Safeguarding Bulletin - 4 November 2026

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Safeguarding bulletin

Hello

from Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team

Safeguarding in Schools

Your invite:
Schools Safeguarding Forum

17 Thursday 26 November

9.00am to 12.30pm

Southwark Council Office

160 Tooley Street SE1 2QH

Light breakfast and refreshments will be available

The Schools Safeguarding Forum is an opportunity for schools/educational settings to stay up to date with local and national changes, best practice guidance and

support resources - plus to meet with colleagues and network. It is open to all designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads, senior leaders, chairs of governors and/or nominated lead governors for safeguarding in all types of Southwark schools and educational settings.

Please add the forum to your diary via this calendar invite and ensure that at least one member of your safeguarding team attends. You can let us know if there are any topics you'd like to see covered on the day.

Southwark news

>> Southwark LADO

As you may be aware, Eva Simcock (LADO and Service Manager for Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team) is currently off work. During her absence, the LADO role is being covered through a daily duty rota. So, please direct all LADO referrals or enquiries to: Qau.Safeguarding@southwark.gov.uk.

>> Safeguarding briefing from the Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership: AirTags and consumer tracking devices

Please make yourself aware of the safeguarding risks associated with Bluetooth tracking devices such as Apple AirTags, which can be misused to stalk, monitor or control children and young people. This short briefing explains what safeguarding professionals, parents, carers and organisations should do to protect them.

>> Today (Wednesday 4 November) is Private Fostering Awareness Day

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with and is cared for by someone who is not their parent, does not have parental responsibility for them, and is not a close relative, for 28 days or more. The law requires that the local authority where the child lives is notified of any (suspected) private fostering arrangements so as to support the child and private foster family (and wherever possible the biological parent/s) with any issues arising such as benefits, housing, immigration or emotional issues such as keeping contact with biological family, maintaining cultural identity. Private fostering remains significantly underreported, both nationally and locally. **Schools and settings can help by referring to LA any privately fostered children that may come to their notice or any children who they believe may be privately fostered.** See further information about private fostering.

>> Share your thoughts on safer travel on Grove Vale and Lordship Lane

Southwark Council is proposing changes along the length of Grove Vale and Lordship Lane, to improve bus journeys and make the route safer for everyone. The proposals include new pedestrian crossings at safety hotspots, better management of parking and loading, and giving more priority to buses and pedestrians along the route. **Schools and settings in or near those areas may want to share this information with their staff members as well as their parents/carers to enable them to share their thoughts about the proposals.**

Southwark training opportunities



>> Safeguarding in Schools Webinars

The recording of our latest webinar on Tackling Misogyny in Schools that took place on 22 October is now available via Safeguarding in Schools Webinars in case you were unable to attend.

The next webinar on **Supporting Children's Safe AI Use** will be on **8 December 2026, 12.30pm to 1.30pm**. Delivered by Ditch the Label, this session will explore the risks and harms that can occur when young people use AI, including AI-generated child sexual abuse imagery and the use of AI for mental health support and companionship, and supports schools to prevent harm and respond effectively to unsafe AI use. You can sign up or download this direct calendar invite.

>> Supporting student wellbeing with Soluna by Kooth

Ensuring students have accessible, safe mental health support is a top priority. **Soluna by Kooth** provides young people (ages 10 to 25) with immediate, NHS-commissioned digital support, offering a safe space to talk, build resilience, and find age-appropriate resources. Soluna by Kooth would love to support your school in raising awareness about this **free** service. As the Kooth Engagement Lead for Southwark, Ryan Bamsey (rbamsey@kooth.com) can provide your team with **free support and promotional resources**:

- **School Assemblies:** Delivered directly by Ryan Bamsey, either in person or via video link, focusing on positive mental health and introducing students to the service.
- **Free Posters & Wallet Cards:** Great for noticeboards, pastoral spaces, and student hand-outs.
- **Digital Media Pack:** Digital flyers and banners to include in your school newsletter or display on digital screens.

To book an assembly or request free physical resources for your school, please get in touch with **rbamsey@kooth.com**. Find out more as well as requesting free physical resources through Soluna order form UK.

>> FREE Future Leaders programme for KS4/5 students

Future Leaders UK is a national youth empowerment organisation funded by the UK Government. It helps young people aged 14 to 18 build the confidence, resilience and leadership skills they need to navigate the pressures of growing up today, with a particular focus on those who may be more vulnerable to being drawn into harm, exploitation or radicalisation. **The programme will run from November 2026 to March 2027** and will consist of 20 weekly online sessions and monthly in-person workshops. Participants will explore topics such as online radicalisation, extremist ideologies, disinformation, hate crime, community tensions, identity, belonging and resilience. A short video about this multi-award-winning programme is available.

Schools are simply required to share this opportunity with students to make them aware, including through the Future Leaders poster. They apply directly on the Future Leaders UK website, and no further involvement from schools is required.

>> Free Year 8 to 10 PSHE/RSHE performance/workshop – 'Where The Lines Are Drawn'

Little Fish Theatre is delighted to announce the return of **Where The Lines Are Drawn**, their powerful theatre-in-education production and interactive workshop for **Year 8 to 10 pupils**. The project is **completely FREE to schools** and will tour secondary schools from **22 February to 19 March 2027**. *Where The Lines Are Drawn* explores how misinformation, social media, prejudice, peer influence and attitudes learned from family or online communities can escalate from apparently low-level "banter" into discrimination, hate crime and violence. The professional performance is followed by an interactive **Forum Theatre workshop**, where pupils can pause and revisit moments from the play, suggest different choices and explore how situations could have developed differently. Watch the video about *Where The Lines Are Drawn.* For further information and/or to book contact suha@littlefishtheatre.co.uk.

