

# Protecting children in education settings



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Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in education settings; and
- identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.

(‘Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education’, Department for Education Guide)



Southwark Council aims to protect children and young people in Southwark schools, after-school clubs, young people's services, early years centres and children's centres from abuse and neglect.

### **What is abuse and neglect?**

Abuse and neglect is known as child abuse. This happens when someone caring for a child deliberately hurts or neglects them, or does not protect them from being harmed by another person. The harm caused may be physical, emotional or sexual.

### **Why are staff working in education settings involved?**

Southwark Council children's services has a duty to safeguard children from all social and ethnic backgrounds and to promote their welfare by ensuring:

- schools, centres and clubs are safe places for children
- staff can identify when a child may be suffering from harm and know what to do about this
- complaints are dealt with properly.

Staff working in education settings who work regularly with children and young people are in a good position to identify signs of abuse or neglect and they have a legal responsibility to care for, to protect and to put children's welfare first.

Staff must identify and refer to children's services any children in need of services or at risk of harm, and must work with investigating agencies. Each school, centre and club must have a senior member of staff responsible for seeing that child protection procedures are followed.

### **What are child protection procedures?**

These are rules that people working with children must follow. Southwark follows the same procedures as all London boroughs. Staff must report any concerns, which may include:

- any injuries or marks that cannot be explained
- unusual behaviour
- physical punishment that is not reasonable or not appropriate
- worrying things said by or about the child.

### **Are parents or carers informed before children's services are contacted?**

Where possible, staff will contact parents or carers before a child is referred to children's services. However, if they think this might put the child in more danger or that the police may need to be involved, staff may contact children's services first and discuss how to inform the parents or carers.

### **What happens after a referral is made?**

Children's services will find out more information from the family, the child and other services. Referrals can sometimes be upsetting for parents and carers, but please remember that if a child is referred to children's services, staff are not accusing anyone.

By sharing our concerns and acting quickly, we may prevent children from being seriously harmed and help families going through stressful times. Referrals will often be false alarms, but staff must put the needs of children and young people first and not take any risks with the safety or welfare of your children, even if this means upsetting parents or carers.

### **Does a referral mean that the child will be removed from home?**

No, it is very unusual for a child to be removed from their home. The law says that everything possible should be done to help parents look after their children in their own homes. Children should only be removed if there is no other way of ensuring they can be protected from harm.

If the children's services assessment shows serious concerns about possible abuse or neglect, a child protection conference will be held to agree a child protection plan. Family members and the school, centre or club concerned are invited to attend.

### **What can parents and carers do to help?**

Children get the best from education services when staff, parents and carers are working together and there is good communication.

Please inform a member of staff if your child has an accident or illness, or is upset by something that has happened at home or within the family. If staff are worried about your child and there is no obvious explanation, their training will lead them to think about possible child abuse.

### **When children are behaving badly, are parents and carers allowed to smack them?**

The law entitles only parents to use reasonable punishment. Any physical punishment is not reasonable if it involves:

- shaking the child
- hitting the child on the head or face
- making the child stand on one leg for long periods
- locking the child up
- hitting the child with an object such as a stick, cane or belt
- putting items like ginger or chilli in the mouth, eyes or other parts of the child's body
- causing a mark or injury to the child.

The above list and any physical punishment or threats that cause emotional harm to a child are likely to be reported as possible child abuse.

Staff in education settings in Southwark must not physically punish children and they will have effective ways of encouraging good behaviour that can also be followed by parents and carers at home.

If a member of staff thinks a parent or carer will hurt a child because they are behaving badly, it will make it difficult to talk to the parent or carer about any behavioural concerns. Children's behaviour tends to improve when they understand that staff, parents and carers are working together.

### **What can parents and carers do if they feel they have gone too far in punishing a child or are afraid they may harm their child?**

Support is available, and asking for help is often the first step to solving the problem. Talk to a teacher, centre manager, education welfare officer, a health visitor or your family doctor. They can provide more information on safeguarding your child.

Children's services provides support to families, children and young people who are in need.

### **Contact**

If you are concerned that a child may be suffering harm, please contact the referral and assessment duty desk on **020 7525 1921**.

Out of hours: **020 7525 5000**

### **Other helpful agencies**

#### **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline**

24 hour confidential freephone service for adults, children or young people to speak with someone anonymously (without giving your name)

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Text: on 88858

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Childline**

24 hour confidential freephone service for children and young people offering information and support.

