CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR BEDFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL (EYFS INCLUDED)

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Date Updated:	**March 2026**
Review:	**September 2026/as updates require**
Name:	**Allan Jones**
Position:	**Chair of Governors**

CONTENTS

1. **Policy statement.**
2. **Definition.**
3. **Implementation.**
4. **Equality statement.**
5. **Policy compliance, monitoring, and review.**
6. **Roles and responsibilities.**
   - 6.1 The role of all staff including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors
   - 6.2 **The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**
   - 6.3 The role of the Headteacher
   - 6.4 The role of Teachers
   - 6.5 The role of the Governing Body/Proprietors
7. **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**
8. **Children reporting safeguarding concerns.**
9. **Opportunities to teach safeguarding.**
10. **OUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO ARE VULNERABLE AND AT RISK THROUGH A CHILD CENTRED AND COORDINATED APPROACH**
    - 10.1 Children who may require Early Help
    - 10.2 Children in need with a Social Worker
    - 10.3 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
    - 10.3a Virtual School - key contacts
    - 10.4 Children who are lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender questioning
    - 10.5 Children requiring support with their mental health.
    - 10.6 Children with SEN/Disabilities/Health conditions
    - 10.7 Harm outside the Home - (Extra Familial Harm)
    - 10.8 Children who live in Private Fostering arrangements
11. **Recognising and identifying abuse, neglect and significant harm.**
    - 11.1 Physical abuse
    - 11.2 Emotional abuse
    - 11.3 Sexual abuse
    - 11.4 Neglect
12. **Specific safeguarding issues.** Sharing of nudes and semi nudes
    - 12.1 Online safety and the use of mobile technology and cameras
    - 12.2 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in School
    - 12.3 Remote learning and safeguarding
    - 12.4 Children absent from school/ missing education
    - 12.5 Missing: Children who run away or go missing from home or care
    - 12.6 Domestic abuse
    - 12.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
    - 12.8 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
    - 12.9 Serious Violence
    - 12.10 Modern Slavery Trafficked Children
    - 12.11 Homelessness
    - 12.12 Children and the court system
    - 12.13 Children with family members in prison

12.14 Bullying including prejudiced based abuse, racist incidents and cyber bullying.
12.15 Gaming
12.16 Abuse linked to Faith and Belief
12.17 Gender Based Violence/ Violence against Women and Girls
12.18 So-called 'Honour-Based' Abuse (including FGM, Forced Marriage and Breast Ironing)
12.19 Preventing radicalisation (training)
12.20 Parental mental health
12.21 Self-harm
12.22 Child abduction and community safety incidents

13. What to do if staff are concerned about a child's welfare.
14. Dealing with disclosures/Listening to children/Notifying parents.
15. Concerns about a child/Support Services for Children
16. Child on Child Abuse.
17. Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools/sexually harmful behaviours.
18. Partnership with parents.
19. Working with professionals/multi-agency working.
20. Supervision.
21. Confidentiality and information sharing.
22. Record Keeping/Child Protection File.
23. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OR SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OR PERSON IN SCHOOL.
23.1 Low level concerns
24. Whistleblowing.
25. The use of 'reasonable force' in schools and colleges.
26. Use of school or college premises for non-school college activities.
27. Complaints.
28. Useful Contacts

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Statutory framework, key statutory and non-statutory guidance.
Appendix 2 - Safer recruitment, selection, and pre-employment vetting.
Appendix 3 Summary of Sefton Level of Need Document/Safeguarding Windscreen.docx
Appendix 4: Definitions and indicators of abuse
Appendix 5: CE Screening tool.docx
Appendix 6: Channel Flowchart
Appendix 7: Risk assessment - sexual violence/harassment
Appendix 8: Low level concern form 2024.docx
Appendix 9: Allegation management - initial consideration/enquiry form
Appendix 9A: LADO notification form
Appendix 10: Flowchart for managing allegations.docx

Appendix 11: Body Maps and Body Map Guidance.docx

Appendix 12: Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. (LCSPRs)

1. POLICY STATEMENT

At Bedford Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued and able to recognise when they are at risk and access help when they need it. We are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, governors, volunteers, and contractors.

Staff working with children at Bedford Primary School will maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child, and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act immediately.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures will be made available through our school's website, reviewed, and ratified annually by the Governing Body. We will ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local and national guidance. All staff in our school are consulted and contribute to the development of this policy as part of the review process. Parents/carers can request a copy. We are also able to arrange for our policy to be made available to parents whose first language is not English, upon request.

