BRITISH COUNCIL

Safeguarding Team

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Safeguarding in Teaching

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What is Safeguarding in Teaching context

"Safeguarding" in the context of teaching refers to the measures and practices put in place to ensure the safety, well-being, and protection of students & teachers within an educational setting.

It encompasses a wide range of strategies aimed at preventing harm and providing a secure learning environment for all students and teachers.

Safeguarding in teaching involves not only physical safety but also emotional, social, and psychological well-being.

Key Safeguarding principles in Teaching

1. Do no harm *(build structural and functional capacities)*

2. Address all concerns *(assess risks, create risk mitigation plan, share responsibilities, monitor, review, and evaluate)*

3. Act collectively *(teachers, students, parents, local community, professional community). Improving the safety of the learning environment requires all these stakeholders to work together)*

4. Empower and engage students *(Build understanding of Safeguarding trough participatory design sessions)*

5. Link policy and practice (Global and national policies can be operationalized to identify and respond to risks that students and teachers face – user friendly contextualization)

6. Work to strengthen positive social and gender norms in TAGs and classroom (strengthen positive social norms towards principles of equality, non-discrimination, and non-violence)

Examples of Safeguarding risks in TAGs

Professional working groups, whether in educational, corporate, or any other professional setting, must be mindful of safeguarding risks to ensure the well-being and safety of individuals involved. Safeguarding risks in professional working groups may vary based on the nature of the work and the context, but here are some common considerations:

- **Professional Boundaries:**
  Risk: Blurring of professional and personal boundaries among group members, leading to inappropriate relationships or behavior.

- **Communication and Information Sharing:**
  Risk: Inadequate safeguards leading to the mishandling or unauthorized sharing of sensitive information   (private data).

- **Conflict of Interest:**
  Risk: Situations where group members have conflicting personal or financial interests that could   compromise the group's work dynamic

- **Mental Health and Well-being:**
  Risk: Ignoring or neglecting the mental health and well-being of group members

Examples of Safeguarding risks in TAGs

- **Discrimination and Harassment:**
  Risk: Discriminatory practices or harassment within the group, which can create a hostile collaboration environment.

- **Power Dynamics:**
  Risk: Unequal power dynamics within the group that can lead to exploitation, bullying, or abuse of   authority.

- **Training and Awareness:**
  Risk: Insufficient training or awareness regarding safeguarding issues among group members.

Examples of Safeguarding risks in classrooms

Safeguarding risks in a school classroom can vary, encompassing physical, emotional, and online safety concerns. Here are some specific examples of safeguarding risks in a school classroom:

Physical Safety:

- **Tripping Hazards:** Cluttered or poorly arranged classrooms can pose a risk of students tripping and falling.

- **Unsafe Equipment:** Poorly maintained or inappropriate classroom equipment and furniture can lead to accidents.

- **Lack of Emergency Procedures:** Inadequate preparation for emergencies, such as fire drills or lockdowns, can jeopardize the safety of students.

Bullying and Harassment:

- **Verbal Bullying:** Insults, name-calling, or derogatory language among students can contribute to emotional harm.

- **Physical Bullying:** Physical aggression, pushing, or fighting among students poses a direct threat to their safety.

- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment or intimidation through digital means, including social media or messaging apps.

Abuse:

- **Neglect:** Failure to address students' basic needs, such as nutrition, clothing, or medical attention.

- **Physical Abuse:** Any form of physical harm inflicted on a student by a peer or adult.

- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse:** Constant criticism, humiliation, or intimidation can harm a student's mental well-being.

Examples of Safeguarding risks in classrooms

Online Safety:

- **Inappropriate Content:** Exposure to inappropriate material online, either intentionally or unintentionally.

- **Privacy Concerns:** Insufficient protection of students' personal information or misuse of online platforms.

Health and Well-being:

- **Medical Conditions:** Failure to address known medical conditions or allergies.

- **Mental Health:** Ignoring signs of emotional distress, anxiety, or other mental health issues in students.

Security Concerns:

- **Unauthorized Access:** Strangers entering the school premises without proper authorization.

- **Lack of Security Measures:** Insufficient measures to ensure the security of the school building and its surroundings.

Child Protection:

- **Failure to Report Suspicions:** Teachers not reporting suspicions of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

- **Lack of Clear Policies:** Schools not having well-defined policies on child protection, or staff not being familiar with them.

Examples of Safeguarding risks in classrooms

Supervision Issues:

- **Inadequate Supervision:** Leaving students unsupervised, especially in potentially hazardous areas.

- **Lack of Awareness:** Teachers and staff not being vigilant and attentive to signs of distress or discomfort among students.

Communication Gaps:

- **Ineffective Communication with Parents:** Failing to keep parents informed about their child's well-being and progress.

- **Poor Communication Among Staff:** Inadequate information sharing among teachers and staff can lead to gaps in student care.

Discrimination:

- **Unfair Treatment:** Teachers displaying bias or discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

It's crucial for schools to have robust safeguarding policies, conduct regular training for staff, and encourage open communication to address and prevent these risks effectively.

Risk management is essential

Step 1- Identifying risks

Step 2 - The Likelihood of Risk Occurring

Step 3 – Strategies to Minimise Risk

Step 4 – Risk Monitoring

Risk review

When assessing risks, consider where risks are coming from?

Internal risks?

External risks?

Controlling the things that are within our control in order to make the activities safe for children and adults

Tips for Facilitating TAGs & Classroom (Safeguarding perspective)

Set the stage

In order to express their opinions and participate in group discussions, especially about sensitive subjects, participants/students need to feel safe and not fear retaliation for comments they make during the discussion.

It is best to establish a supportive group atmosphere with ground rules for discussions before the activity starts

Six rules to establish in order to foster a more productive discussion:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting

- Respect one another's views

- Criticize ideas, not individuals

- Commit to learning, not debating

- Avoid blame and speculation

- Avoid inflammatory language

You also need to set the stage in terms of the participants' readiness to discuss the issue(s) at hand.

Tips for Facilitating group Discussions on Sensitive Topics

Know yourself

Before facilitating a discussion about possibly sensitive topics, it is important that you consider your own biases or confusion surrounding the issue.

Recognize the diversity of your participants/students

It is important to remember that each of the participants/students comes from a unique background and has had different experiences.

Foster civility

There is a good chance that discussions about sensitive topics may become heated. The main goal of fostering civility is to protect participants/students from feeling personally attacked.

Be prepared to deal with tense or emotional moments

When discussing sensitive issues or difficult topics, it is very possible that some participants will get angry or upset. If this happens, remain calm and try to turn it into a learning experience. Don't avoid the issue, but do defer it until you make a plan for dealing with it if necessary.

HOW TO PROMOTE/CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- **Make the** TAGs and classroom a safe space for **everyone**

    – Do not address the sensitive topic unless somebody brings it up or you are prepared to handle topic outcomes.

    – Discussions should only take place if all participants want this

    – Ensure people treat each other with respect, rely on our EDI values.

    – Consider everyone's needs.

    – Listen and validate everyone's feelings.

    – Group members may feel worried, frightened, angry or confused or a whole range of other emotions. Listen to their feelings and acknowledge them as valid, rather than minimising them.

    – Group members with existing mental health needs may need some extra support.

Final remarks

- Make rules of engagement

- If any Risk occurs, stay calm

- Consider stopping the discussion/activity if you or any participant don't feel comfortable or you think you cannot control the situation

- Seek for support (report concern/incident)

- Know your limitation

- Stay in the comfort zone until you are ready to leave your comfort zone

- If the situation in group work gets heated, ask yourself, "What is the goal of TAGs/class?".

Thank you