



Safeguarding and Child Protection: Policy and Procedures

Agreed by: The Board of Trustees, September 2026

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Author: JC/WP

Statutory Policy



Winsham primary School
Safeguarding Contact Information
The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Cara Gilmour-White
Email: safeguarding@winsham.acexcellence.co.uk
Telephone number: 01460 30377
The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSL) are: Sarah Moss, Sam Butler and Sarah Nation
Email: safeguarding@winsham.acexcellence.co.uk /send.winsham@acexcellence.co.uk
Telephone number: 01460 30377
The Headteacher is: Cara Gilmour-White
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Telephone number: 01460 30377
The nominated Local Safeguarding Advocate is: Hayley Welch
Email: Hayley.Welch@acexcellence.co.uk
Telephone number: 01460 30377
The Chair of the Local Advocate Board is: VACANCY
Email:
Telephone number:
The Trust Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead is: Wendy Parr
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Responding to a concern about a child

Where a young person alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation

- Listen to the child. Take their concerns seriously.
- Reassure the child that you will take action to keep them safe
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Make a written record of what the child tells you.
- Explain to the child what you are going to do next.
- Do not question the child further or attempt to question the alleged abuser.

Discuss concerns with the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL/DDSL).

- The DSL at **Winsham C of E Primary School** is **Cara Gilmour-White**. The DDSL are **Sarah Moss, Sam Butler and Sarah Nation**
- If the matter involves the DSL, it should be brought to the attention of **Wendy Parr (Trust Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead)**
- A written record of the concern will be kept in the Child Protection section of the child's file.
- A member of staff should contact Children's Social Care directly only in exceptional circumstances (such as

Child is judged to be in real and immediate danger:

- Dial 999 and ask for Police assistance.

There is a safeguarding concern: matter referred to Children's Social Care

SOMERSET During office hours, contact Children's Social Care on 0300 1232224.
Out of hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 1232327.

- Non-emergency police :101

Children's Social Care will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the referral
- Decide (within 24 hours) on next steps
- Inform the referrer of the course of action that has been decided

There is not a safeguarding concern:

- The DSL may assess that there is not a safeguarding concern or the issues raised can be appropriately managed by the school
- The DSL will carefully consider if the child/family has any further needs which ought to be addressed.
- The DSL will consult with family and relevant agencies and undertake an Early Help Assessment if required.
- The member of staff who made the referral will be informed of the outcome.

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Child Protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and require all staff, governors, contractors and volunteers to share this commitment.

We recognise that all children, regardless of age, disability, SEND, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us. Children are aware of the adults they can talk to if they have a concern. When there are concerns for a child's welfare, we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies. We will ensure concerns are discussed with parents/carers first, unless we have reason to believe that by doing so would be contrary to the child's welfare. This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy underpins our safeguarding procedures and protocols.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the Somerset safeguarding children board (Local Safeguarding Children Partnership).

KCSIE 2026 update note

This policy has been updated to reflect the September 2026 edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education, including changes to staff reading expectations, Family Help, mental health, young carers, AI-enabled harm, online safety, filtering and monitoring, mobile phone expectations, safeguarding on school premises, child-on-child abuse, safer recruitment and regulated activity.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Who should use this policy?

1.1.1 This policy applies to all staff, parents, pupils, volunteers and contractors at schools or in the central teams in the Academies for Character and Excellence. This policy will be reviewed every year unless significant safeguarding changes occur before the review date. The policy is available on the school website.

1.2 Policy statement and principles

1.2.1 The Academies for Character and Excellence (ACE) is committed to ensuring that consistent, effective safeguarding procedures are in place promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children in all their schools and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

1.2.2 Our school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for behaviour and safety, and leadership and management.

1.2.3 Our core safeguarding principles are as follows:

- the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- a strong culture of safeguarding underpins effective practice across our school
- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are encouraged to exercise professional curiosity, maintain respectful challenge where appropriate and recognise that no single practitioner will hold the full picture of a child's life
- all staff are expected to maintain an attitude that 'it could happen here'
- all staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- children who feel safe make more successful learners
- pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

1.3 Policy aims

1.3.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure all staff (including advocates and volunteers) and contractors are aware of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in ensuring this is the case, including identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to, and know how to approach adults if they are experiencing difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to

- provide a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse
- provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children
- ensure all staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors both in and outside of school and abusers can be both adult/s to child/ren or child/ren to child/ren (child on child abuse)
- ensure all staff are aware of, and consider, the context within which such incidents and/ or behaviours occur (familial/contextual)
- emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff
- ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and all staff give full consideration to the use of appropriate assessments, resources and agency support when identifying the factors present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare
- develop and promote effective working relationships with other partnership agencies, especially the Police, health and social care and [children's services / SSCP / Safeguarding Children Board]
- ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance), and a single central record is kept for audit
- support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence

1.4 Terminology

1.4.1 The following key terms are used in the document.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- the process of providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside of the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and,
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Contractor refers to any individual who is engaged by the Trust to provide services either on the school premises or external to the school premises (e.g. alternative provision or outdoor education instruction).

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and legal guardians.

The Glossary at annex 2 outlines more terms and acronyms that are commonly used in safeguarding and child protection.

1.5 Safeguarding legislation and guidance

1.5.1 The following safeguarding legislation and guidance have informed the development of this policy:

- [Education Act 2002 Section 175 \(maintained schools only\)](#)
- [Education Act 2002 Section 157 \(Independent schools incl Academies and CTCs\)](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Teachers' Standards \(Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2026\)](#)
- [Information Sharing – Advice for Practitioners \(2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) – Advice for Practitioners (2015)
- [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(2022\)](#)
- [Arranging Alternative Provision – A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools \(2025\)](#)

1.6 Trust policies

1.6.1 This document sits within a wider suite of policies and procedures that support safeguarding and children protection in schools across the ACE. These include:

- Attendance Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Personal and intimate care Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Manual (including First Aid)
- IT Policy (including AI provisions)
- Use of Mobile Phones in school
- Staff behaviour/code of conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Managing allegations
- Grievance and disciplinary
- Staff/pupil online communication

Section 2: Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Trust follows statutory guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), and other associated documents, relating to the roles, responsibilities and expectations for the following:

- the Academies for Character and Excellence ('ACE' or 'The Trust')
- Local Advocate Boards
- the Headteacher (this includes Heads of School where appropriate)
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (DDSL)
- staff
- visitors and contractors

These are summarised in figure 1 below, with detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Figure 1: Summary of Safeguarding Roles and responsibilities:

ACE (The Trust)

The Trust's Board of Directors hold ultimate accountability for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements in each of its schools are effective and compliant with relevant legislation and guidance. The Trust is responsible for ensuring their school has robust policies and procedures in place to manage safeguarding (including the identification of a Designated Safeguarding Lead), for supporting the Headteacher and DSL, and for holding them to account for the effective delivery of safeguarding in their setting.