Our governing body recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation, and this policy has regard to statutory guidance; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Key statutory and non-statutory guidance and any locally agreed inter-agency procedures. **Appendix 1** - **Key Statutory and non-statutory guidance**

Our school staff including Trustees/Governors will ensure they comply with the data protection law; develop data policies; understand what staff and pupil data to keep; and prevent personal data breaches. Data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The school will ensure we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of adults to deter and reject unsuitable people from entering the workplace**. Appendix 2 - Safer Recruitment, selection, and pre-employment vetting (Part 3 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.**

Bedford Primary School will work in partnership with Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP)to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area, and follow relevant local arrangements, policies, and procedures. We will be part of the DSL network and access up to date multi -agency training and attend safeguarding events. We will facilitate meetings for our children and families to support easier local access.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- ✔ **Prevention**: positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.

- ✔ **Protection**: following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection and safeguarding concerns.
- ✔ **Support**: for all children, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific interventions are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
- ✔ **Working with parents and other agencies:** to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

2. DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil, or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age. Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers, and adoptive parents. 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.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- ✔ 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 the home, including online
- ✔ preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ✔ ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- ✔ promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- ✔ taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Child protection refers:

- ✔ To the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

A Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but in our school, we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will consult with the child and use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. As a school we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

The following **3 safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017).

The 3 safeguarding partners will plan to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- ✔ **The local authority (LA)**
- ✔ **Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB) for an area within the LA**
- ✔ **The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area**

3. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy, and supporting procedures apply to all who encounter children in the school, including teachers, supply teachers, learning support staff, teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, admin staff, meals supervisors, caretakers, cleaners, visiting students, parent helpers/volunteers, governors, contractors, and other visitors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies and procedures including:

- ✔ Staff code of conduct
- ✔ Whole school behaviour policy
- ✔ Anti-bullying policy
- ✔ Exclusion policy
- ✔ Relationships - Sex and Health Education
- ✔ Policies and guidance related to Mental and Physical Health
- ✔ Guidance for NPCC helpline and usage –
- ✔ When to call the police guidance from the NPCC
- ✔ Attendance policy and procedures
- ✔ Online policy and procedures including filtering and monitoring.
- ✔ Health and Safety policy and procedures
- ✔ Safer Recruitment, Selection and Pre-Employment Vetting Policy and Procedures
- ✔ School Single Central Record (restricted access)
- ✔ Single Equality Scheme/Objectives
- ✔ Accessibility Plan
- ✔ Data Protection Policy
- ✔ Supporting Pupils with Medical/Health Conditions Policy and Procedures
- ✔ SEND Special Educational Needs Policy
- ✔ Whistleblowing Procedures
- ✔ Intimate Care Procedures
- ✔ Educational Visits Procedures (including procedures for assessing risks)
- ✔ First Aid and Accident Procedures
- ✔ Administering medicines
- ✔ Missing Procedures
- ✔ Guidance on the use of Photographic Images
- ✔ Guidance the use of mobile phones and cameras
- ✔ Procedures for protecting children when contractors are working in educational settings

- ✔ Code of Conduct for adults visiting or working on a school site (leaflet)
- ✔ Risk Assessments (incl. Fire Safety)
- ✔ Premises Management including security measures (formal inspections and Buildings Register) Lettings arrangements.
- ✔ Sefton Level of Need Guidance (assists schools to respond appropriately and make timely decisions about how to respond to the needs of the child/children and families they are working with. **This can be found at** Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership - Level of Need Guidance (2024) (seftonscp.org.uk)

Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Policies and Procedures Online Manual can be found at: Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Procedures | Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual

4. EQUALITY STATEMENT

We recognise children's diverse circumstances and are committed to the legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. As a school we understand that children, regardless of their background, could be a victim of abuse and therefore are entitled to the same degree of protection and support regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children:

- ✔ Who have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions?
- ✔ Who are young carers?
- ✔ Who may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality?
- ✔ Who have English as an additional language?
- ✔ Who are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence?
- ✔ Who are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation?
- ✔ Who are asylum seekers?
- ✔ Who are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs?
- ✔ Who are looked after or previously looked after?
- ✔ Who are absent from school?
- ✔ Who are missing from education?
- ✔ Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated?

Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information, resources and support services in community languages and accessible formats.

