

# Harm Outside the Home

## A tool for schools and settings

Understanding and mitigating potential  
harms outside of the home

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# Why is this important?



During the period of adolescent development (10 – 25 years of age) children are increasingly exposed to potential harms outside of the home. This is also referred to as Contextual Safeguarding ([NSPCC, 2019](#)). These include harms caused through sexual and criminal exploitation; abuse in their own romantic, same-age relationships; sexual harassment and abuse from peers or adults unconnected to their families. Harms can also include weapon-enabled and street-based violence although more commonly associated with adolescence than with earlier childhood ([Firmin, 2020](#)). Such risks are all largely instigated by, or occur in, relationships with people beyond a child's parents or carers.

Whilst acknowledging that harm outside the home can occur within education settings ([Ofsted, 2021](#)), **the purpose of this toolkit is to increase school's protective capacity against harms outside the home.** This toolkit has been created by Nottinghamshire County Council. It has been developed through research literature reviews, in consultation with Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS), Tackling Emerging Threats to Children (TETC) team, the Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) team and Schools and Families Specialist Services (SFSS). It depicts a moment in time and captures current identified risks outside the home and supportive resources. It is likely to be a fluid document that is adapted to reflect shifts in understanding and future changes to identified harms outside of the home.

Based on what children told us, research literature reviews and following a strength-based philosophy, we developed Six Guiding Principles to support schools in enhancing their capacity as a safe and protective factor for children against harm. [Scott et al \(2019\)](#) identifies the quality of safe and trusted relationships as being the key foundation of effective work with children at risk of harm outside the home. Relationships are therefore central to each of these Six Guiding Principles.

- We use the term 'child/ren' throughout this document to consciously avoid harmful 'adultification' of any groups of children. Casey (2017 [The "Adultification" of Black Girls](#)).

# What are harms outside the home?

**Child Sexual  
Exploitation**

**Child on Child  
and Relationship  
Abuse**

**Criminal  
Exploitation and  
County Lines**

**Radicalisation /  
Extremism**

**Weapon-enabled /  
Street-based  
Violence**

# Six Guiding Principles

to increase education's protective capacity against harms outside the home

## Inclusion:

Sense of belonging and connection



## Understanding

### Behaviour:

Recognising emotions and regulation



## Education:

Developing knowledge, identification and support around harm outside the home



## Community:

Valuing community experiences building strong partnerships and collaboration



## Communication:

Listening, hearing and validating children's experiences

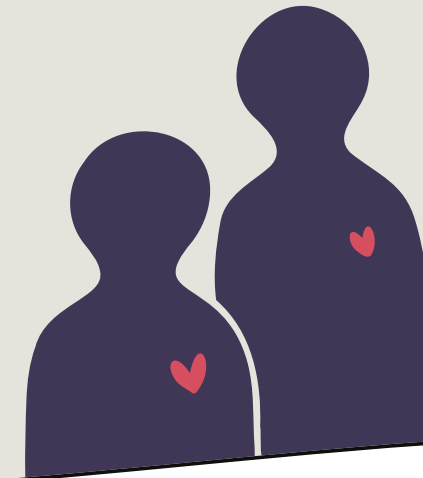


## Environment:

Creating safe places and spaces



Safe and trusting relationships



# 'How To' Guide

Example of how to use this toolkit

Each principle has two parts:

Part 1 (definition, research and key resources)

Part 2 (reflective questions)

## Part 1:

### Communication:

Listening, hearing and validating children's experiences

The relationships in a child's life are very important to their wellbeing and development. In an education setting, this means that their relationships with school staff, and with each other, should be nurtured and supported ([Mentally Healthy Schools, 2022](#)).

#### Safe and trusting relationships

Harms outside the home looks at how we can best understand risks, engage with children and help to keep them safe ([NSPCC, 2019](#)). Part of ensuring we do this is by hearing, listening and validating children's experiences.