Tel: 0800 1111

### **Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)**

24 hour helpline for anyone involved in caring for children, offering listening, support, information and guidance on all issues of concern; parent classes and workshops for parents to share ideas and learn new skills and a website containing a range of information, including leaflets on family related issues and an email support service.

Parentline: 0808 800 2222

Email: [parentsupport@familylives.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@familylives.org.uk)

Website: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

### **The Family Rights Group**

Advice for families whose children are involved with or need children's services because of welfare needs or concerns.

Tel: 0808 801 0366

Email: [advice@frg.org.uk](mailto:advice@frg.org.uk)

Website: [www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

### **If you have questions or comments about this leaflet, or the safeguarding procedures, contact:**

#### **Early help service (EHS)**

Southwark Council

PO BOX 64529

London SE1P 5LX

Tel: 020 7525 3893/2702/2715

Fax: 020 7525 2670

Visit: [www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren)

## This leaflet describes how we protect children in Southwark from harm and neglect.

For more information, please take this leaflet to any of the places listed. The receptionist will contact someone who speaks your language to explain this leaflet.

ক্ষতি ও অবহেলা থেকে কিভাবে আমরা সাদার্কের ছোট ছেলেমেয়েদের রক্ষা করে থাকি, এই প্রচারপত্রে সেটা বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে। আরও তথ্য পেতে হলে দয়া করে এই প্রচারপত্রটি নিয়ে নিচের ঠিকানাগুলোর যে কোনটাতে গিয়ে দেখা করবেন। সেখানকার রিসেপশনিস্ট একজন বাঙালী দোভাষীর সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করবেন যিনি আপনার কাছে এই প্রচারপত্রে যা লেখা আছে সেটা বুঝিয়ে বলবেন। আপনার জন্য প্রচারপত্রের একটা লিখিত অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থাও তাঁরা করতে পারবেন।

*Bengali*

Bu broşür çocuğu ihmalden ve zarardan nasıl koruduğumuzu açıklamaktadır. Fazla bilgi için aşağıdaki yerlere başvurunuz. Resepsiyondaki görevli size yardımcı olabilmek için dilinizi konuşan birisiyle temasa geçecektir.

*Turkish*

這份傳單說明我們怎樣保護在薩瑟克的兒童免受傷害和忽略。欲知詳細內容，請拿這份傳單到以下任何一個辦事處。接待處人員將與華語傳譯員聯絡，給你解釋這份傳單的內容。他們亦可以安排將這份傳單翻譯成中文給你。

*Chinese*

Ce prospectus vous explique l'action entreprise par Southwark dans le domaine de la protection de l'Enfance, contre les abus et les negligences. Si vous souhaitez davantage de renseignements, munissez vous de ce prospectus et presentez vous a l'une des addresses qui figurent au bas de ce document. On fera des lors appel a une personne de langue francaise qui vous donnera de plus amples informations sur le contenu de ce document. Nous pouvons de plus vous faire parvenir une traduction ecrite de ce document.

*French*

Este folleto le explica como protegemos a los niños en contra de negligencia y perjuicio en el barrio de Southwark. Para obtener más información acérquese con este folleto a una de las direcciones que aparecen en la lista de abajo. La persona en la recepción se pondrá en contacto con el intérprete pertinente (por ejemplo, el de habla francesa) para que le explique el contenido del folleto. También se podría arreglar una traducción del mismo.

*Spanish*

Tập tài liệu này giải thích chúng tôi che chở các trẻ em tại Southwark miễn bị làm tổn thương hay bị sao lãng như thế nào. Nếu muốn được tin tức thêm hãy mang tờ tài liệu này đến bất kỳ một địa điểm dưới đây. Nhân viên phòng tiếp nhận tại đó sẽ liên lạc thông dịch viên giải thích nội dung tập tài liệu này cho quý vị. Họ cũng có thể sắp đặt phiên dịch tập tài liệu này thành tiếng Việt cho quý vị.

*Vietnamese*

- One Stop Shop, 122 Peckham Hill Street, SE15
- One Stop Shop, 151 Walworth Road, SE17

If you would like this information in large print, or in another format, please phone 020 7525 2715.