5. POLICY COMPLIANCE, MONITORING, AND REVIEW

Bedford Primary School will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including

lessons learnt. The policy will also be revised following any national or local updates, significant local or national safeguarding events and/or learning, and/or any changes to our own procedures.

Via our school website, all staff will have access to this Child Protection Policy. All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection procedures and of the government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education: Part One and Annex B (September 2025) as part of their induction into the school. All staff will sign to say they have read and received these documents. Staff who join the school part-way through the year will undergo safeguarding and child protection (including online safety/ filtering and monitoring at induction including reading Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One and Annex B (September 2025).

Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed here via our website.
The policy forms part of our school development plan and will be reviewed annually by the governing body who has responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the governing body.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Role of all staff including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff including those not directly employed by the school, such as contractors, volunteers, and governors in the school. This policy will be read by all staff as part of their induction.

The Governing Body will be collectively responsible for ensuring that child protection and safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and in the school's day to day safeguarding practice. They will ensure:

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support systems and practice we have in place.

Planned programme of relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:

- ✔ Healthy and respectful relationship
- ✔ Boundaries and consent
- ✔ Stereotyping, prejudice, and equality
- ✔ Body confidence and self-esteem
- ✔ How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)

- ✔ The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and how to access support.
- ✔ What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they are always unacceptable

All staff:

- ✔ Working directly with children will read and understand their statutory responsibilities outlined in Part 1 and Annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. Keeping children safe in education 2025 (publishing.service.gov.uk) (Staff who do not work directly with children will read either Part 1 or Annex A, as determined by the DSL and the leadership, dependent on their roles, responsibilities and contact with children)
- ✔ Will provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBT + to speak out and share their concerns.
- ✔ Will be aware of our systems which support child protection/ safeguarding,
- ✔ Understand their professional responsibilities outlined in the staff code of conduct.
- ✔ Understand the role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL (DDSL)
  Read and understanding the school Behaviour-for-Learning-Policy.docx.pdf , online safety policy which includes the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, (insert if you have a separate online safety policy)
  Understand the school's safeguarding responses to children who are absent during the school day/missing from education.
- ✔ Understand the early help process and the offer in the school.
- ✔ Understand that a child's experiences, such as abuse, neglect, exploitation trauma and adverse childhood experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour & education.
- ✔ Are clear about the process for making referrals to local authority Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT)(for other Local authorities) children's social care
- ✔ Understand if there are concerns about a child's welfare, they will firstly speak to the DSL, DDSL or head teacher (in the absence of a DSL), to agree a course of action. In the absence of a DSL or head teacher being available, staff must not delay in directly contacting Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) or the police if they believe a is at immediate risk of significant harm.
- ✔ Know what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue, or a discloses to them that they are being abused, neglected or exploited.
- ✔ Recognise the link between mental health, school attendance and children `absent from education' and the impact on learning, progress, and educational attainment.
- ✔ Know that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online and should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns that children may be at risk of abuse or exploitation.
- ✔ Children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT+) can be targeted by other children.
- ✔ Use school procedures for recording any cause for concerns and passing information on to DSLs in accordance with this policy and our recording systems.
- ✔ Understand the signs and indicators of different types of abuse, neglect and exploitation as well as specific safeguarding issues as outlined in the policy.
- ✔ Speak to the DSL if they have a concern about a child's mental health.

- ✔ Are aware and understand that children absent from education or/missing absconding/during the school day can also be a sign of a range of safeguarding concerns including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation/criminal exploitation.

6.2 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Team

The school has a member of the senior leadership team, designated by the Governing Body, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding including keeping children safe online by understanding the filtering and monitoring processes on our school devices and school networks.

The DSL (Lucy Gordon) will provide support to staff members and other adults to carry out their safeguarding duties, and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and other services that support children. The role of the DSL is explicit in the role-holder's job description as set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Annex C**

During term-time, the DSL and/or a deputy will always be available (during school/college hours) for staff in the school/college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Arrangements will be made to ensure that access to the DSL or deputy will be available to staff during off-site visits or other extra-curricular activities taking place outside normal school hours.

The DSL will have knowledge and skills for recognising and acting upon child protection concerns, having received appropriate training. The DSL is also the 'Prevent Single Point of Contact' (SPOC)**.**

Our DSL team will have knowledge and a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviours and are trained in the use of the Brook Traffic Light Tool.

