



## Safeguarding Guide

All adults have a responsibility to safeguard and protect children. This guide provides information on the signs and the types of abuse and has useful links to organisations who can offer further support.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation: County Lines**

The term 'county lines' is becoming more widely recognised and used to describe situations where young people may be internally trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation. Drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

Signs of potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting, having new possessions or receiving presents, having more available money than usual and changing friendship groups. The risk to a young person, and their family and friends, as a result of experiencing criminal exploitation can include, but is not limited to:

- Physical injuries: risk of serious violence and death
- Emotional and psychological trauma
- Sexual violence: sexual assault, rape, indecent images being taken and shared as part of initiation/revenge/punishment, internally inserting drugs
- Debt bondage- young person and families being 'in debt' to the exploiters; which is used to control the young person.
- Neglect and basic needs not being met
- Living in unclean, dangerous and/or unhygienic environments
- Tiredness and sleep deprivation: child is expected to carry out criminal activities over long periods and through the night
- Poor attendance and/or attainment at school/college/university

## **Child Protection**

All child protection concerns need to be acted upon immediately. For anyone concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse please inform one of the designated safeguarding staff at Oakgrove School. Staff will record any safeguarding or child protection concerns using MyConcern, which is GDPR compliant to securely record and alert key personnel to any concerns so that appropriate early help and support can be implemented and relevant partner agencies contacted.

Where a disclosure is made by a child attending a Personalised Education Centre (The Bridge Academy) or other alternative provision, the referral will be recorded and referred to the On-Site Senior Designated Person and a formal notification made to Oakgrove School for information or appropriate action to be taken. Any records made are kept securely on the student's Child Protection file on MyConcern.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

## **Child Sexual Abuse online**

When sexual exploitation occurs online, young people may be persuaded, or forced, to:

- Send or post sexually explicit images of themselves
- Take part in sexual activities, via a webcam or smartphone
- Have sexual conversations by text or online

Abusers may threaten to send images, video or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity.

Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the sexual abuse has stopped.

## **Child Sexual Abuse in Gangs**

Sexual exploitation is used in gangs to:

- Exert power and control over members
- Initiate young people into the gang
- Exchange sexual activity for status or protection
- Entrap rival gang members by exploiting girls and young women
- Inflict sexual assault as a weapon in conflict

Girls and young women are frequently forced into sexual activity by gang members. Research has found girls considered to be engaging in casual sex were seen by gang members as forfeiting their right to refuse sex.

Sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Warning signs can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour. Young people who are being sexually exploited may:

- Go missing from home, care or education.
- Be involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hang out with groups of older people, or antisocial groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Associate with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Get involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Spend time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels
- Not know where they are, because they have been moved around the country
- Be involved in petty crime such as shoplifting
- Have unexplained physical injuries
- Have a changed physical appearance, for example lost weight

(This information has been taken from the NSPCC website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk))

## **Domestic Abuse**

The Government defines domestic abuse as: “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.

Domestic Abuse can take a variety of forms: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

## **Controlling Behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

## **Coercive Behaviour**

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

If children are members of a household where domestic abuse is known or suspected to be taking place, action needs to be taken to safeguard the children and is likely to lead to a referral to Thames Valley Police and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

In Milton Keynes, MK Act is a charity working with families to move on from fear and abuse.

MK Act Helpline: 0344 375 4307 (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm)

0808 2000247 National Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)

Thames Valley Police: 999 or 101

### **Forced Marriage**

Milton Keynes does not support the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent. Forced Marriage is when a person experiences physical pressure to marry, such as threats, physical violence or sexual violence or emotional and psychological pressure, for example if you are made to feel like you're bringing shame on the family.

Forced marriage in England and Wales is illegal. This includes:

- Taking someone abroad to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they are pressured or not)

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. There are different procedures and a variety of reasons why FGM is carried out. All staff, parent and carers, and students need to be aware of the circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening, as well as signs and symptoms that may indicate the child has undergone FGM.

The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between 4 and 13, but is also performed on new born infants and on young women before marriage or pregnancy. A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure, from blood loss or infection. Girls are genitally mutilated illegally by doctors or traditional health workers in the UK, or sent abroad for the operation.