### What does research tell us?

- There is a clear rationale for seeking children's views which was laid out in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#).
- [The Children Act \(1989\)](#) provided a legal basis for children's rights to a voice.
- Schools with a strong commitment to pupil voice have reported many positive outcomes. These include a reduction in exclusions, better behaviour, better relationships across the whole-school community, and improvement in attainment and attendance ([Mentally Healthy Schools, 2022](#)).
- There are multiple benefits associated with gathering children's views, including having a positive impact on their psychological health ([Warshak, 2004](#)).
- Children repeatedly report that being done to (on matters of contextual safeguarding) resulted in feelings of powerless and hopelessness. Children want to be partners in their protection and recovery ([Scott et al., 2019](#)).
- Through a pupil voice project, children in Nottinghamshire have reflected on a number of themes of their experiences of school and learning; emotional well-being; the importance of relationships; feelings of safety; anxiety related to exams and the impact of inequality ([Pupil Views Nottinghamshire, 2020](#)).
- Listening to pupil voice relays to children that their opinions matter, and more importantly, that the children themselves matter. As a consequence, a number of factors increase and improve, such as self-esteem, experiences at school and relationships with teachers ([Dembriou, 2019](#)).
- We need to create spaces and opportunities to hear children's voices and also to understand behaviours which may indicate a child's experiences and how they are feeling ([NSPCC, 2018](#)).

### Key resources

## Part 2:

### Reflective questions: Communication

#### Thinking about our education setting

- To what extent does our setting value the promotion of 'pupil voice'?
- How does our setting communicate the importance of 'pupil voice' to the children?
- How does our setting ensure that our children are heard?
- How does our setting encourage children to voice their concerns?
- When a child's experiences do not fit with social expectations, how do we provide our child with genuine acceptance and empathy?
- How do we show we listen to and act on concerns?
- How do we provide opportunities for children to express their views?

#### Thinking about our child

- Do we listen and give value to the language our children use to describe themselves and the groups they belong to?
- Can our children understand the words we are using? Do they share the same meaning for them?
- Do we listen and understand what our children are telling us about the way they see themselves the world and the people who are influencing them?

Definition of the foundation

Psychological theory and evidence base: A summary with clickable links to articles

Signposts to key resources hyperlinked

Questions to ask at a wider school/setting level

Questions for adults/professionals to ask themselves about individual children

## Communication:

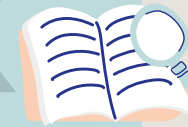
Listening, hearing and validating children's experiences

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- Through a pupil voice project, children in Nottinghamshire have reflected on a number of themes of their experiences of school, recognising: positive and negative experiences of school and learning; emotional well-being; the importance of relationships; feelings of safety; anxiety related to exams and the impact of inequality ([Pupil Views Nottinghamshire, 2020](#)).
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## Key resources

**MENTALLY HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

- [Relationships and belonging](#)
- [Pupil voice](#)

**NSPCC Learning**

- [Let children know you're listening](#)
- [Safeguarding in schools](#)



- [Gathering pupil views:](#)
- [Drawing the ideal self](#)
- [Ideal school](#)
- [Pupil pen picture](#)



**Video: "Every interaction can be an intervention" video by Dr Karen Treisman**



# Reflective questions: Communication

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# Education:



Developing knowledge, identification and support around harm outside the home

Safe relationships are key to supporting children around the education and support of potential harms outside of the home.

Safe and trusting relationships

Criminal exploitation & county lines  
(Home Office, 2018)

Child on child & intimate relationship abuse  
(Keeping Children Safe in Education)

Radicalisation/ extremism  
(Home Office, 2021)

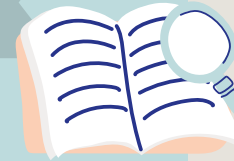
Child sexual exploitation  
(DfE, 2017)

Weapon-enabled/street-based violence  
(James, 2019)