Local Advocate Board

The Local Advocate Board maintains an oversight of safeguarding at a local level, working with the Headteacher to identify, review and – where appropriate - escalate safeguarding issues in school. A safeguarding 'portfolio' advocate leads on this work through regular liaison with the Headteacher and DSL, and by feeding back to the local board and Trust.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is accountable for the delivery of effective safeguarding policies and procedures across the school, and reporting on this to the Local Advocate Board Committee and Trust.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead
(DSL) Deputy DSL (DSL)**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) holds strategic and day to day responsibility for the management and co-ordination of effective safeguarding across the school, including case responsibility for child protection, child in need, looked after children and early help. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead supports the DSL in this role and deputises for them in their absence.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for safeguarding and are appropriately trained to identify and report concerns they have about the welfare of children. They have appropriate and regular training to ensure they are able to do so.

Visitors and Contractors

All visitors and contractors will be informed of, and bound by, safeguarding protocols and procedures when working in the school, or with children from the school.

2.1.2 The Trust (ACE) will:

- ensure each school appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has received appropriate training for the role
- ensure that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- ensure that the school has an appropriate safeguarding child protection policy and procedures, including a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, that are consistent with Somerset Safeguarding Board and statutory requirements. These are reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means
- have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Headteacher and allegations against other children
- follow safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association
- ensures a training strategy is in place that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, code of conduct and the role of the DSL on induction, and appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the Somerset Safeguarding Boards
- ensure the DSL and DDSL receive refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- ensure that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers have sight of this Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct Policy
- ensure that the school contributes to Early Help arrangements and inter-agency working and plans
- provide a coordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of family/children are identified
- consider how pupils may be taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum
- ensure that Local Advocates receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic support to their schools on safeguarding (via the Headteacher/DSL)
- ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority and Somerset Safeguarding Board and national guidance
- undertake a programme of internal and external audit of its

schools to check compliance with this policy, statutory requirements and good practice

- ensure schools conduct an annual 175/157 safeguarding audit and submit this to the local authority, including identification of actions for strengthening safeguarding in their setting

2.1.3 The Local Advocate Board (LAB):

- works with the Headteacher to review safeguarding arrangements in school and identify any specific safeguarding risks or concerns at a local level
- escalates any concerns about safeguarding in school to the Trust's Safeguarding and Inclusion lead and/or the Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding
- acts as a point of contact for any safeguarding concerns relating to the headteacher

2.1.4 The Headteacher/Head of School

- promotes a strong culture of safeguarding across the school
- ensures that Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements, when necessary, to enable the DSL and their deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online
- ensures that the child's wishes are considered when determining action to be taken or services to be provided
- liaises with the designated officer or team in the local authority (LADO) where an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (via the Trust)

2.1.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with updates at least every two years
- supports the Headteacher in ensuring a strong culture of safeguarding, including an environment which encourages listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is responsible for ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training and regular updates on safeguarding to enable them to undertake their duties

set out in this policy (including initial induction on starting work at the school)

- is responsible for ensuring all visitors and contractors receive appropriate safeguarding information required
- ensures that effective DSL cover arrangements are in place during the school day and for any school-arranged activities, including appropriate deputy DSL capacity and escalation arrangements
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community.
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, those with medical needs, and young carers.
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. The pupil's social worker is also informed
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- has a working knowledge of local safeguarding children partnership processes
- understands locally agreed processes for providing Early Help and interventions
- refers cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Front Door service for advice and action
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the Somerset safeguarding board
- leads the development, with the Headteacher, of the 'Audit of Statutory Duties and Associated Responsibility' (S175/157 audit) to be submitted annually to the Education Safeguarding Team working in Somerset Council
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- makes the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means
- ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- oversees and acts upon filtering and monitoring systems and reports for IT systems. Ensuring that a programme of regular checks is undertaken in these systems to demonstrate ongoing effectiveness
- ensures appropriate safeguarding checks are conducted on any *Alternative Provision* providers that are attended by a pupil on roll at the school, in line with government guidance

2.1.6 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

- Is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the DSL, undertakes those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the

designated person, the deputy will assume all the functions above

2.1.7 All school and Trust staff:

- understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action
- consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child
- will provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse
- are able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the DSL or if necessary, where the child is at immediate risk to the police or 'Front door'
- are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect (both familial and contextual) and recognise that contextual harm can take a variety of different forms
- are aware of their duty to report/escalate their concerns if the DSL fails to do so appropriately without reasonable cause
- are aware of the Early Help process and understand their role within it including identifying emerging problems for children who may benefit from an offer of Early Help, liaising with the DSL in the first instance and supporting other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment through information sharing. In some cases, staff may act as the Lead Professional in Early Help cases
- are aware of systems within school which support safeguarding e.g. Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct, CME, online filtering, and monitoring
- will have read Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* each year and confirmed that they have understood the expectations placed upon them
- will recognise that children missing or absent in education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation
- understand and adhere to the school's policies on use of mobile phones by staff and acceptable use of IT

2.1.8 Visitors and contractors

All visitors and contractors will receive appropriate briefing and/or training in the school's safeguarding and child protection protocols and procedures. They will be required to always follow said protocols and procedures when working in the school and when working with pupils off site.

