SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

Safeguarding in Education
Spring Term 2 Bulletin

2020 – 21 HT4 (March 2021)

INTRODUCTION

Once again, I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your commitment and hard work over the last year. I know it hasn't been easy.

Huge preparations have gone into welcoming more pupils back into our schools. As more children return to school, it's important we recognise some pupils and their families may have some anxieties over their return.

Some pupils may need a little more help than others at settling back into school. This Safeguarding in Education Bulletin has some useful information and resources to support you with some of the safeguarding issues your school may face over the next few weeks.

Best wishes,

Simon Marshall
Director of Education

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If you have any queries about any of the information contained within this bulletin, please speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the first instance.

together for children
SUNDERLAND

SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO WORK IN EDUCATION

Education Support provides mental health and wellbeing support to everyone working in education. At a time when staff are under immense pressure, taking care of you r mental wellbeing is more important than ever. Education Support can provide advice and support on your personal wellbeing as well as tips for supporting your colleagues.

Visit www.educationsupport.org.uk to find out more or contact the helpline on 0800 562561.

If you have any queries about any of the information contained within this bulletin, please speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the first instance.

PART 1 – ALL STAFF

ONLINE SEXUAL HARM REDUCTION GUIDE
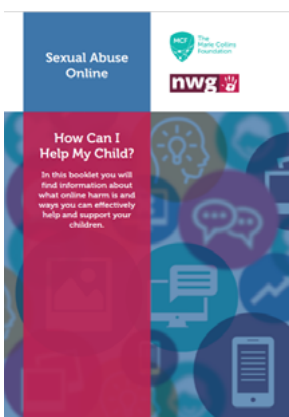
The Marie Collins Foundation has joined forces with the NWG Network to produce two new help guides aimed at reducing online harm.

The Marie Collins Foundation was created to address the needs of children abused online.

The Online Sexual Harm Reduction Guide is aimed at professionals; How Can I Help My Child? is aimed at parents and carers.

Both guides provide parents and professionals with what to do and what not to do as well as links to further support.

Source: The Marie Collins Foundation

3D LEARNING TOOL TO HELP ADULTS TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT ABUSE

The NSPCC have produced a very useful 3D tool/software to support people who work with children. A pilot 3D, interactive learning tool called 'Talk to Me' helps adults build their confidence in having conversations with children about difficult topics like abuse and ensure children always feel listened to.

The 'Talk to Me' tool has been funded by Innovate UK as part of its national COVID-19 response. It is informed by the NSPCC's 'Let children know you're listening' research (2019) and expert advice to make the tool relevant to the UK child protection context. One of the key findings from the 2019 research was that children and young people wanted adults to make it clear they are listening and taking them seriously.

The free tool enables learners to:

- access simulated scenarios and interact with fictional child characters
- learn how to respond to the children and build their trust to help them talk about their experiences to successfully complete each scenario
- build knowledge and confidence to talk to children about abuse.

The scenarios are based in a school setting and focus on domestic and sexual abuse. Access to 'Talk to Me' is free for anyone until December 2021 and the simulations can be revisited as many times as you like. Click here to access the software Learn to navigate difficult conversations with children about abuse with 'Talk to Me' | NSPCC Learning

Source: NSPCC

CHALLENGING VICTIM-BLAMING ATTITUDES

What is victim–blaming?

Victim-blaming happens when the victim of a crime is held entirely or partially at fault for the harm they've experienced.

Victim-blaming can be direct and explicit, for example, telling the victim it was their fault. It can also be indirect and unconscious, for example, questioning what a victim could have done differently, or how they may have reacted differently in the victim's shoes.

What does it look like in the classroom?

Children and young people receiving online safety education may express victim-blaming attitudes towards characters in scenarios or films used to support their learning. For example, young people may blame the characters for anything that happens to them as a result of their behaviours online. Some young people may describe the characters as "stupid", "dumb" or "naïve".