Female genital mutilation is illegal in this country (under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003) except on specific physical and mental health grounds. Staff have a duty of care to report any incidents of FGM to Thames Valley Police as it is an offence to:

- Undertake the operation (except in specific physical or mental health grounds)
- Assist a girl to mutilate her own genitalia
- Assist a non-UK person to undertake FGM of a UK national outside UK (except in specific physical or mental health grounds)
- Assist a UK national or permanent UK resident to undertake FGM of a UK national outside the UK (except in specific physical or mental health grounds)

Why is it carried out? There is a belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman or rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean and hygienic
- It is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

### **Gangs and Knives**

Increasingly, we are hearing more about knife crime and gang related incidents within our communities. At Oakgrove, we are proactive in discussing these concerns with students, being open and honest about how they can keep themselves safe, and supporting with accurate information from Thames Valley Police and other agencies.

For more information about knife crime and gangs, please read this leaflet produced by Safer MK: Gang Information

## **Mental Health**

Mental Health is a state of wellbeing, in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community – World Health Organisation

Oakgrove School has several staff who have undertaken the Mental Health First Aid Champions training for young people.

### The prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class.
- Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm.
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s.
- Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing, such as long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Oakgrove understands that teenage years are both exciting and challenging. It can therefore be hard to know whether a teenager's feelings and behaviour are normal or becoming a problem. The Anna Freud Centre's child mental health experts provide simple advice and guidance to parents and carers about how to make conversations about their child's feelings part of everyday life. Information for parents and carers can be found at [Annafreud.org](http://Annafreud.org)

Anna Freud produces a leaflet on how parents and carers can start talking about mental health with young people at secondary school:

[www.annafreud.org/media/7223/secondary-parents-leaflet-final-proofed.pdf](http://www.annafreud.org/media/7223/secondary-parents-leaflet-final-proofed.pdf)

Mental health concerns may include; anxiety, depression, self-harm, panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, seating problems, obsessions and compulsions. Support Agencies for mental health advice include:

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)

[www.place2be.org.uk](http://www.place2be.org.uk)

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

### **Online Safety**

Oakgrove School's Online Safety co-ordinator is Kirsty Wastell. Online is taught as part of the Computing Curriculum and within our PHSE and Life Skills programme and assemblies.

Online Safety includes:

- Bullying by peers and people they consider 'friends'
- Identification and location of a child offline
- Sexual grooming
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Making or distributing illegal or inappropriate content
- Theft of personal information
- Self-harm
- Exposure to racist or hate material
- Encouragement of violent behaviour, such as 'happy slapping'
- Glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking
- Physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and intimidating student and risk-taking activities
- Leaving and running away from home as a result of contacts made

## Instagram

Anonymous accounts on social media (Instagram in particular) can be created to send messages to the account, which are then posted on to the page. These messages can be bullying in nature and invite further comments on the posts.

Oakgrove is often restricted on what the school can do about students' online activity as staff do not have access to these pages and do not have the power to close the accounts. Incidents of this nature are also happening outside of school hours. Oakgrove therefore rely on parents/carers to support the students with their use of social media and monitor their online activity at home to ensure they are using their devices safely and positively.

With this in mind, the school would like to offer the following advice to parents/carers:

- Please check the age requirements of student's social media accounts. If they are under age, they should not be using it.
- Monitor student's activity closely and regularly. There are a number of apps and parental controls available to help with monitoring of your child's activities online.
- Report any incidents straight away using the reporting options of the social media site.
- For more serious concerns, please contact the police directly.
- Keep an eye on the amount of student's screen time and look at their 'search history' or potential gaps within this.
- Continue to make Oakgrove aware of situations and the school will support students and parents/carers accordingly

Please view these websites for further support and guidance:

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety)

[www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers](http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers)

[www.webwise.ie/parents/advice-top-10-tips-for-parents](http://www.webwise.ie/parents/advice-top-10-tips-for-parents)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)

Net Aware, the NSPCC and O2 website and app provide information for parents or anyone working with children to stay up to date and keep children safe in today's digital world and has been updated with new reviews from parents and young people. Fourteen new sites, apps and games now feature on the website and app including Yubo, Sarahah, Discord and Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas. Net Aware also provide online safety information and advice on privacy settings and other features, as well as recommended age guidance and risk ratings for inappropriate content.