Section 3: Principles and Guidance for Safeguarding and Child Protection

3.1 Underpinning principles

3.1.1 Everybody involved in the school, including staff, contractors and volunteers must recognise that any child may be vulnerable to harm, to always maintain professional curiosity about the welfare of pupils and maintain an attitude of "it could happen here". We also recognise that:

- school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm
- pupils experiencing abuse, neglect or other difficulties can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education
- children who are abused (or have witnessed abused) are likely to have experienced an adverse childhood experience (ACE), and that these can lead to feelings of helplessness, humiliation, self-blame and may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth

3.1.2 Our school will support all children by:

- creating a caring, safe and inclusive environment where children feel valued, respected and able to seek help
- listening to children, taking their views seriously and reassuring those who raise concerns that they will be supported and kept safe
- promoting self-esteem, confidence, resilience and respectful relationships through the curriculum and the wider life of the school
- recognising that distress, anxiety, behaviour or changes in presentation may indicate unmet need or safeguarding concern
- working in partnership with parents, carers, other settings and agencies where this supports the child's safety, welfare and best interests

3.2 Preventing harm

3.2.1 We recognise that schools play an important role in preventing harm by helping children understand risk, build trusted relationships and know how to seek help. Our school community will therefore:

- ensure children know which trusted adults they can approach if they are worried, unsafe or in difficulty
- provide regular opportunities to hear children's views, including through pupil voice, safety questionnaires and anti-bullying work
- teach children, through PSHE, RSE and the wider curriculum, how to recognise risk, keep themselves safe and seek help, including online
- promote responsible behaviour, respectful relationships and safe use of technology, including awareness of cyberbullying, image sharing, misinformation, harmful content and online conduct
- ensure pupils, staff and parents understand relevant guidance on mobile technology and associated safeguarding risks

- use appropriate resources, guidance and assessment tools to identify children who may require additional support, including for mental health or emotional wellbeing
- refer significant safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL and, where required, to MASH or the relevant safeguarding partner
- ensure continuity of safeguarding support when a child leaves the school by securely transferring relevant information to the receiving setting as a priority

3.3 Keeping Children Safe in Education

3.3.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) is statutory guidance for all schools which is issued by the Department for Education annually. Schools and colleges in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3.3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all staff, including those who do not work directly with children, read and understand Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* annually. The DfE's 'Part One: overview for all staff' may also be used as a supplementary quick-reference document, but it does not replace the requirement to read Part One in full. Senior Leaders, Trustees and Local Advocates will read the sections of KCSiE relevant to their roles, including Part Two and the management of safeguarding, and will confirm that they have read and understood the guidance.

3.3.3 The DSL will also ensure compliance with KCSiE by ensuring:

- all staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the school's safeguarding statement, staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)¹, Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection, Behaviour Policy, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(ies), and sign to say they have read, understood and will abide by it
- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection information, including online safety, at induction
- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, in line with advice from Somerset Safeguarding partnership which is regularly updated (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually
- all members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns
- all staff and LABs have annual training (Level 2 or LAB specific) in safeguarding and awareness, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse

¹ The code of conduct includes acceptable use of technology, staff & pupil relationship boundaries and communications, including the use of social media.

- the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy are made available via the school website or other means and that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy via the school handbook/newsletter/website

3.4 Children who may be particularly vulnerable to harm

3.4.1 Whilst any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse or neglect, there are several specific factors that may lead to increased risk of harm that staff need to be aware of. These include:

- **Children missing from education or care**
A child going missing from school / having unexplained absence is a potential indicator of abuse. The DSL monitors any such absences and will notify the local authority in line with Statutory Guidance.
- **Looked After Children (LAC) and Children in Need (CIN)**
Children already known to social care or living in alternative care arrangements carry compounded trauma and instability, which can put them at greater risk of further neglect or abuse.
- **Young Carers**
Young carers may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities including emotional pressure, social isolation, persistent or irregular attendance, inappropriate caring responsibilities and reduced access to wider support. Staff will remain alert to indicators that a child may be providing care for a family member and will share concerns with the DSL so that appropriate Early Help, Family Help or specialist young carers support can be considered.
- **Children with medical conditions**
Children with medical conditions may face additional safeguarding challenges. They may also experience barriers to communication or disclosure. The school will work closely with parents, healthcare professionals and other agencies to ensure that safeguarding and welfare considerations form part of any support arrangements.
- **Children with SEND**
Children with SEND may also face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities. Staff will remain alert to communication barriers, assumptions about behaviour or presentation, peer isolation and the possibility that signs of abuse may be masked or misinterpreted and will share any concerns promptly with the DSL.
- **Financial exploitation, modern slavery and child-on-parent/carer abuse**
Staff should be professionally curious where a child appears to be coerced, controlled, carrying unexplained money or items, involved in exploitative activity, or where there are concerns about violence or abuse within the family home.
- **Pupils from low-income backgrounds:**
Children eligible for free school meals or living in deprived areas experience higher baseline vulnerabilities regarding material resources, family stress, and

overall well-being.

3.4.2 It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, children who have a special educational need, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

3.4.3 A range of other specific factors increase risk of abuse or neglect. Staff will be made aware of these, and behaviours and warning signs that may appear if a pupil is at risk of / exposed to any of these. Risk factors include:

- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- radicalisation
- youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking
- child on child abuse
- up -skirting
- serious violence
- sexual harassment

3.4.4 We recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another.

3.5 Early Help

3.5.1 The school will seek the right support at the right time for children and families, recognising that early identification and intervention can prevent potential harm and improve outcomes for children.

3.5.2 The school provides a coordinated offer of *Early Help* when additional needs of a family are identified and contributes to *Early Help* arrangements with collaborative working with partner agencies where plans and assessments are recorded on the R4C system

3.5.3 To support the Early Help offer, we ensure that:

- staff understand that children and families may benefit from support at different levels, including universal support, community-based Early Help, targeted Family Help, Child in Need services and Child Protection intervention
- staff understand their own role in the Early Help process, including indicators where Early Help may be needed including where a child:
 - has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of permanent exclusion
 - has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
 - is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

3.6 Safeguarding and Children Protection: Good practice guidelines for staff

3.6.1 To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils, the following standards of good practice underpin a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, online safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and collaboration with parents and professionals
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or Front door
- following the school's rules with regard to relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media

3.7 Physical intervention to support pupil safety

3.7.1 Physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force, will only be used where it is necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances, and where it is required to prevent a pupil from harming themselves or others, damaging property, causing disorder or committing an offence. Staff should use the least restrictive approach practicable and seek to de-escalate wherever possible.

3.7.2 Any significant incident involving the use of force will be recorded promptly, reviewed by Senior Leaders and reported to parents or carers as soon as practicable. Records will include the context, actions taken, rationale and any follow-up support required for the pupil or staff involved.

3.7.3 Staff who may need to use physical intervention will receive appropriate guidance and, where necessary, training relevant to their role and the needs of pupils.