When delivering online safety education, be alert to the fact that there may be children and young people in the room who have been victims of abuse and potentially engaged in similar activities to the characters in the scenarios or films. For example, they may have spoken to people they don't know online or shared nude images. Victim-blaming can have a devastating impact, not only on those who have already experienced harm and trauma (whether they have disclosed this or not) but also by making it far less likely that children and young people will have the confidence to seek help if they need it.

How can I challenge victim-blaming attitudes in the classroom?

Children and young people of all ages can display victim-blaming attitudes. These should be challenged in a constructive and supportive way that encourages young people to think critically about the language they use and the impacts this has, both in the moment and more widely by reinforcing harmful social narratives.

You can challenge victim-blaming attitudes by using one or more of the following strategies that are relevant to the age group you work with:

1. Focus on the behaviour of the perpetrator

When discussing situations where young people are being groomed, abused or blackmailed, focus on the criminal behaviour of the perpetrator. Do not ask, for example, 'what the young person could have done differently'.

2. Take a children's rights-based approach

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out rights to which all children are entitled. Explain that all children have the right to privacy, and the right to protection from abuse. Help your group to understand their rights by sharing the children's version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. Explore impact on individuals

Ask the group to consider the impact that online abuse can have on a young person. Help young people to recognise that it can cause serious long-term harm to confidence, self-esteem, friendships and relationships.

4. Unpack victim-blaming

If victim-blaming terms such as "stupid" are used to describe the characters, ask young people to think about the connotations of the language they've chosen.

Explain that using this language wrongfully places blame on the person experiencing abuse, rather than the person who is perpetrating it.

5. Increase empathy by considering circumstance and motivation

Increase empathy for characters experiencing abuse by discussing the circumstances and reasons why the young person may have engaged in risk taking behaviour online. For example - if a character is being blamed for sharing a nude image, you could explain that they may have shared it with a person they like, trusting that it would not be shared further. Or, the young person could have been pressured, forced, or tricked into sending something.

'Challenging victim-blaming attitudes' is one of six Thinkuknow values to ensure safe, effective and child-centred online safety education.

Source: Challenging victim-blaming attitudes (thinkuknow.co.uk)

DISRUPTING EXPLOITATION

Exploitation poses a national threat. Child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and serious youth violence are all safeguarding issues that we all have a responsibility to notice, check and share.

Offenders are increasingly using more sophisticated methods to commit crime, identify, groom and exploit individuals, so partner agencies must work together. Disruption is vital.

Making parents aware of the signs

Parents are often the first to notice that their child is being exploited. Empowering parents to be alert to the signs and what to do about it is important.

PACE (Parents against child exploitation) have produced a very useful short video from the stories of some affected parents. To listen to parents talk about the changes they noticed in their child visit Signs of exploitation - Parents Against Child Exploitation (Pace) UK

When professionals have a concern

When professionals have a concern that a child is at risk of exploitation or is being exploited they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) about their concerns.

Anyone can make a referral, so if you have a concern, you should consider contacting Northumbria Police (by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency) or Together for Children's Integrated Contact and Referral Team by calling 0191 520 5560 or the Out of Hours Service on 0191 520 5552.

Police Intelligence

Police gather and use intelligence to enhance their knowledge or evidential picture in relation to offenders/offences. All intelligence is valuable to Police (no matter how small or insignificant it may seem to you) as it helps them build a better picture. If you feel you have any intelligence you should submit it to Police by using their Intelligence / Information Submission Form or by contacting 101.

Source: KCSIE 2019, NWG Tackling CSE Guidance, Northumbria Police.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Mental health is as important to a child's safety and wellbeing as their physical health. It can impact on all aspects of their life, including their educational attainment, relationships and physical wellbeing. Mental health can also change over time, to varying degrees of seriousness, and for different reasons.

Negative experiences such as abuse and neglect can adversely impact a child's mental health. It can be hard for adults to recognise when a child needs support with mental health issues. It can be difficult for young people to speak out about the challenges they're facing. It's crucial that anyone who works or volunteers with children is able to recognise the signs that a child may be struggling with their mental health, and how they need to respond.