Liaison and Referrals

The DSL will:

- ✔ Liaise with Children's Social Care and other agencies in Sefton (If children live in another area liaise with the relevant agencies).
- ✔ Refer all cases of suspected abuse or allegations to **Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT)** immediately, if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to the child school need to contact the police.
- ✔ Liaise with staff and act as a source of support, advice and expertise within school when deciding to make a referral.
- ✔ Liaise with the Head teacher (where this is not one and the same person) to inform them of issues under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and Police investigations.
- ✔ Remain responsible for oversight of any child on placements or alternative education arrangements.
- ✔ Ensure the most relevant trained person attends strategy discussions, case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, team around the family (TAF), contributes

to assessments, and provides a report which has been shared with the parents where necessary.

- ✔ Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment and be confident as to how to access this support.
- ✔ Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search as outlined in the statutory guidance – PACE Code C.
- ✔ Ensure that any child currently on a child protection plan who is absent from school without explanation is referred to Sefton Council School Attendance First Day Response Scheme, and contact is made with the social worker, in their absence, a Team Manager.
- ✔ Be responsible for responding to domestic abuse notifications from the Operation Encompass Initiative and provide support to children and their families as appropriate.
- ✔ Refer concerns about Child-on-Child abuse including allegations of sexual violence and sexual harassment and accessing multi-agency support when appropriate.
- ✔ Refer concerns about missing children or any transfer concerns to Sefton Children Missing Education: **cme@sefton.gov.uk**;
- ✔ Understand, advise and support staff regarding the requirements of the Prevent Duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation.
- ✔ Refer children and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme where there are concerns around radicalisation.
- ✔ (EYFS) inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working with a child (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse, committed on the premises or elsewhere) and of the action taken in respect of the allegations.
- ✔ Where required to do so, liaise with the "Case Manager" and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in cases of allegations against a member of staff or another adult.
- ✔ Refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not voluntarily left the school.
- ✔ Refer to the Police, cases where a crime may have been committed.
- ✔ Hold information on which children have a social worker, so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.
- ✔ Access a range of advice to help identify children in need of additional mental health support.
- ✔ Liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. 'When to call the police', should help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do. (NPCC 2020)

Training

The DSL will:

Receive appropriate [DSL] training, including **'Working together'**, updated every two years, and other training associated with the role including **'Prevent'** awareness, domestic abuse, online safety and record keeping

- ✔ Attend the DSL network, and link with Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements to ensure staff are aware of training opportunities and the most recently published local policies on safeguarding arrangements.

- ✔ Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed processes such as the FAST team (Family advice support team).
- ✔ Ensure each member of staff, including new and part-time staff and volunteers, contractors and students has access to and understands the school's child protection policy, staff code of conduct & whole school behaviour policy.
- ✔ Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and disability, health conditions, young carers, and those at risk of radicalisation, modern slavery, sexual/criminal exploitation, and serious violence.
- ✔ Keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- ✔ Arrange training relating to specific safeguarding issues that may occur inside school, the neighbourhood and on- line.
- ✔ Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and are confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst online at school.
- ✔ Recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, e.g. online bullying, grooming and radicalisation, and be confident and have the capacity to support SEND children to stay safe online.
- ✔ Encourage a culture among all staff and other adults of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in measures the school may put in place to protect them.

Raising Awareness

Our DSL will:

- ✔ Ensure the school child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors and staff regarding this.
- ✔ Ensure during induction, all staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors have a clear understanding of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures, our school/Trust Code of Conduct, which includes acceptable use of technologies/mobile devices, online filtering and monitoring processes utilised and expectations associated with this, staff/learner relationship and communications, including the use of social media. They will also be provided with a copy of the whole School Behaviour Policy, and a copy of Part 1 and Annex B of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.
- ✔ Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know referrals may be made about suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation and the role of the school or college in this.
- ✔ Promote educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership staff. This will ensure that our staff know who these children best, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort. We will support teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

(The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in Annex C of KCSiE 2025: Role of the designated safeguarding lead. All designated safeguarding leads and deputy safeguarding leads must read and comply with this.)