3.7.4 Any use of force that causes injury, distress or concern will be considered in line with the school's safeguarding, complaints, managing allegations and disciplinary procedures, as appropriate.

3.7.5 The school recognises that appropriate physical contact may form part of safe care, first aid, support, reassurance or curriculum activity. Staff must maintain professional boundaries and act in accordance with the Trust's behaviour, physical intervention and staff conduct policies.

3.8 School Premises - safeguarding and security

3.8.1 Trust will meet all relevant legal and safeguarding requirements for school premises. School leaders will ensure that site access, toilet and changing facilities, and any residential or overnight arrangements are managed safely, in line with statutory requirements and DfE guidance. Safeguarding risks linked to the physical environment will be assessed, recorded and addressed promptly.

3.8.2 All visitors, including contractors and consultants, must sign in on arrival, wear appropriate identification and follow the school's safeguarding and health and safety procedures while on site. Parents and carers collecting or dropping off pupils are not required to sign in unless entering the school beyond agreed access points. The Headteacher will determine, using professional judgement and risk assessment, whether a visitor should be escorted or supervised.

3.9 Extended school and off-site arrangements

3.9.1 All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own Child Protection Policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

3.9.2 When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

3.9.3 Where pupils attend alternative provision, the school remains responsible for safeguarding oversight. The school will ensure that placements are quality assured, attendance is monitored, safeguarding information is shared appropriately, and concerns are responded to without delay.

3.10 Letting of the school estate

3.10.1 Appropriate checks will be made on any person/s seeking to use the school site for a commercial or other letting. These are set out in the Trust's Lettings Policy.

3.10.2 The school retains responsibility for acting on concerns arising from activities taking place on school premises. Where safeguarding concerns or allegations arise relating to an individual or organisation using school premises, but not directly employed by the school, the school will follow KCSIE guidance and seek advice from the LADO where appropriate.

3.11 Photography and images

3.11.1 The school recognises that photographs and videos of children are usually taken and used for appropriate and legitimate purposes. However, we also recognise that images can be misused to place children at risk of harm, including through the use of AI. The school will therefore maintain clear safeguards for the taking, use, storage and publication of images of pupils. To protect pupils, we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- use only the pupil's first name with an image
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- ensure the choice of images for publication minimising the risk of being used for inappropriate purposes

3.11.2 Photos must always be taken and stored on school cameras or IT equipment. Staff members' personal phones or cameras should not be used to capture or store photos under any circumstances.

3.12 Online safety

3.12.1 Pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet, including sharing of content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

3.12.2 Technology can be used to harm children, including through abusive communication, grooming, coercion, impersonation, harassment, exploitation and online sexual abuse. This risk may be increased by generative AI, including the creation or manipulation of messages, images, audio or video. The Trust will work with schools, pupils and families to promote safe, age-appropriate and effective use of technology.

3.12.3 Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity. Online safety education will also include awareness of misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, manipulated content and AI-generated material

3.12.4 The school's Online Safety Policy, which can be found on the school website explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our Sexual Exploitation Policy or child protection procedures.

3.12.5 Many pupils have access to handheld devices. Parents and carers are encouraged to support safe internet and social media use beyond school. The school's Mobile Phone Policy sets clear expectations for pupils, staff and visitors, including appropriate use, storage, image sharing, online conduct, device access and reporting concerns. Pupils must hand mobile phones to the office on arrival, where they will be securely stored until the end of the school day.

3.13 Online safety - Filtering and Monitoring

3.13.1 The DSL, supported by school leaders and the Trust, will ensure that effective filtering and monitoring systems are in place and routinely checked. Their effectiveness will be reviewed and recorded at least annually, taking account of emerging risks, pupil access, safeguarding incidents, new technologies and system performance.

3.13.2 The Trust Board and Local Advocate Board will receive appropriate assurance on the effectiveness of these arrangements. Actions arising from reviews will be recorded and monitored through the school's safeguarding governance arrangements.

3.13.3 All staff will be made aware of:

- expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, e.g., part of their role is to monitor what's on pupils' screens
- how to report safeguarding and technical concerns, such as if:
 - they witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed
 - they are able to access unsuitable material
 - they are teaching topics that could create unusual activity on the filtering logs
 - there is failure in the software or abuse of the system
 - there are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks
 - they notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material

3.14 Allegations against staff

3.14.1 All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction².

3.14.2 We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff or staff may have concerns about another staff member. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headteacher³.

3.14.3 The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)⁴ at the earliest opportunity and before taking any further action.

3.14.4 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Local Advocate Board who will consult the LADO as above, without notifying the Headteacher first. The process is shown in the diagram below.

3.14.5 Staff, parents and advocates are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher or other member of staff who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.

² Refer to "Guidance for Safe Working Practice"

³ Chair of Local Advocate Board in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher

⁴ Duty LADO Anthony Goble – 0300 122 2224



3.14.6 The school will follow the Somerset procedures for managing allegations against staff, procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the school's Managing Allegations Policy and procedures.

3.14.7 Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and the Trust's HR Lead in making this decision.

3.14.8 In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Trustees and the CEO with advice as above.

3.14.9 Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension, the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

3.14.10 The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education and in the Trust's Code of Conduct Policy and procedures.

3.15 Whistleblowing if a member of staff has concerns about a colleague

3.15.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

3.15.2 All staff will be made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) following guidance in the Whistleblowing Policy.

3.15.3 The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

3.15.4 Whistleblowing regarding the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Local Advocate Board whose contact details must be made readily available to staff.

3.16 Confidentiality and information sharing

3.16.1 All staff must treat child protection information as confidential and share it only with the DSL, Headteacher/Executive Head, Chair of the Local Advocate Board or relevant safeguarding partners, as appropriate and on a need-to-know basis.

3.16.2 Staff must not promise confidentiality to a child where information suggests that the child, or another child, may be at risk of harm. Concerns must be recorded and shared promptly with the DSL; any member of staff may contact children's social care directly if they believe this is necessary to protect a child.

3.16.3 The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent information sharing where this is necessary and proportionate to safeguard a child. Decisions to share, or not to share, information will be recorded and will follow relevant government information-sharing guidance and the DfE Data Protection Toolkit for Schools.

3.16.4 Where appropriate, the DSL will seek consent from parents, carers or the child before sharing information. Information may be shared without consent where seeking consent could increase risk, prejudice a police investigation, or where there is another lawful basis for sharing.