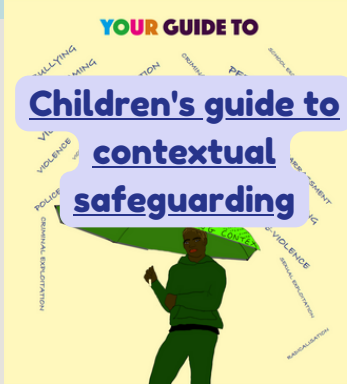
Statutory guidance  
**Keeping children safe in education**

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

## What does research tell us?



- Harms outside the home affect children from all backgrounds regardless of socio-economic background, gender, race and religion **(Home Office, 2020)**.
- Children are vulnerable to these harms both face to face and online, or sometimes a combination of both. 'Social contexts such as peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods can make young people vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse' **(Firmin, 2017)**.
- Early identification and intervention act as key protective factors in reducing potential harm. 'Intervening early not only saves young lives from being wasted but also prevents the onset of adult criminal careers and reduces the likelihood of youth perpetrating serious and violent offenses' **(Youth.Gov)**.
- Those who groom children are skilled at recognising vulnerabilities and exploiting these to build relationships with children. 'Vulnerable children are more likely to be targeted by perpetrators **(Colton et al., 2010)** because they are perceived as easier to manipulate and therefore less likely to disclose (sexual) abuse' **(Leclerc et al., 2005)**.
- One trusted adult in a child's life can be a major protective factor. Having more than one trusted adult increases this protection **(Daniel and Wassel, 2002)**.
- Children who have a strong sense of identity and a sense of belonging are less likely to be vulnerable to harms outside the home. 'A relatively clear and stable identity makes people more resilient, reflective, and autonomous in the pursuit of important life decisions, while promoting a sense of competence' **(Verhoeven et al, 2018)**.



## Training:

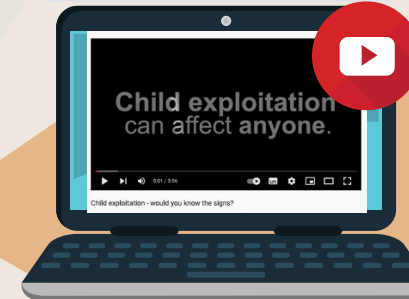


- **NSPCC**
- **East Midlands Education Support Service**

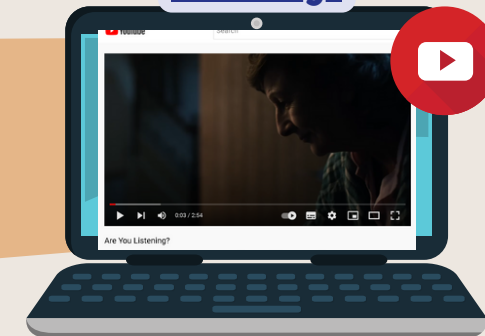
## Key resources



Video: **Child exploitation - would you know the signs?**



Video: **Are You Listening?**



**NSPCC**

- **Criminal exploitation and gangs**
- **Child sexual exploitation**



**Child sexual exploitation by organised networks Investigation Report**

**The Children's Society County lines and child criminal exploitation**

**CEOP Education**

**Believe in children Barnardo's**

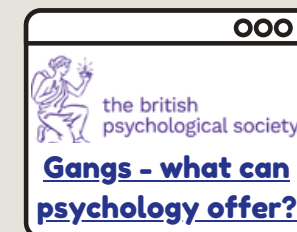
**Child sexual exploitation**

**ACT**

**Prevent Radicalisation and Extremism by Acting Early**

**educate.against.hate Signs of radicalisation**

Video: **ACT Early | support and guidance on radicalisation**



**Contextual Safeguarding in Practice**



**Contextual Safeguarding**

**Local Government Association Tackling Child Exploitation Resource Pack**



**Child sexual exploitation perpetrators research programme briefing**

**Nott Alone**

# Reflective questions: Education



## Thinking about our education setting

How does our setting support the understanding of our student's lived experiences?

How well do we understand the context of our children's lives? (Home/school/wider community/online)

How do we support our children to develop their understanding of harms outside the home?

