Serious Case Reviews take place when a child has died; or there are questions about how organisations have worked together when a child has been seriously harmed.
Keeping Children Safe in Education tells us ‘research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action’.

Poor Practice includes...
Lack of challenge to inaction

Failure to act soon enough

Poor Record-keeping

Failure to listen to the child

Sharing too slowly

Failure to reassess

Lack of challenge to inaction

Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)
But a major theme in Serious Case Reviews is ‘Disguised Compliance’
Parents who appear to cooperate to avoid professionals getting too close or asking too many questions.

Professional Optimism

A tendency by professionals to confuse participation with cooperation.

Source: Serious safeguarding case reviews 2009 - 2010 Ofsted
Respectful Uncertainty

Lies at the heart of the relationship between the social worker and the family.

The critical evaluation of information that families give to professionals.

Healthy Scepticism

- Open Mind
- Investigative Approach
- Effective Questions
- Looking beyond the obvious

‘Start Again’ Syndrome

When there is a change of practitioner, insufficient attention is paid to the past complex history/chronology so that assessment and work start afresh and focus on the present.

Any new assessment must take into account the past.

Source: Analysing child deaths and serious injury through abuse and neglect: what can we learn? DSCF (2008)
Indicators of Disguised Compliance

- Parents put little effort into making changes
- Limited improvement despite significant input
- Parents align with certain professionals
- Child’s view conflicts with that of parents
- Parents only engage with part of the plan

Source: Hidden Agendas Community Care September (2009)
Risks of Disguised Compliance

- Cases drift and lack focus
- Significant issues may be missed
- Risks may increase
- Cases may be closed early
- Child remains at risk of harm