3.16.5 Safeguarding and child protection records will be stored securely, kept separate from the pupil's main school file, and transferred securely when a child moves school. Access will be restricted to those with a legitimate safeguarding need.

3.17 Trust complaints procedure

3.17.1 Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action.

3.17.2 Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

3.17.3 Complaints which become child protection concerns will be managed under the school's child protection procedures.

4. Safer recruitment

4.1.1 The Trust is committed to safer recruitment and will follow the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and the Trust's Staff Recruitment Policy. This includes taking all reasonable steps to ensure that adults appointed to work with children are suitable, appropriately checked and clear about their safeguarding responsibilities.

4.1.2 The Trust's procedures in relation to safer recruitment are outlined in our Safer Recruitment Policy. In summary, the safer recruitment process means that applicants will be required to:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted

4.1.3 The school will also:

- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- undertake an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence in accordance with KCSIE
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State

4.1.4 At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

4.1.5 All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct and identification of their child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

4.1.6 The Trust maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken for every adult working with children, including staff, directors, advocates and volunteers in regulated activity.

4.2 Regulated activity

4.2.1 Schools are specified places which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. The school will determine whether staff, volunteers and other adults are undertaking regulated activity in accordance with current legislation and DfE guidance. The school recognises that legislative changes have altered the definition and scope of regulated activity, including the removal of the previous supervision exemption in relevant circumstances. Recruitment and DBS checks will reflect current legal requirements.

4.2.2 Trainee Teachers

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained. Where safeguarding concerns or allegations relate to a trainee teacher, the school will apply the same principles and expectations that apply to supply teachers and contracted staff.

4.2.3 Supply Staff (Teachers and Teaching Assistants)

The school will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked before the individual begins regulated activity.

4.2.4 Contractors or Consultants

The school checks the identity of all contractors or consultants working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity.

4.2.5 Volunteers

Volunteers, including advocates, will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

4.2.6 Children on Work Experience

Children do not go on work experience from our Trust schools, but they do have other excursions which are risk assessed and all necessary safeguarding checks completed. Requests for work experience in the Trust schools from secondary school / college pupils below the age of 18 are considered on a case-by-case basis. They must be agreed with the Trust's Safeguarding Lead who will decide on checks that must be carried out, and the scope of work experience that is permitted. This will be in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* part three.

4.2.7 The school will not assume that supervision automatically removes the need for barred list or DBS checks. Decisions will be made in accordance with current statutory guidance, risk assessment and the Trust's safer recruitment procedures.

Section 5: Child Protection Procedures

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section sets out different types of abuse that pupils may experience, signs that staff need to be continually vigilant for in relation to these and sets out the procedures to be followed if a member of staff, volunteer or other adult in school has a concern about a pupil or has a disclosure from any child.

5.2 Recognising abuse

5.2.1 Any child, in any family, in any school, could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here". We also recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another.

5.2.2 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in the family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

5.2.3 Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

5.2.4 Abuse and neglect may also take place outside of the home, contextual safeguarding, and this may include (but not limited to), sexual exploitation criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, radicalisation.

5.2.5 Staff are aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting put children in danger and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.

5.2.6 Further information about the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, (familial and contextual) and indicators that a child may be being abused can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1.

5.3 Categories of abuse

5.3.1 There are four main categories of abuse:

a) Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

b) Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless

or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

c) Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

d) Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

5.4 Indicators of abuse

5.4.1 Staff should remain alert to any signs or changes that may indicate a child is experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation. Concerns may arise from what staff see, hear or notice over time, including changes in a child's behaviour, presentation, attendance, relationships or emotional wellbeing.

5.4.2 Children may hide injuries or find it difficult to explain what has happened. Staff are not expected to decide whether an injury or behaviour is accidental or deliberate. Any concern, however small, must be recorded and

shared with the DSL.

5.4.3 A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may show one or more of the following signs:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their schoolwork
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

5.4.4 A single sign may not prove that abuse has taken place, but it may still be important. Staff must share concerns with the DSL so that information can be considered alongside what else is known about the child.

5.4.5 Sometimes staff may feel concerned without having clear evidence. This may be because of a change in behaviour, worrying comments, unusual written work or artwork, unexplained absence, or physical signs that do not seem right.

5.4.6 There may be a range of explanations for a child's presentation, but staff must not dismiss concerns or wait for proof. Concerns should be recorded promptly and passed to the DSL.

5.4.7 Staff may ask open, supportive questions such as "Are you okay?" or "Can I help?" They must not investigate, lead the child or ask probing questions. If a child says something that raises concern, staff must listen, reassure and report to the DSL without delay.

5.5 Bullying

5.5.1 While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing.

5.5.2 All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racist, homophobic, gender-related bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

5.6 Racist incidents

5.6.1 The Trust's policy on racist incidents is set out separately and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents and report them to both the Strategic Board and the Local Authority.

5.7 Child-on-child abuse, harassment and violence

5.7.1 All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children, and it can happen both inside or outside of school or on-line. It is important that all staff recognise the signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify and respond to reports.

5.7.2 The Trust recognises that harassment, abusive behaviours and serious violence may be part of wider child-on-child abuse patterns and should always be taken seriously. Inappropriate, prejudiced, misogynistic or sexually harmful behaviour will be challenged and recorded, even where it appears to be low level, as early intervention helps prevent escalation. The school adopts a preventative approach to child-on-child abuse.

5.7.3 Low-level inappropriate behaviour, including sexist comments, prejudicial language, harmful gender stereotypes, harassment or discriminatory behaviour, will be challenged and addressed before behaviours escalate.

5.7.4 As a Trust we operate a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and it should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up', or 'boys being boys' or 'girls being girls' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

5.7.5 Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudiced-based discriminatory bullying).
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise physical harm (this may include an on-line element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an on-line element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and on-line sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- up -skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this includes activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an on-line element)

5.7.6 As a Trust all our schools have procedures to help minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and there are clear systems in place for children to confidently report abuse. We work closely with partners, such as the NSPCC and CAP to ensure that our children are safe.

5.7.7 Our DSLs are trained to support both the victim and the perpetrator and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous), can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

5.7.8 As a Trust, we also recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse in our schools, such abuse may be taking place and is simply not being reported. Research indicates that young people rarely disclose child-on-child abuse and if they do, it is likely to be to their friends. Therefore, our school will also educate pupils in how to support their friends if they are concerned about them, that they should talk to a trusted adult in the school and what services they can contact for further advice.