Net Aware website: Download the app from Google Play or the App Store



**Further advice to discuss with your child:**

- Privacy settings:** These settings give the user the ability to control who they share particular content with, for example making a photo you post visible to friends only or to the public. Encourage children and young people to use the privacy tools available on the social networking site to protect their personal information and to keep their accounts private from their friends. About social networking sites give safety advice and information on their safety tools. For more advice see [www.facebook.com/safety](http://www.facebook.com/safety) for more in-depth information on Facebook privacy settings.
- Online Friendship:** Remind them to only add people they know and trust in the offline world to their contact lists on social networking sites.
- Geolocation:** Young people must be aware of who they are sharing their location with if they are accessing a social networking site via a smartphone or mobile device. They might be checking their location without realising it. Location services can be turned on or off within the settings of a device.
- Think Before You Post:** Emphasise the importance of thinking before you post something online. This can include writing a comment or sharing a picture. Discuss with them what a 'post' can be (a post and a comment) and that sometimes messages online can be misunderstood. What may start out as a harmless joke for one person, can be extremely hurtful for another individual and once something is posted online it is potentially there forever. If you are not sure, or if you wouldn't be happy for your Head Teacher to see it, it's probably best not to post it. Your online reputation can also be affected by other behaviour, such as groups you join or 'checking in'.
- Consider the photos you upload:** It's important that children consider the future of photos they post online, the attention that may be drawn to the photos, and who can see the photos. They should always ensure that they ask permission from others before posting pictures of their online.
- Know how to report:** Know how to block other users and know how to report - make sure children and young people know how to report abusive comments or illegal activity on social networking sites. Regular social networking sites allow you to report a comment or user who is violating website terms and conditions, by clicking on a report button or sending the site an email. If young people have concerns about cyberbullying that they should speak to a trusted adult as well as using the evidence, and even use the tools available to block other users. If you have concerns that your child or has been the subject of inappropriate sexual contact or approach by another person, to find out how to report it to the police via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre ([www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)).
- Logging out:** Once you have finished using a social networking site, it is important to log out. Specifically when using a public or shared computer and also on mobile devices. Make sure you have activated it if you use a mobile device, as a mobile device can mean that others can access your social networking profile.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q My child is underage, but has created a social networking profile. What should I do?**

**A** Research shows us that a large number of children have created a social networking profile before they are at the correct age (usually 13 to do so). It is important to respect the terms of use of the site and register with the correct age, as there are additional protections in place for younger users. If the site however discloses that underage users are using the service, they will delete their accounts. You should discourage underage use of these services as best you can, and be aware of services which cater for younger users by having higher safety features. However, before young people start using social networking services it is important that they are equipped with the skills to stay safe online and to use social networking sites responsibly. Sit down together and make sure that you both know how to use the privacy tools that are available. There are multiple ways in which a social networking profile can remain private that will prevent your child from giving out personal information to strangers. Support your child in ensuring that they only add contacts to these sites that they also know and trust online. One way to keep an eye on how your child uses a social networking site is to connect with them.

**Q Can my child limit who accesses their profile?**

**A** It is possible to set profiles to private or friends only, which restricts access only to those who have been granted permission to do so. This is different to a public profile which can be seen by anyone. Depending on the social networking site, the privacy settings do differ so it is important that users check their settings. It is important that children should register with their real age so that they are included in the protections made available by default to their age group.

**Q Does my child's profile appear in a public search engine (eg. Google)?**

**A** There are ways that you can prevent your profile from appearing in search engine results, most social networking sites allow you to remove your profile from public search results by using the privacy settings.

**Q How can I report inappropriate behaviour and what happens when I make a report?**

**A** Social networking sites should have clear, prominent and accessible places to make a report. Providers should respond promptly to reports from users, and some will acknowledge each report with a confirmation that it has been received and provide indication of the timeframe in which the complaint will be managed. Make sure you talk with your child about these tools and ensure that they know how to use them.