6.3 THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to:

- ✔ Ensure that staff (including temporary and supply staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction.
- ✔ Ensure policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented.
- ✔ Ensure the Single Central Record is up to date and the safer recruitment practices set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- ✔ Ensure that all staff receive an induction to the work they are to undertake in the school.
- ✔ Communicate this policy to parents when their child joins the school via the school website.
- ✔ Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the DSL/DDSL, as referenced in Annex C of KCSiE (2025), are reflected in their job description.
- ✔ Make decisions regarding low-level concerns and may collaborate with the DSL.
- ✔ Ensure that the DSL has appropriate time, training, and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- ✔ Ensure that they attend any briefings for head teachers/principals on safeguarding and child protection and that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training.
- ✔ Act as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer, where appropriate.
- ✔ Ensure that all recommendations made by the Local Authority in relation to strengthening the school's safeguarding arrangements are implemented in a timely fashion.
- ✔ Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors can raise concerns about unsafe practice in relation to children.

6.4 THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

Teachers, including the Head teacher, will safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties in line with the Teacher Standards. .

6.5 THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY/PROPRIETORS

The Governing Body is responsible and accountable for:

- ✔ Ensuring Bedford Primary facilitates a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- ✔ Maintaining oversight of our Trust Online Safety Policy noted within our main child protection policy, and the arrangements put in place to ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and the school network. The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems will in part be informed by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. This will include:

- ✔ Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- ✔ reviewing filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- ✔ Ensuring that harmful and inappropriate content is blocked (without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning).
- ✔ Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet the school safeguarding needs.
- ✔ Reviewing and discussing the standards with the leadership team, IT staff and service providers to ensure the school/college meets the standard published by the Department for Education filtering and monitoring standards. Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring - core standard - Guidance - GOV.UK
- ✔ Confirming (with DSL/Trust IT team) that to ensure the standards are met, maintained and communicated to staff, pupils, parents, carers and visitors to the school (visitors who provide teaching to children as part of the learning and educational opportunities we provide).
- ✔ Ensuring that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety training providing an understanding of the expectations and applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- ✔ Awareness with regards to our obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010(including the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- ✔ Ensuring we have appointed an appropriate senior member of staff from the school leadership team to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with a named deputy/team of deputies.
- ✔ Evaluation and approval of this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law - governors should also hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.
- ✔ Appointing a governor to lead on child protection/safeguarding to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board.

Additionally the Governing Body is responsible and accountable for ensuring:

- ✔ The lead governor accesses the designated safeguarding governor training and any associated briefings.
- ✔ **All** governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction.
- ✔ **All staff** members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe. For example, 7 minute briefings which can be found at: Sefton SCP 7 - Minute Briefings
- ✔ Bedford Primary School has safer recruitment and selection procedures in place.
- ✔ Any **child protection files/records** are maintained as set out in Annex C; KCSiE (2025)
- ✔ We undertake an annual safeguarding audit (157)of the school's procedures, processes and practice and ensure any actions that have been identified in areas that need improving are put into place.
- ✔ If an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, the chair of governors acts as the 'case manager'.
- ✔ We have appropriate IT filtering and monitoring systems in place and should be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty to limit children's exposure to online risks.
- ✔ We have procedures in place for supporting pupils with medical/health conditions.

- ✔ The governing body, along with the school's senior leadership team, are responsible for satisfying themselves and obtaining written assurances from any relevant school lettings and alternative/off site providers and provisions that their safeguarding arrangements are secure, in keeping with the requirements set out in KCSiE 2025. This includes ensuring that the provision has effective safeguarding policy/procedures/training in place for all staff. The provision follows safer recruitment processes and has clear allegation management processes. Children who attend alternative provisions can often have complex needs and it is important that these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to, and appropriate risk assessments/support plans are in place where children access provision offsite. As of January 2026, Bedford Primary School use the following alternative or off-site providers - Jigsaw PRU. Written evidence of safeguarding arrangements have been shared/received.
- ✔ The governing body will supply information as requested by the Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP)

(The full responsibilities of the governing body are set out in Part Two of KCSiE 2025– The management of safeguarding. The governing body will ensure that the school is fully compliant with their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.)

7. CHECKING THE IDENTITY AND SUITABILITY OF VISITORS

Our school has robust procedures in place for people visiting the school. For visitors who are there in a professional capacity we will check ID and be assured that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check. Visitors are always expected to sign in (iPad/sign-in app.) and wear a visitor's badge when in school. We will ensure that visitors to our school are supervised as appropriate.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or the organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All visitors to our setting, including visiting speakers, will (as appropriate) be accompanied by a member of staff. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities, is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise children or staff.