5.7.9 Where a concern regarding child-on-child abuse has been disclosed to the DSL(s), advice and guidance will be sought from Front Door and where it is clear a crime has been committed or there is a risk of a crime being committed the police will be contacted.

5.8 Reporting concerns of potential abuse

5.8.1 All staff and adults working in school have a duty to record and report any concerns they may have about the wellbeing of a child. Concerns should be recorded using established systems in the school (e.g. CPOMs), and reported to the DSL, DDSL, or member of the SLT in their absence. If none of these postholders is contactable, and the member of staff believes the child is at serious risk, they should contact the Front Door service.

5.8.2 It is not the responsibility of staff or other adults working in school to investigate any disclosures or decide whether a child has been abused.

5.8.3 There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, and they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs

may have been noticed. Such concerns should still be recorded / reported as individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

5.8.4 We recognise that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill, or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or needs safeguarding. In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

5.9 Managing a pupil disclosure

5.9.1 Safeguarding concerns are often raised by pupil disclosures. These should always be given urgent attention and reported to the DSL as soon as possible if information about potential abuse of neglect has come to light.

5.9.2 It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

5.9.3 If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they respond quickly the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

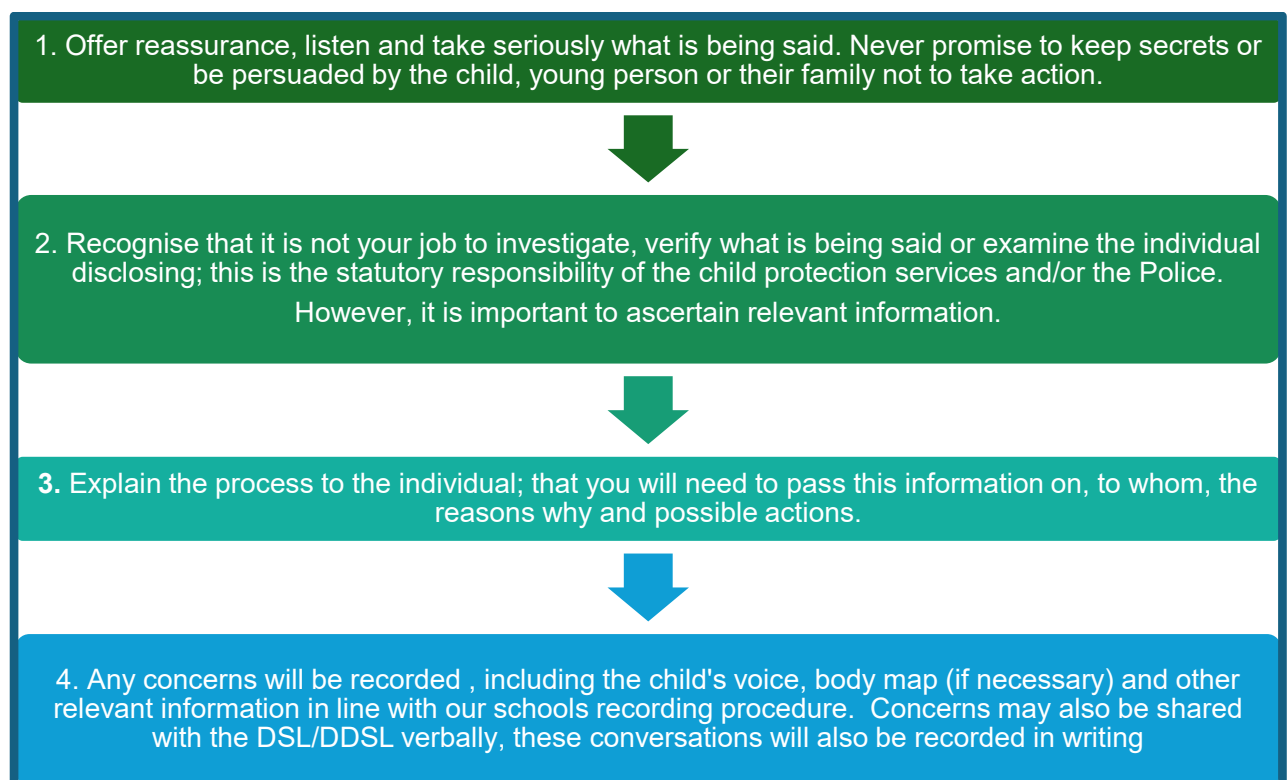
5.9.4 During the disclosure, staff must:

- allow pupils to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and cannot keep secrets
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not be afraid of silences – staff will appreciate how hard it can be for a pupil to disclose
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what the pupil's mother thinks about all this
- (The 'TED' mnemonic - Tell me.... Explain to me..... Describe to me..... can be helpful in ensuring questioning focuses on securing factual information)
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort as this may not be comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm

hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong

- tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves.
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern form and hand it to the designated person
- seek support if the member of staff is distressed/ needs supervision

5.9.5 The flow chart below summarises the process:



5.9.6 Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing. Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

5.9.7 All concerns however small must be recorded and shared with the DSL as this information could provide the 'missing' piece of the bigger picture of the lived experience for the child.

5.9.8 Once the DSL has the information, they will decide on how to proceed based on all available evidence. This may include escalating to children's services, managing through an early help referral, or ongoing monitoring.

5.9.9 Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, or DDSL
- if your DSL / DDSL is not available, contact the Trust Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. If you have serious concerns and cannot get hold of anybody in school or the Trust, you should contact the Front Door service in your local authority
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only (i.e. do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or the member of staff's family)
- complete a record of concern using CPOMs / school systems
- seek support / supervision if they are distressed

If you are not satisfied with action taken by the DSL, escalate the concern to the Trust's Safeguarding Lead.

5.10 Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from Front Door.

5.11 Enquiry to Front Door

The DSL will make an enquiry to Front Door, with parental consent. However, if parental consent is not given advice will be sought if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that an enquiry is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct enquiry to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

5.11.1 Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for pupils, parents and staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety

- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies

5.11.2 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSLs and to seek further support as appropriate including supervision.