Do we provide stability through trusted and consistent relationships? For children? For parents/carers?

Does our curriculum include topics such as grooming, exploitation, healthy/unhealthy relationships and is this delivered as a whole school and/or responsive to an individual's experiences?

How do we ensure our children/parents/carers know how to report/share concerns (both in and out of school)?

Does our curriculum, reflect the harms outside the home that our community is experiencing?

## Thinking about our child

What behaviours/changes have we noticed that cause us concern, where are they happening and what's the story behind these?

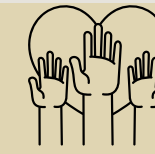
How do we empower our child to keep themselves safe/access support when they need it?

How does our child perceive the concerns we have about them and harms outside the home?

How aware are families of the risks posed to their child?



# Reflective questions: Inclusion



## Thinking about our education setting

What does inclusion mean to us?

How inclusive do we believe our school/setting to be, do all of the staff value inclusion?

How could we be even more inclusive?

Are staff confident in their skills to support connections with each other, the community and individuals?

What does belonging to our school/setting mean for us and our children? And how do we know that children experience a sense of belonging and inclusion to our school/setting?

How do we think about belonging to our community for individuals who may not feel that they belong? What do we actively do to increase their sense of belonging and inclusion?

## Thinking about our child

What would the child want to communicate about their experience of being included in our school?

How do we ensure our children experience a strong sense of inclusion and belonging to our school to protect them from vulnerable situations e.g. negative peer influences, gang membership, child sexual exploitation and harmful online content?

What do we need to be aware of, that may impact on a child's sense of belonging and inclusion (e.g. not being part of a majority group/exclusion/placement changes)?

How do we address any concerns about the child's belonging to groups that maybe harmful to their safety and wellbeing (e.g. gangs)?

How do we value the child's experiences within their families and communities (e.g. children in care in a new home with different cultural experiences, family experiences which are very different to school)?

# Understanding Behaviour:



Recognising emotions and regulation

Relationships, trust and belonging are the heart of supporting children's emotions and behaviours. Children who have a sense of belonging in school, through their positive relationships tend to be happier, more confident, more emotionally regulated and perform better academically (Riley, 2021).

Safe and trusting relationships

Understanding and being able to support children and young people's emotional distress and behaviour through a relational approach is essential to ensuing school is a protective factor against harms (Mentally Healthy Schools, 2022).



all behavior is COMMUNICATION

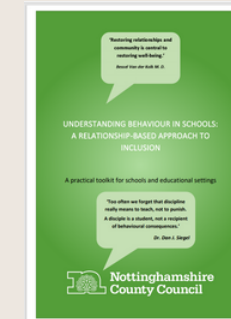
## What does research tell us?

- There is a clear link between school exclusion, suspension and child exploitation. Young people experiencing exclusions from school are put at increased risk of harm outside of the home (Graham, 2021).
- Exclusion is linked to negative life outcomes (e.g. incarceration (Timpson, 2019) and does not provide learning opportunities for children to improve (Michail, 2011).
- Exclusions have been linked to psychological distress as both a cause and a result (Ford et al, 2017), and to potential re-traumatisation of children who have experienced trauma.
- Particular groups of children are significantly more likely to be excluded from school than their peers e.g. children with Special Educational Needs and Disability, children from Black Caribbean ethnic groups and Children in Care (DfE, 2019; Ford et al, 2017). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on children's attachment specifically advises against the use of exclusions with Children in Care.
- Relational and restorative approaches have been shown to reduce exclusions and improve attendance and attainment (Payne & Welch, 2015).
- Reward, sanctions (including exclusions) traditional behaviourist approaches are shown to be limited in their effectiveness when used in isolation (EEF, 2019).
- Understanding emotions and unmet needs is essential for supporting behaviour in schools (Rutledge, 2011).
- Children are doing their best to survive and adults need to be supported to understand their role in supporting behaviour that challenges (Australian Childhood Foundation, 2020).
- Adults engaged in attachment aware, trauma informed and emotion coaching training, described changes in their practice, in particular recognising emotions while managing behaviours, changing communication styles and language used with children and other staff (DfE, 2022).
- When nurture groups are working well as a short term intervention, they can make a considerable difference to the behaviour and the social skills of the children who attend them (Ofsted, 2011).
- Children who go missing from home and education are at an increasingly significant risk of violence, victimisation, sexual exploitation and harms outside the home. Safe adults in the child's life must work together to support them (DfE, 2014).