The NSPCC have put together some information to help you recognise and respond to concerns about children and young people's mental health. They have produced three videos looking at: how mental health can become a safeguarding concern; the impact of abuse and neglect; and ways professionals can support children and young people who are experiencing issues with their mental health.

To access the information and videos visit: Child mental health: recognising and responding to issues | NSPCC Learning

Source: NSPCC

BARNARDO'S EDUCATION COMMUNITY
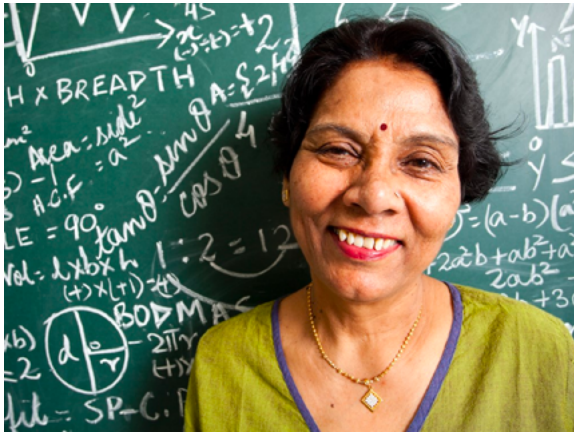
Barnardo's have recently launched a new online education community to provide those who work in education with online access to trauma informed resources with a focus on:

- Bereavement
- Grief
- Loss
- Trauma

There are also resources on the site to support staff wellbeing.

For more information visit: www.educators-barnardos.org.uk

Source: Barnardo's

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN ON THE RETURN TO SCHOOL

The following sites provide school staff with resources to support pupils back to school.

Childline: www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/school/

Place2Be: www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/services-for-schools/mental-health-resources-for-schools/return-to-school-resources/

Mentally Health Schools: Home : Mentally Healthy Schools

NSPCC Coronavirus: transitioning back to school | NSPCC Learning

Trauma Informed Schools UK Trauma Informed Schools UK

YoungMinds: Coping with anxiety about going back to school (youngminds.org.uk)

If you have found any other resources that you have found particularly useful, please send them to ronnie.lynn@togetherforchildren.org.uk so they can be shared with colleagues in the next bulletin.

# PART 2 – DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS (DSLS)

HARMFUL ONLINE CHALLENGES AND ONLINE HOAXES

The Department for Education (DfE), UK Council for Internet Safety Education and Samaritans have developed advice for schools to support their approach to harmful online challenges and online hoaxes.

A hoax is a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful, and online challenges generally involve users recording themselves taking a challenge, and then distributing the video through social media channels, inspiring or daring others to repeat the challenge.

Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) should ensure they are familiar with the guidance Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Source: Gov.uk
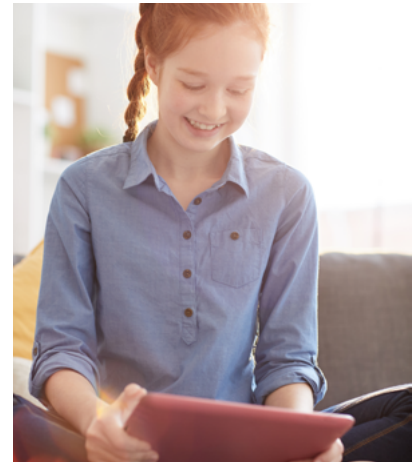
WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE SSCP TRAINERS POOL?

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) are always on the look out for new members to join the current pool of trainers. Could you spare a few hours every couple of months to train others in safeguarding?

You will receive full training and support and will be mentored by experienced trainers until you are confident enough to facilitate multi-agency training. If you want to enhance your current skills, knowledge and CV or need further information, please contact Pamela Finn, Practitioner Forum Coordinator and Training Lead by emailing pamela.finn@sunderland.gov.uk.

For more information contact Ronnie Lynn – School Improvement Officer (Safeguarding) on 07557 801 273 or email ronnie.lynn@togetherforchildren.org.uk