

SAFEGUARDING

Contextual Safeguarding

“As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse, or exploitation from outside their families”

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), paragraph 33

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keep Children Safe in Education (2019) refer to Contextual Safeguarding. This is understanding, assessing and reducing the risk of harm from outside the family home.

Contextual Safeguarding is based on research and extensive trials in multi-agency safeguarding hubs. It seeks to understand child protection risks from beyond the home which become increasingly important as children begin to spend more time out of their home and under the influence of their peers. Children can be negatively affected by a range of risks as they spend more and more time in retail areas, open spaces and on public transport. As parents/guardians we need to assess and intervene in these places.

Research shows that teenagers are influenced more by their peers and wider relationships than other parents and the pervading attitudes and social norms of their social groups may be positive or negative. A safe, supportive and effective peer group will engender positive relationships, whilst negative experiences may lead to negative behaviours including violent, coercive and harmful behaviours.

Contextual Safeguarding extends the capacity to safeguard from the home to the neighbourhood. For example, while parents, carers and teachers may emphasise the harm from certain activities, the peer group may play down the dangers and illegality. The influence of the group is greater than that of the parents. Contextual Safeguarding looks at how risks of harm can be reduced. For example, a park that has been used for inappropriate activity at night may have extra light installed, shrubs trimmed back and increased police and council patrols. There is an emphasis on everyone working together and playing their part. As a school we are constantly assessing risks and if we have any concerns, we take immediate action, referring to wider connects and sources of influence on the child. We urge all stakeholders to be as hyper-vigilant and take the action that is necessary to support our children; a common responsibility is the only way forward.

Working together to keep our children safe.

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