

Safeguarding factors and indicators

This document is a risk assessment tool, to support school staff in identifying and acting on risks of abuse and harm, in children.

Remember: where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) should be made immediately.

The indicators	What could this mean?	What could you do?
<p>A child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is disabled or has certain health conditions and additional needs has special educational needs (whether or not they have an EHCP) has a mental health need is a young carer is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation is at risk of being radicalised or exploited has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse is misusing drugs or alcohol has returned home to their family from care is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage is a privately fostered child is persistently absent from education. 	<p>The child might have a need for early help.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of early help processes in your locality. Discuss with the DSL whether an early help referral is needed. Keep the situation under review and be prepared to escalate if things are not improving.
<p>Mental health problems.</p>	<p>The child may have suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. You can observe children day-to-day and help identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Consider all the steps above, and if in doubt, discuss with the DSL whether the child is a child in need and/or at risk of harm.
<p>Challenging behaviours such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> taking drugs alcohol misuse missing school sharing nude/semi-nude images. 	<p>The child may be at risk of harm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the DSL whether the child is a child in need and/or at risk of harm. Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response – it might not be abusive, but children still need to know it is illegal.
<p>A child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appears with unexplained gifts or new possessions associates with other children involved in exploitation suffers from changes in emotional well-being misuses drugs and alcohol missing for periods of time or regularly come home late regularly misses school. 	<p>Child criminal exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the DSL whether the child is a child in need and/or at risk of harm. Bear in mind that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys, and indicators may not be the same. Boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.
<p>As above, and also a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> with an older boyfriend or girlfriend suffering from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant. 	<p>Child sexual exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the DSL whether the child is a child in need and/or at risk of harm. Remember that CSE can affect any child, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, eg they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.
<p>A child who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased absence from school a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups significant decline in performance signs of self-harm a significant change in wellbeing signs of assault or unexplained injuries unexplained gifts or new possessions. <p>Particularly in combination with the following risk factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> being male having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school having experienced child maltreatment having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. 	<p>Risk from/involvement with serious violent crime.</p>	<p>Discuss with the DSL whether the child is a child in need and/or at risk of harm.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying). Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'). Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault. Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment. Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party. Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos. Upskirting. Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group). Online activities connected to any of the above. 	<p>Child on child abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the DSL whether the child is a child in need and/or at risk of harm. <p>Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even if there are no reports of child on child abuse, it does not mean it is not happening. Inappropriate behaviours between peers may be abusive and should never be downplayed or dismissed. Children may not feel ready or know how to tell you that they are being abused. They may not even recognise their experiences as harmful.

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