SLT Visiting Speakers Policy.pdf

8. CHILDREN REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Our school recognises that concerns raised by children need to be taken seriously. We recognise the importance of ensuring children feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations. To address this, we have put into place systems that are well promoted, easily understood and accessible for all, including those children who have additional needs.

9. OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH SAFEGUARDING

Our school plays an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate and adult behaviour; what is 'safe' both online and offline to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.

The governing body ensures our children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety), and through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our curriculum will provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness, and decision making, so that children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others. Systems have been established to support the empowerment of children to talk to a range of staff when they are in difficulty and to raise comments, complaints and feedback about their school experience and any other external issues which affect their wellbeing. Children will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate. Records will be kept of reported incidents in line with guidance.

We encourage the safe use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our children. We will, however, positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who are invited by the school staff or by the children themselves to ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages, or that are inconsistent with, or are in complete opposition to the school's values and ethos.

Our school will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- ✔ Any messages communicated to children are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups, or individuals.
- ✔ Any messages communicated to children do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise children through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture, or other ideologies.
- ✔ Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication.
- ✔ Activities are matched to the needs of children.

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our school is to encourage children to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, understanding and abilities, and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate.

Specific systems/support services (outside of expected day to day classroom interaction and our SCARF PHSE/RHSE curriculum) and support will include:

- Pupil Council
- Regular 'Stay Safe' messages in assemblies plus dedicated 'Stay Safe' assemblies (led by DSL/pastoral team) half-termly.
- PSHE focus lessons/themes and W Assemblies 2025 -2026.docx

- Pupil/parent feedback questionnaires
- RHSE information events for parents - available on our PSHE page, alongside our RHSE policy
- Child-friendly Child Protection Policy
- School website – Bedford worry box/Staying Safe pages (for parents and pupils)
- Pastoral support whiteboard for children to write their initials/class on.
- Anti-bullying week/events
- NSPCC (PANTS & Speak Out & Stay Safe materials)
- SWACA (Safe/Healthy Relationships - all classes from Y1-6)
- Community policing/Merseyside Police Hate Crime Team - follow up and guidance sought after any incident that is racially motivated or discriminatory
- Online Safety Events/Online safety messages for children and their families via school monthly newsletters.
- Annual Karl Hopwood Online Safety Expert visits/targeted sessions for staff, governors and pupils
- Conquer Life 'Stay Safe' sessions
- Cyber Dependent Crime Unit, Merseyside Police
- Catch 22 – presence at parent consultation events/parent workshops.
- GANGS (Get away and Get Safe - Y6 annual visits)
- Use of Rail Safety online videos
- PSS Family Action: Prisoners' Families Service
- Nurture/Pastoral support (e.g. drop-ins, counselling/bereavement counselling/sleep counselling/use of ELSA materials)
- Venus/CAMHS
- CEWB (Complete Emotional Well-Being) counselling services
- SWACA
- CGL
- Hope's Therapy Dogs https://www.hopestherapydogs.co.uk/
- Everton in the Community/LFC foundation/Vibe (Conquer Life)
- Left Behind resources/PSS
- Child/parent support from our Education Mental Health Practitioner/MHST
- School Home Support - attendance/barriers to school attendance
- Team Around The School

***School Locality/Contextual Safeguarding priorities**

10. OUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO ARE VULNERABLE AND AT RISK THROUGH A CHILD CENTRED AND COORDINATED APPROACH

We recognise that while all children have a right to be safe some children may be more vulnerable to suffering abuse, neglect and exploitation. We understand that no single person can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who encounters them at our school has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

10.1 CHILDREN WHO MAY REQUIRE EARLY HELP

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the DSL.

Our school is committed to using the Early Help process to support children and their families and we will take on the role of Lead Practitioner where this is deemed to be appropriate. We have staff that are trained in delivering early help support and using the early help system. If we require an additional Early Help service for a family, we will contact and work with

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the need for early help for a child who:

- ✔ Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- ✔ Has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory education, health and care plan.
- ✔ Is a young carer.
- ✔ Bereaved
- ✔ Is missing education (not on a school roll) persistently absent from school or not in receipt of full time education
- ✔ Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.
- ✔ Is not in education, training, or employment after the age of 16 (NEET).
- ✔ is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- ✔ is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- ✔ Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.
- ✔ Children who run away or goes missing from home or care.
- ✔ Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- ✔ Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- ✔ Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- ✔ Has returned home to their family from care.
- ✔ Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect/exploitation
- ✔ Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- ✔ Is a privately fostered child.

