



CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

A guide for children
and young people

What is contextual safeguarding?

Contextual safeguarding means thinking about how children and young people might be at risk of being hurt outside of the home. Too often thinking about risk to young people focusses only on home life looking at the behaviour of family, parents, carers and any other people that come into the house. Contextual safeguarding is a way to help everyone think about and understand risks in other places such as school and in friendship groups.

It can be helpful use this diagram to understand:



Sometimes people just focus on the home and family when looking at how children and young people could be hurt. Contextual safeguarding means thinking about how people could be at hurt or at risk of being hurt by their friends or other people they know, at school or in other places like parks, other houses or sports clubs.

What could the risks be?

Contextual safeguarding could identify any kind of risk of abuse to a young person away from their home, but some examples are:



How do we know if a young person is at risk or needs help?

It's not always easy to see if someone needs help! If young people are at risk of or experiencing higher risk harm such as being in a gang, carrying weapons, or have cuts and bruises it's simpler. But if someone is being forced to do things by a person who scares them then they're more likely to be secretive and not tell anyone what's going on.

What we do know from young people who have talked about their experiences of contextual safeguarding is that the people closest to them often didn't know anything worrying was going on.

Their stories have helped us to understand that:

If you are being hurt or at risk **outside of your home** then you're less likely to tell the people who care for you, and that can make your relationship with your family or carers even more difficult

If things are bad **at home**, then you are more likely to be involved in a contextual safeguarding issue in your community

How can you or your friends get some help if you need it?

There are lots of people you can talk to if you want some help, or to understand if what's happening to you or around you is ok.

If you can safely talk to your parents, carers or another adult in your life that you trust that's a great place to start. If not, there are lots of other people who will listen and help:



Call Childline's helpline for children and young people on 0800 1111.



Use the Crisis Text Line by texting SHOUT to 85258

You don't need a data plan, internet connection or an app to use it.



Private message a counsellor using 1-2-1 Counsellor Chat.

Go to <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>

All of these services are free and completely confidential. People supporting you will only say or do something if:

- they think you, or someone else, is about to be seriously hurt or a life is in danger
- you ask them to do something
- the person involved might be hurting other people, for example a teacher or a youth worker