Explain child protection within the wider concept of safeguarding children and young people.

The wider concept of safeguarding encompasses a variety of different factors including family circumstances, the environment, poverty and cultural practices.

**Family circumstances**

The physical and mental health of parents or main carers can be a vital factor in the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Parents who are struggling with their own health issues such as chronic illness or depression may have difficulties in meeting the needs of their children. Equally, parents who are experiencing problems with substance misuse or domestic violence may neglect their children’s needs or fail to provide a safe home environment.

Parents are responsible for making important decisions about their children’s care, including the provision of good nutrition and access to health services. Many children and young people experience neglect as a result of parents or main carers who do not provide for their children’s basic needs.

Some children and young people may live with foster parents or in residential care settings managed by the local authority (known as ‘looked after children’). There are a number of risk factors related to being in care, which can make children and young people more vulnerable. This includes being separated from their family and home environment, insecurity, a lack of consistent care, and in a minority of cases, the risk of **institutional abuse**.

Adverse family circumstances can lead to children and young people running away from home or going missing, which pose an even greater risk to their safety and security.

Child Protection usually refers to the policies and procedures that are used in schools when abuse is alleged or suspected. Safeguarding is a much broader term as you can see from the information provided above. Safeguarding in schools is about the procedures and practices you follow to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and that their welfare is at the forefront of your practice.
This includes following legislation such as The Health and Safety at Work Act, Every Child Matters, Data Protection Act, Human Rights etc.

Wider concept of safeguarding children.

**Environment**

Some children and young people live in environments where they are exposed to risk and unsafe practices. For example, areas with a high traffic density, or neighbourhoods where violence or substance misuse is prevalent. This can lead to young people being more vulnerable to risks from accidents, involvement in crime or other dangerous behaviours.

In some areas of the UK, child trafficking has become a major concern. Children and young people are recruited and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Trafficking can have a serious impact on physical and mental health and can be devastating on the lives of children and young people.

Children and young people who are refugees or asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to neglect, harm or abuse as a direct result of their stressful circumstances. This can include social isolation, exposure to violence and trauma and a lack of means to access support.

Technology invades every aspect of children’s lives and can seriously threaten their safety and welfare. Being online can expose young people to unsuitable sites and potentially harmful material and these risks are magnified by the increased mobility and accessibility of the internet through ‘smart’ phones, tablets and other mobile...
Poverty

Poverty can have devastating effects on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Growing up in poverty means being cold, going hungry and not being able to join in activities with friends. A recent study by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) found that:

- 3.5 million children are living in poverty in the UK
- children from low income families are more likely to die at birth, suffer chronic illness during childhood or to have a disability
- children living in poverty are almost twice as likely to live in bad housing, which has significant effects on both their physical and mental health, as well as their educational achievement

(CPAG 2013)

Cultural practices

Specific cultural practices in some countries are considered to be a form of exploitation and abuse of children by many international organisations. In many parts of the world, children and young people are routinely involved in child labour, prostitution, drug dealing or armed conflict. These practices deprive them of their childhood, interfere with their ability to attend school and are mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is carried out in many African countries and this can result in serious physical harm in addition to emotional and sexual problems for young women. Child marriage is common in many parts of Asia and Africa, where minors are given in matrimony, often before the age of puberty. These marriages are typically arranged and often forced and therefore considered to be a form of child abuse.

You can read more about these potentially harmful cultural practices at Save the Children:

http://www.savethechildren.org