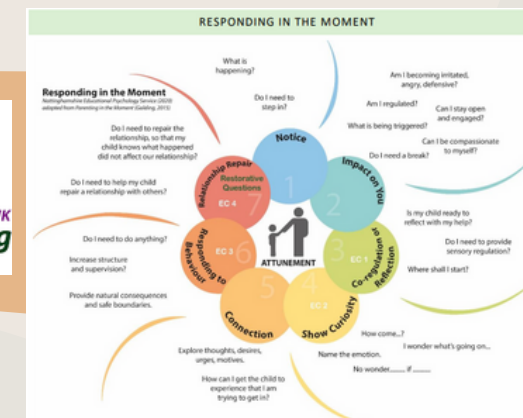
## Key resources



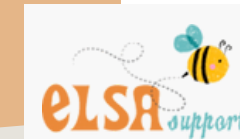
Podcast series: Exclusion from school and its consequences



Understanding Behaviour in Schools Toolkit



Video: Rita Pierson: Every kid needs a champion | TED



Video: Badly Behaved or Emotionally Strained? | Krissi Carter



# Reflective questions: Understanding Behaviour

## Thinking about our education setting

How do we understand behaviour as an education setting?

What are our policies on relationships, behaviour and mental health and how do these match our practice?

What approaches and systems do we use to support emotional regulation and behaviour that challenges?

What training has our educational setting accessed in the area of relational based practice, emotions and behaviour and what has been most helpful? How do we work with parents/carers around this?

How do we prioritise and support staff wellbeing?

What do we do and who do we involve when you are struggling with behaviour that challenges?

How do we support staff to understand behaviour that challenges in their classroom?

## Thinking about our child

What are the behaviours that are causing us concern (including withdrawal and especially going missing)?

What is our child's behaviour trying to communicate to us?

What is going on for our child in and out of our education setting that might make us understand those behaviours?

What is the child's view of what is going on?

What is the parents/carer view of what is going on?

Does our child access full time education or do we need to consider what is happening for them when they are not our education setting (e.g. attending alternative provision)?

Who are our child's safe and trusted relationships in education and the community and how do we bring together this team around the child?

# Community:



Valuing community experiences building strong partnerships and collaboration

Relationships of trust extend beyond the school to the wider community.

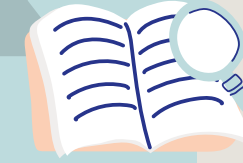


Community can be a place or a feeling; be defined by shared political allegiances, religions or ethnicity; be online or offline and have positive or negative associations and is constantly evolving (Chavis & Lee, 2015; Dhaliwal et al, 2015).

Cohesive communities have shared visions and an enduring sense of belonging supporting the views of all where strong relationships are formed. This removes barriers, encourages interactions and different opinions and viewpoints (Community Cohesion, 2004).

There is increasing acknowledgement of the difference made when children and young people are able to build trusted relationships with an adult. 'Working Together' cites one of the key messages heard from children is that they need 'stability: to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them' (DfE, 2020).

