risks of online shopping such as identity theft and security issues. Criminals could install malicious software (malware) on your computer that might damage your data, cause your PC to run slowly, gather personal information, harm your reputation or be used to steal your money.
- Ensure that your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall in place, to provide protection against the potential risks of shopping online.
- Only use online retailers you trust or ones that have been suggested by friends or family.
- Shop around to get the best deals and to check a website's returns and privacy policy before buying anything. When buying things online, always read the small print!
- Ensure that you have strong passwords (a combination of letters, numbers and symbols) on websites you shop online.
- Know what a secure website looks like: look for the padlock symbol in the bottom right of the browser window, and for website addresses which begin with https (the 's' stands for security).
- Print out a copy of any online orders and check your bank statements after you have bought anything online.

Mobile phones

Internet access is now available on most mobile phones. While this provides opportunities for communication, interaction and entertainment, there are possible risks to children and young people including: accessing potentially harmful content such as pornography; possible dangerous contact with strangers in chat rooms; commercial pressures like spam and intrusive advertising. UK mobile phone operators have taken steps to help protect children and young people from potentially harmful content accessible via their mobile phone, including the following:

- All UK mobile phone operators have to provide an internet filter on their phones to help block accessing material that is potentially harmful to children, such as pornography. However, in most cases parents will need to ask their operator to activate the filter.
- Being registered as a child user will mean that the child cannot access material provided by the mobile operator or its partners that is rated as 18+. All mobile phone users are considered to be children by their mobile operator unless or until they have proved to their mobile operator that they are 18 years old.

Children & Young People's Workforce Diploma

- Bluetooth allows a mobile to find and 'talk' to other Bluetooth-enabled mobile phones nearby and vice versa. This means that when activated on a child or young person's mobile phone, they may receive unexpected and unwanted messages from other Bluetooth-enabled phone users nearby, and any personal information stored on their phone (such as their contact list) could be vulnerable. Mobile operators therefore advise that Bluetooth is not enabled on children and young people's phones.
- Chat rooms or games (where you can chat to other users) which are provided by a mobile operator or its partners and which do not have 18+ age-restrictions must be moderated. Different mobile operators may have different moderation policies and systems which may affect the level of safety, so ask the mobile operator about this. Remember that chat rooms accessed on the internet via mobile phone (that is, which are not provided by the mobile operator or its partners) may not be moderated.
- The mobile operator should have systems and procedures in place to help deal with nuisance and malicious phone calls. It is important to let the mobile operator know if their system is failing, both in order to protect children and others using the same service.
- The mobile operator will take action against spam, whether it is text, picture or e-mail. Find out what action the mobile operator is taking and report any spam received on the phone to them.

(Childnet International, 2006)

You can help children and young people to understand the importance of e-safety by giving them the following tips:

- Think about whom you give your mobile phone number to – you do not know where it might end up.
- If you start receiving annoying, nasty or rude texts, remember: do not reply, but do keep a record of it. If any of these things bother you, talk to an adult you trust or report it to your school or mobile phone operator.
- A growing number of viruses are attacking mobile phones, so be careful with what you download onto your mobile.
- If you often receive spam (junk mail) texts from random numbers, report it to your mobile phone operator.
- If you are taking photos or film of your friends and want to upload them to the internet, always check with them first.
- Remember to keep control of your own image too. Once a picture is posted online, it can be copied, changed and distributed without your knowledge. Only upload and exchange photos that you would be happy for everyone to see.

(Childnet International, 2009)



In Practice

Martha is working with a group of five-year-old children when they accidentally access inappropriate material while using the internet. What would you do in this situation?

Weblinks and resources

Organisations and websites

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) campaigns against cruelty to children, and runs Childline, the free, confidential helpline for children and young people. The NSPCC also offers services to support children and families, and can investigate cases where child abuse is suspected:

www.nspcc.org.uk

Working Together to Safeguard Children is the Government's guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether

Anna Freud Centre was established in 1947 by Anna Freud to support the emotional wellbeing of children through direct work with children and their families, research and the development of practice, and training mental health practitioners:

www.annafreud.org

Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children's Centre – this website includes news and policies for a centre based in central London:

www.kategreenaway.ik.org

Kidscape is a charity established specifically to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse. The website includes resources for parents, children and professionals, and details of campaigns and training events:

www.kidscape.org.uk

The National Strategies (Early Years) is the Government's programme for developing practice in the early years in England, including statutory requirements, advice on best practice, and research findings:

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears>

The **NASUWT** publication 'Tackling Prejudiced-Related Bullying' (PDF) is available free:

<http://www.nasuw.org.uk/InformationandAdvice/Equalities/PrejudiceRelatedBullying/index.htm>

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services. They offer information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people up to the age of 25, through a network of advocates throughout England and Wales. NYAS is also a community legal service:

<http://www.nyas.net/>

Childnet – their Know IT All website contains resources designed to help educate parents, carers, teachers and young people about safe and positive use of the internet. Available free at:

<http://www.childnet.com/kia/>

Books

Axline, V. (1971) *Dibs, In Search of Self: Personality Development in Play Therapy*. Penguin.

Department of Health (2003) *What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused*. DH.

(Free copies of this booklet are available via the DH website: www.dh.gov.uk)

Elliott, M. and Kilpatrick, J. (2002) *How to stop bullying: a Kidscape training guide*. Kidscape.

Lindon, J. (2003) *Child Protection*. 2nd Edition. Hodder & Stoughton.

Lindon, J. (2008) *Safeguarding Children and Young People: Child Protection 0-18Years*. 3rd Edition. Hodder Education.