>> Free media literacy workshops for Southwark secondary schools

Shout Out UK (SOUK) is offering fully funded workshops for Southwark secondary schools looking at online mis/disinformation, AI-generated content, algorithms & echo chambers and common manipulation techniques. Sessions run from September 2026 to March 2027. For further information/discussion contact Charlton Brown: charlton@shoutoutuk.org

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse

>> Feeling unsafe? Help available in Southwark

Tackling violence against women and girls is one of top priorities in Southwark. But abuse can happen to anyone: women, men, young people, older people. Whoever you are, support is available in Southwark, and you will be listened to.

- **Southwark Domestic Abuse Service.** Advice, safety planning and support for anyone affected by domestic abuse.
- **Safe Havens and Safe Spaces.** 29 Safe Havens and 71 Safe Spaces across the borough, places anyone can go if they feel unsafe, for quiet, private support.
- **The Women's Safety Alliance.** Brings the council, police and community groups together with one mission: a Southwark that is safer for women and girls, and safer for everyone.

National helplines for those experiencing abuse:

- The National Domestic Abuse Helpline (women), free, 24 hours: 0808 2000 247
- The Men's Advice Line: 0808 8010 327
- Galop, for LGBT+ people: 0800 999 5428
- Karma Nirvana, for forced marriage and honour-based abuse: 0800 5999 247

In an emergency, always call 999.

>> New national assessment reveals scale of violence against women and girls

At least one in five police recorded crimes relate to public protection threat areas, according to the first Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment published recently by the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection (NCVPP). The findings show that violence against women and girls accounts for much of the demand to build a shared understanding of how the threats facing women, girls and children are evolving and where policing and partners must focus their efforts. However, recorded crime figures tell only part of the story. Many victims experience crime that never reaches police data, particularly abuse that takes place online, meaning the true scale of harm is significantly greater than any dataset can capture.

>> Violence between parents casts long shadow on children's lives

The UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies has published research examining the impact of exposure to domestic abuse on adolescents. Findings indicate that children who experienced domestic violence in their early years were at greater risk of serious mental health difficulties in their late teens and were more likely to have reported carrying a weapon and being involved in a gang. Aggression between parents (both parents as perpetrator and victim) had the most negative impact on children's mental health and behaviour. The research highlights the need for early interventions and family-centred approaches to domestic violence screening.

Online safety

>> Report on content harmful to children online

Ofcom has published its first statutory report required by the Online Safety Act 2023 to review the incidence of content harmful to children on regulated online services and the severity of harm children in the UK experience or may experience as a result. Findings show: most children said they had encountered at least one piece of harmful content online in a four-week period; there was no significant change in the proportion of children encountering harmful content over the first nine months after the children's safety duties came into force in July 2025; and children continue to report that encountering harmful content negatively impacts their wellbeing.

Other news

>> New Guidance: Understanding and preventing serious violence in education

The DfE has recently published a new guidance to helping schools and colleges understand how their students may get involved in violent or criminal behaviour, and how to prevent and respond to incidents. This information does not introduce new expectations - it adds to existing guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education, and provides practical tools and signposting to relevant support to help schools and colleges work confidently and consistently.

>> Child trafficking and exploitation

ECPAT UK and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner have published a report examining the scale and nature of child trafficking across the UK. Drawing on data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), children's services and Crown Prosecution Service, research and frontline evidence, the report finds: a 17% increase in the number of children identified as potential victims of trafficking in 2025; a significant gap between the scale of exploitation being identified in children's social care records and the number of children being formally referred into the NRM; and criminal exploitation is now the most commonly recorded form of exploitation among children referred to the NRM.

Other training opportunities

>> Free online event: The Hidden Signs: How education and health agencies can better identify and safeguard trafficked or exploited persons – Wed 20 Jan 2027, 12.00noon to 1.00pm

Teachers, nurses, doctors and other education and health staff are often among the few professionals who see a trafficked or exploited person. Signs can be easy to miss, and knowing how to respond safely and sensitively is not always clear. This event by AFRUCA is for teachers, school staff, designated safeguarding leads amongst others and explores how education and health services can better identify indicators of exploitation and safeguard victims.

>> Free webinar for professionals working in education on supporting autistic people and their families – 27 November. 12.00 noon to 1.00pm

Join this to discover how Autism Central can complement the support already provided. Autism Central is the National Peer Education Programme for families and support networks of autistic people of all ages in England. The programme is delivered by Anna Freud and commissioned by the NHS. The webinar will explore the family journey, the difference peer support can make, and how you can confidently signpost families to practical information, peer support and opportunities to connect while they are waiting and beyond.

Organisations referenced in this bulletin are not necessarily commissioned or endorsed by Southwark council. Please apply your own due diligence.

If you have any colleagues who would like to receive this weekly safeguarding bulletin, they can sign up to Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools bulletin.

Find out more about support from Southwark's Safeguarding in Schools Team.

For safeguarding resources and training information visit Safeguarding in Education.