## What does research tell us?



- The role of communities is one element of the collective effort to safeguard children; one that is particularly important in relation to child exploitation where harm typically happens outside the home (DfE, 2020).
- Raising awareness is a key first step to a community's ability to intervene early and prevent child exploitation. 'Children and young people, professionals, parents and carers, neighbours and friends can help prevent abuse by being well informed about the issues' (Dhaliwal, S et al 2015 p. 5).
- There is an increasing research body that that recognises the positive impact for children on schools who actively build meaningful partnerships with communities (Partridge, 2019).
- Through the Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) model, parents reflected that they learnt how to use a range of positive parenting skills; better understand their children's feelings; listen, communicate and interact more effectively; nurture closer, warmer parent-child relationships and develop more resilient families. The EPEC model reflects the social, ethnic and cultural diversity of families communities (EPEC).
- Multi-agency working is key to effective safeguarding and child protection and has been highlighted through the analysis of a number of serious case reviews (NSPCC, 2019).

## Key resources



Community engagement in tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm



Solihull parenting approach



Relationships Really Matter

Relationships Really Matter:  
Happy home, happy adults, happy children  
We all have arguments and fall out with people. It's a natural part of relationships. The information here is about managing everyday disagreements in a more positive and healthy way. It's not about abusive relationships. When a relationship hurts a person physically or emotionally this is a sign of domestic abuse.  
Icons made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

Financial support for families:

- Turn2Us
- Step Change
- Citizens Advice
- Family Fund



Partnership Projects (offers services, workshops, training and consultancy in innovative therapies)



Beyond referrals toolkit and resources



# Reflective questions: Community



## Thinking about our education setting

How does our setting genuinely respect and engage with the local community by hearing about their experiences?

How are our families and communities represented in our setting?

How does our setting collaborate effectively with key partners and agencies to ensure that the right support is around our families and communities?

How does our setting address issues of power and social injustice?

## Thinking about our child

Where does our child get their sense of connection/belonging in the community?

What positive community links does our child already have and how can we build on these?

Has our child got a safe and trusted adult who isn't in their immediate homelife? If so, how can we connect with them and work together to support our child?

What support has our child accessed already? What impact do we/our child think this has had?

Who does our child say is important to them in their community?

What interests our child and how can we support our child to engage in linked activities in education and the community?



# Environment:

Creating safe places and spaces



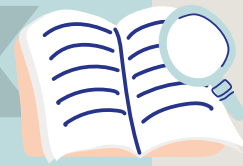
Safe and trusting relationships

By their very nature, harms outside the home take place in a variety of settings/environments and can include the school and online. These harms are often hidden from the adults who would ordinarily act as protective factors. Often, other children are aware of these unsafe spaces but do not share this knowledge with adults in a position of trust who might otherwise keep them safe. The influence of peers and the acceptance of violence and abuse as social norms, act as powerful contributory factors.

(Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2021)



# What does research tell us?



- Although schools generally are considered to be safe spaces, full of protective adults, there are also potentially a number of areas which are less safe for children. These include areas which are less supervised such as stairwells, toilets, corridors, and outdoor spaces. Children can be subjected to bullying, sexual violence and harassment, threats and intimidation, as well as being groomed and exploited by their peers (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2021).
- Adolescent children spend an increasing amount of time unsupervised, outside of the family home. Parks, retail areas, fast food outlets, streets, transport hubs, and other community spaces which children frequent, are sometimes inadequately lit, poorly maintained, inadequately supervised, and perceived by the local community as “unsafe”. By becoming “no-go” areas for the general public, these unsafe spaces can present real risks to children and are the locations of choice for adults who seek to exploit them. The environment itself helps to keep criminal activity “hidden” (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2021).
- Children often spend increasing amounts of time online. As children gain greater independence, adult supervision reduces proportionately. However, many online spaces have been shown to be inadequately regulated and to contain both harmful content and provide easy access for potential groomers/exploiters. Risks include online bullying; radicalisation; all forms of exploitation including but not limited to, child sexual exploitation and sextortion (Safeguarding Hub, 2022; (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2021).
- In order to adequately safeguard children from harms outside the home, there needs to be a focus on “places” of risk and disrupting the activities of exploitative adults/ peer groups (Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2020).
- Effective safeguarding around harms outside the home requires the support and involvement of the wider community and a range of partners (Ofsted, 2016).
- Involving children in the assessment of place-based risks and harms is essential to effective practice (Ofsted, 2016).