Section 6: Specific Safeguarding and Child protection issues

6.1 Introduction

Section 6 sets out key safeguarding issues that staff may encounter when working with children in school. These issues may arise on their own or alongside other forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and staff should remain alert to signs, patterns or changes that may indicate a child is at risk. Staff are not expected to investigate concerns, but must record and report any worry promptly to the DSL so that appropriate support, advice or referral can be considered.

6.2 Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)⁵

6.2.1 The practice of children sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace. However, this online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of 18 is illegal.

6.2.2 Given the increased adoption of, and access to, mobile phones by primary school aged children, all staff will be made aware of how to respond to incidents that involve youth produced sexual imagery. DSLs will follow the Trust-wide protocol for managing such incidents.

6.2.3 Age-appropriate teaching and learning supports children to stay safe online through the PSHE curriculum.

6.3 Children with sexually harmful behaviour

6.3.1 Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

⁵ Youth refers to anyone under the age of 18

6.3.2 The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff, who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

6.4 Exploitation (incl. child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and county lines)

6.4.1 Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance could be due to age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and /or access to economic or other resources. The abuse could be linked to an exchange for something the victim perceives that they need or want and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increase status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

6.4.2 The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and adults or children (who themselves may be experiencing exploitation). The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It may involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

6.4.3 Victims can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different from boys; the indicators may not be the same and both boys and girls that are being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

6.4.4 CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities.

6.4.5 CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in the exporting of illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line'.

6.4.6 Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited should be passed without delay to the DSL. Our school is aware there is a clear link between regular school absence/truancy, CSE and CCE. Staff should consider a child to be at potential CSE/CCE risk in the case of regular school absence/truancy and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

6.4.7 School is aware that a child often cannot recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. Consequently, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse.

6.4.8 The DSL will use the Adolescent Safety Framework Safer Me Assessment⁶ on all occasions when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited. The Safer Me Assessment will indicate to the DSL whether a Safer Me Early Help approach or referral to the Exploitation Hub is required. If the DSL is in any doubt they will contact MASH consultation.

6.4.9 In all cases if the assessment identified any level of concern the DSL should contact their local MACE⁷ (Missing & Child Exploitation) and email the completed Safer Me assessment along with a MASH enquiry form. If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 999.

6.5 Our School includes the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation in the PSHE and RSE curriculum. Pupils will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to CSE/CCE, including online, and knowing how and where to get help.

6.5 Carrying of weapons

6.5.1 Any concern regarding a child carrying, possessing, accessing or expressing an intention to use a weapon must be referred immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL. The DSL will assess risk, seek appropriate agency involvement and consider whether police involvement is required. Staff should also be alert to indicators of involvement in serious violence, including unexplained injuries, changes in friendships, unexplained money or gifts, increased absence, fearfulness, or signs of coercion or exploitation.

6.6 Female genital mutilation (FGM)

6.6.1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. A mandatory reporting duty requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police⁸.

6.6.2 The duty applies to all persons in school who are employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether or not they have qualified teacher status. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, the DSL should be informed.

⁶ [DCFP Adolescent Safety Framework info and Safer Me Assessment](#)

⁷ [DCFP MACE guidance](#)

⁸ [FGM procedural information](#)

6.6.3 If a teacher or member of staff is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the teacher should inform the DSL and also personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. The report should be made by the close of the next working day.

6.6.4 School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM. Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported as per the school's child protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

6.6.5 There are no circumstances in which a teacher or other member of staff should examine a girl.

6.7 Forced marriage

6.7.1 A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

6.7.2 A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

6.7.3 Children may be married at a very young age and well below the age of consent in England. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

6.7.4 Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. (See school or Local Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance for further information).

6.7.5 School staff should not attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Contact should be made with Front Door if the school has concerns about forced marriage.

6.8 Honour-based abuse

6.8.1 Honour based abuse (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such abuse can occur when

perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

6.8.2 Honour based abuse might be committed against people who; become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion.

- want to get out of an arranged marriage
- want to get out of a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

6.8.3 It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others.

6.8.4 All staff are aware of the 'One Chance' Rule' in relation to forced marriage, FGM and HBV. Staff recognise they may only have one chance to speak to a pupil who is a potential victim and have just one chance to save a life.

6.9 Radicalisation and extremism

6.9.1 The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

6.9.2 Some children may be vulnerable to radicalisation, including being drawn into extremist beliefs, ideologies or activities that are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Staff should remain alert to all forms of extremism, including Islamist extremism, extreme right-wing ideology, white supremacy and other emerging or local risks.

6.9.3 Our school seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism. School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism and opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

6.9.4 When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL. They should then follow normal safeguarding procedures. If the matter is urgent then Devon & Cornwall Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In non-urgent cases where police advice is sought then dial 101. The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

6.9.5 Further information on Preventing Radicalisation is included in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* in line with the [Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales](#).

6.10 Domestic abuse

6.10.1 Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, and religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

6.10.2 We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that several abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

6.10.3 Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse.

6.11 Violence against women and girls, misogyny and harmful attitudes

6.11.1 The Trust recognises that misogyny, violence against women and girls, sexual harassment, coercive control and harmful online ideologies can create safeguarding risks. Staff will challenge discriminatory or harmful attitudes, record and respond to concerns through safeguarding, behaviour and curriculum systems, and support pupils to understand respectful relationships, consent, equality and how to seek help.

6.12 Mental health

6.12.1 Staff must be aware that mental health concerns can, in some cases, indicate that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Mental health difficulties may also increase a child's safeguarding vulnerability. Concerns about behaviour, attendance, relationships, self-care or emotional wellbeing should therefore be considered alongside any wider safeguarding information known about the child.

6.12.2 Staff should remain alert to signs that a child may need mental health support, including significant changes in behaviour, persistent low mood, social withdrawal, sleep difficulties, anxiety, self-harm, neglect of personal care, unexplained physical symptoms or loss of interest in activities they previously enjoyed.

6.12.3 Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services must be contacted without delay. Where concerns are not an emergency but require advice or support, staff must speak to the DSL or deputy, who will consider appropriate health, mental health or safeguarding pathways, including local services and 111 where appropriate. Safeguarding and mental health concerns must always be considered together.

6.12.4 Safeguarding awareness training and updates will include how adverse childhood experiences, trauma, abuse and neglect can affect a child's mental health, behaviour, attendance and education into adolescence and adulthood.

The school will also have regard to relevant DfE guidance, including guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools.