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**Childnet International**

#DITTO is a free online safety magazine from e-safety adviser, Alan Mackenzie, aimed at schools, organisations and parents:

#DITTO or see [www.esafetyadviser/latest-newsletter](http://www.esafetyadviser/latest-newsletter)

## Online reputation

A young person's digital footprint creates their online reputation. It is made up of everything posted, shared and created by the person and others. It is essential to think before posting, as content posted online can last forever and could be shared publicly by anyone at any time.

Here are some top tips from [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) to help keep a positive online reputation:

**Search yourself online:** Do students know what is online about them? Do a simple name web search to see what is displayed. If there is something inappropriate take the necessary steps to get the content removed. If unsure how to do this, ask someone at home to help or a member of staff in school.

If Facebook or Twitter pages appear during the search you can change this by adjusting the privacy settings.

**Check privacy settings:** Make sure the information being shared on websites and, in particular, on social networking sites has the person's permission to be shared. Most social networking sites have privacy settings to help manage the content shared and with whom it is shared with; to help decide if posts should be shared with the online friends and followers only or with the public. Keep in mind that a friend's content and their settings can also affect a person's digital footprint.

**Think before you post:** Before posting that funny picture of a friend, or make that joke about someone on Twitter, ask yourself if everyone should also to see it; friends, family,

grandparents, and future employers? A person should be proud of everything they post online, remember once it is online it could potentially be there forever!

**Deactivate and delete:** When stopping using a social networking profile or website, it's a good idea to deactivate or delete the account. This will mean the content is no longer live and should not be searchable online; it will also remove the risk of these accounts being hacked without a person knowing.

**Make a positive footprint:** Negative footprints can be left behind online. The best way to keep a person's online reputation in check is to use online time to get creative and create a positive footprint.

Visit ChildLine to chat to a counsellor online or call them on 0800 1111 if there is ever a need to talk to someone in confidence.

Adults who go online to chat to young people and arrange to meet up in order to cause them harm are breaking the law. If meeting someone online or conversations with that person make a young person feel uncomfortable then they should tell a trusted adult or report it to the police.

Criminal content online, should be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). Unsure if it is criminal content? Visit the IWF website to find out what can be reported

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include, but is not limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

### **Prevent**

The Government has defined extremism in the Prevent strategy as: vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Also included in the definition are calls for the death of members of the UK's armed forces.

Front-line staff who have contact with the public should understand what radicalisation means and why people may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of it. They need to be aware of what is meant by the term extremism and the relationship between extremism and terrorism.

If a professional has any concerns that a child or young person may be showing signs of having been radicalised this is referred using normal safeguarding procedures through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). School staff will also contact Thames Valley Police.

Staff at Oakgrove School have Prevent training using the Home Office recommended guidance. They are aware of the signs and who then to pass the information onto within the school.

Oakgrove School's Prevent Officer is Caroline Forster.

Please see the Radicalisation and Extremism Policy, July 2019.

### **Signs and Types of Abuse**

Safeguarding includes every aspect of child safety; bullying, racist abuse, derogatory language, homophobia, sexual harassment, peer on peer abuse, educational visits, intimate care, children missing in education and internet safety.

The witnessing of abuse can also have a damaging effect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subject to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional wellbeing of the child. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise because children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further.

### **Physical Abuse**

This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, burning, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child, in order to seek attention through fabricated or induced illness. This was previously known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse is where a child's need for love, security, recognition and praise is not met. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else, such as domestic violence or domestic abuse. A parent, carer or authority figure is considered emotionally abusive when they are consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining toward a child or other family member. It can also occur when children are prevented from having social contact with others, or if inappropriate expectations are placed upon them.

Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention seeking
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders or self-harm

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact both penetrative and non-penetrative, or viewing pornographic material, including through the use of the internet. Indicators of sexual abuse include: allegations or disclosures, genital soreness, injuries or disclosure, sexually transmitted diseases and inappropriate sexualized behaviour including words, play or drawing.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs that can significantly harm their health and development. Neglect can include inadequate supervision (being left alone for long periods of time); lack of stimulation; social contact or education; lack of appropriate food, shelter, appropriate clothing for conditions and medical attention and treatment when necessary.