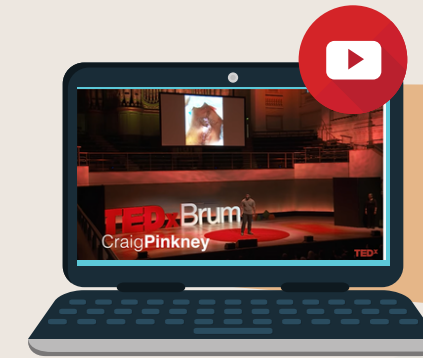
# Key resources



- School assessment toolkit
- Context-assessment-triangles
- Changing school environments



Community Guardians



Video: The real roots of youth violence | Craig Pinkney

Creating safe spaces for students in the classroom



WEAVING & INFUSING		TRAUMA-INFUSED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE SYSTEM	
DR. KAREN TREISMAN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST TRAINER AUTHOR	SafeHands ThinkingMinds.co.uk	Sketch by @wterral	
THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Design, Building, Space	SUPERVISION Performance Reviews & Appraisals	TEAM Meetings, Working Group, Feedback, & Communication Forums	MANUAL CONSULTATION & Decision-Making in ALL ASPECTS by those with lived experience & multiple different voices
LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	EVERY INTERACTION IS IMPORTANT	TYPE & CHOICE OF LANGUAGE	RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE Job Description, Communication, Interview, Feedback, Induction
EVALUATION & MONITORING	STAFF WELLNESS, WELL-BEING & SELF-CARE	THE ORGANISATION'S VISION, MISSION, VALUES	POLICIES & PROCEDURES REGISTRATION
	TRAINING & CONTINUING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	MATERIALS ASSESSMENT & TOOLS	TYPES OF SERVICE AND APPROACH OFFERED & AVAILABLE

Training by Dr. Karen Treisman: Trauma within educational settings

Resources: Trauma-Informed, Responsive Organisations & Systems



# Reflective questions: Environment



## Thinking about our education setting

How do we recognise when our children are not feeling safe?

Where are the safe/unsafe spaces, and how do we know this? How do we involve children in auditing these spaces?

How do we gather local intelligence about safe/unsafe spaces in school/ the community/online?

Is lighting adequate and are areas well-maintained? How is CCTV used? (to increase a sense of safety or for surveillance)?

How do we know our anti-bullying and child-on-child abuse policies and practices are effective?

Do our children know how to report concerns about unsafe spaces? Can they do this anonymously?

Do parents/carers know how to report concerns regarding community spaces/online platforms?

## Thinking about our child




How do we involve our child in auditing safe/unsafe spaces around school/ the wider community?

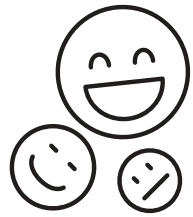

How does our curriculum offer support to enable our child to identify safe/unsafe spaces, including online?

What does our child say about safe/unsafe spaces around school/wider community? What is their understanding of this?

How do we work with our child's parents/carers to ensure they are appropriately informed about harms outside the home, including online risks and how to report concerns?

# Appendix 1: Harm outside the home: Self audit tool

<b>Principle:</b>	What do we do well?	How can we be even better?	How will we do it? Who is best placed to lead?
<b>Communication:</b> Listening, hearing and validating children's experiences 			
<b>Education:</b> Developing knowledge, identification and support around harm outside the home 			
<b>Inclusion:</b> Sense of belonging and connection 			

	<b>What do we do well?</b>	<b>How can we be even better?</b>	<b>How will we do it? Who is best placed to lead?</b>
<p><b>Understanding Behaviour:</b></p> <p>Recognising emotions and regulation</p> 			
<p><b>Community:</b></p> <p>Valuing community experiences building strong partnerships and collaboration</p> 			
<p><b>Environment:</b></p> <p>Creating safe places and spaces</p> 