6.13 Private fostering arrangements

6.13.1 A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parent or carer. This applies to children under 16, or under 18 where the child is disabled. It does not apply to children who are looked after by the local authority or placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital.

6.13.2 Private fostering can occur in any community and may involve children of any age. Most privately fostered children are safe and well; however, some arrangements may give rise to safeguarding concerns. Staff should remain alert to possible risks, including neglect, exploitation, trafficking or arrangements that have not been properly notified to children's services.

6.13.3 Parents, private foster carers and anyone involved in making a private fostering arrangement have a legal duty to notify children's services as soon as possible. Where staff become aware that a pupil may be living in a private fostering arrangement, they must inform the DSL without delay. The DSL will make the required notification to Front Door or children's services and follow any relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.

6.14 Children in kinship care

6.14.1 Children in kinship care are children who live full-time, or most of the time, with a relative, family friend or another adult with whom they have an established relationship, because they are unable to live with their parents. Kinship care arrangements may be formal or informal and should be considered in the context of the child's safeguarding, welfare and support needs.

6.14.2 The school recognises that children living in kinship care arrangements may have additional safeguarding, pastoral or educational needs. Staff will remain alert to any vulnerabilities arising from the child's circumstances and will ensure that relevant information is shared with the DSL where support or safeguarding action may be required.

6.14.3 Where appropriate, the school will work with parents, carers, the Virtual School and partner agencies to support the child's attendance, achievement, wellbeing and safety.

6.14.4: Children staying with host families. Where pupils stay with host families as part of a foreign exchange visit, sports tour or similar arrangement, the school will follow the requirements and guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education* to ensure that hosting arrangements are safe and appropriately checked.

6.14.5. Where overseas pupils live with host families during term time, the school will work with the local authority and relevant agencies to ensure that arrangements are suitable and that any safeguarding concerns are identified and acted upon promptly.

6.15 Children who are questioning their sexuality or gender

6.15.1 The Trust recognises that children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender-questioning may experience bullying, isolation, emotional distress or mental health difficulties.

6.15.2 Children who are questioning their sexuality or gender may require sensitive, thoughtful and individualised support. Staff must ensure that all children are treated with dignity and respect, that bullying, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour are challenged, and that any pastoral or safeguarding concerns are recorded and shared with the DSL.

6.15.3 Where a child seeks support in relation to their sexuality or gender, staff should listen carefully, avoid making assumptions, and consider the child's needs in the round, including their wellbeing, family circumstances, peer relationships, SEND, mental health and any wider safeguarding risks. Decisions about support should be made carefully, in the child's best interests, and in line with statutory duties, school policy and relevant DfE guidance.

6.15.4 Parents and carers should normally be involved in decisions about support for their child, unless there is a clear safeguarding reason why this would increase risk or be contrary to the child's welfare. Where concerns arise, the DSL will consider appropriate pastoral, safeguarding or external advice and ensure that actions are recorded clearly.

SOMERSET: If you have concerns about a child/young person in Somerset

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	POLICE 999	
To make an URGENT referral, i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call Somerset Direct.	Somerset Direct 0300 122 2224	
To make a NON-URGENT referral, complete an Early Help Assessment and send to	SD inputters	
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact Somerset Direct).	PREVENT DUTY - 01278 647466 PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – Avon and Somerset police 01278 649228	
DSL Consultation Line 0300 123 3078	Early Help Hub 01823 3555803	Critical Incident Support EPS SSE 01823 357000

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child...

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO) Anthony Goble 0300 122 2224
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For information, advice, and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures.

Education Safeguarding Service ESS@somerset.gov.uk		
Service Manager Toby Jenkins	Team Manager East Jane Weatherill	Team Manager West Jane Weatherill
Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul	

Child Missing from Education	Somerset County Council
Children affected by Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit T: (0) 20 7008 0151 E: fmu@fco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline T: 0344 381 4772; E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	Child Exploitation and Online Protection command https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	NSPCC FGM Helpline T: 0800 028 3550; E: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	0800 6949999
Young Carers – advice and support.	0300 123 2224 YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline T: 0800 028 0285;; help@nspcc.org.uk
Primary Mental Health Specialists (advice) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Cyp@somerset.org	
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	DSL consultation line 0300 123 3078
	Brook Traffic Light Tool

Appendix 2

Glossary

Word	Definition
Local Safeguarding Children Partnership	Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MACSE	The Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation Forum
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DAF	Devon Assessment Framework
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
REACH	Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care or Home
DfE	Department of Education
SMCS	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
EY	Early Years
KS	Key Stage
FE	Further Education
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer

DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
KCSiE	Keeping Children Safe in Education

Annex 3: Protocol for Responding to Youth produced sexual imagery (Sexting)

Youth produced sexual imagery refers to both images and videos where;

- a person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18
- a person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult
- a person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a safeguarding concern and in line with the UKCIS guidance 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'⁹, and 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident.'¹⁰

Cases where sexual imagery of people under 18 has been shared by adults and where sexual imagery of a person of any age has been shared by an adult to a child is child sexual abuse and should be responded to accordingly.

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery, they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the DSL as soon as possible. The member of staff should confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off. **Staff should not view, copy or print the youth produced sexual imagery.**

The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm. At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to Front door or the police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to Front Door/police if;

- the incident involves an adult

⁹ [Sexting in schools and colleges](#)

¹⁰ [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident \(UCKIS\)](#)

- there is good reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special education needs)
- what you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are violent
- the imagery involves sexual acts
- the imagery involves anyone aged 12 or under
- there is reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming

If none of the above apply then the DSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to pupils involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher, to respond to the incident without escalation to Front Door or the police. Such decisions will be recorded.

In applying judgement, the DSL will consider if;

- there is a significant age difference between the sender/receiver
- there is any coercion or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver
- the imagery was shared and received with the knowledge of the child in the imagery
- the child is more vulnerable than usual i.e. at risk
- there is a significant impact on the children involved
- the image is of a severe or extreme nature
- the child involved understands consent
- the situation is isolated or if the image been more widely distributed
- there other circumstances relating to either the sender or recipient that may add cause for concern i.e. difficult home circumstances
- the children have been involved in incidents relating to youth produced imagery before

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be escalated according to our child protection procedures, including reporting to the police or Front Door. Otherwise, the situation will be managed within the school.

The DSL will record all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery, including both the actions taken, actions not taken, reasons for doing so and the resolution in line with safeguarding recording procedures.