Knowing what to look out for is vital to the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or deputy). If in exceptional circumstances the DSL (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT). In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL as soon as is practically possible.

Our Bedford Early Help Offer

Support for pupils which includes:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Promoting self-esteem and confidence.
- Promoting positive behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
- Providing individualised support (in line with services/provision).

Support for families which includes:

- Providing information and signposting to other services in the local area.
- Liaising with a range of external services such as Team Around the School, housing, Citizen's Advice, Venus etc.
- Assistance in completing paperwork and forms e.g. housing, foodbank vouchers, attendance and support at school and other agency meetings.
- Advice and support in promoting positive behaviour at home.
- Access to drop-in sessions and parental advice/support workshops in school.

10.2 CHILDREN IN NEED WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

The DSL, leadership team and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a child has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the child's safety and welfare. Our school are committed to maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort to ensure the children reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

The Virtual School headteacher, who has a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of pupils with a social worker, works closely with our DSL, Headteacher and SENCO. They engage with other key professionals, including school nurses' mental health leads and other relevant professionals. The Virtual School headteacher also has a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of all children in kinship care

Our school will respond to **absence from school** /missing education where there are known safeguarding risks by working in partnership with Sefton Council and participating in the first day response system. (Add in here about provision pastoral/academic support)

10.3 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

At Bedford Primary School, we will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. Our DSL has details of all the children's social workers and Virtual Heads. Appropriate staff in school have relevant information about looked after children's legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.

Our school has a Designated Teacher (Joanne Boulton, AHT). They have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked-after children learn and achieve. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (Feb 2018) is **The designated teacher for looked- after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK**

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- ✔ Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- ✔ Work with virtual school heads to promote the high expectations and aspirations of how looked after children learn. They are responsible for the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans, including prioritising one-to-one tuition arrangements and working with carers to understand the importance of supporting learning at home.

Members of staff employed in the Virtual School are detailed below.

Natasha Sandland	**Virtual Headteacher**	**Natasha.Sandland@sefton.gov.uk**
Lianne Bate	**Deputy Virtual Headteacher**	**lianne.bate@sefton.gov.uk** **07971 623353**
Emma Stewart	**Deputy Virtual Headteacher CWSW**	**Emma.stewart@sefton.gov.uk** **07929802362**
Jenny Dinning	**Virtual School Inclusion Officer**	**Jenny.Dinning@sefton.gov.uk**
Cristina Brett	**Education Co-Ordinator**	**Cristina.brett@sefton.gov.uk** **07816115535**
Lee Murphy	**Education Co-Ordinator**	**Lee.Murphy@sefton.gov.uk** **07815 711400**

Laura Tickle	**Education Co-ordinator**	**Laura.tickle@sefton.gov.uk** **07870 379770** **Ashley.Toner@sefton.gov.uk**
Ashley Toner	**Education Co-ordinator**	
Sam Keen	**Education Co-ordinator**	**Samantha.Keen@sefton.gov.uk** **07812776368**
Charlie Smith	**Education Co-Ordinator Post 16**	**charlie.smith@sefton.gov.uk** **07815 463240**
Francesca Lloyd	**Virtual School Support Officer**	**Francesca.lloyd@sefton.gov.uk** **07773069662**
Alison Larkin	**Virtual School Support Officer**	**Alison.larkin@sefton.gov.uk** **07929 769285**

10.4 CHILDREN WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL OR GENDER QUESTIONING

Being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not inherently a risk factor for harm in children or young people, but they can sometimes be targeted by peers. Even those only perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual may face similar vulnerability.

For children questioning their gender, a cautious approach is necessary due to uncertainties around the effects of social transition. These children often have broader vulnerabilities, such as complex mental health or psychosocial needs, and may also have conditions like autism or ADHD.

Families or carers supporting gender-questioning children should be encouraged to seek clinical advice. Clinical professionals with relevant experience should see pre-pubertal children as early as possible.

As with all pupils, we will take a cautious and individualised approach, working with the child's parents (unless involving them poses a significant risk of harm) and considering clinical input and wider vulnerabilities, such as bullying.

We understand a lack of trusted adults can increase risks, so staff should work to remove barriers and foster an environment where children feel safe to express concerns.

10.5 CHILDREN REQUIRING SUPPORT WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

There will be occasions when children in our school struggle with mental health issues resulting in low mood or self-harm. If a member of staff notices 'low mood' in any child, they should speak with the DSL team/mental health lead (Sean Briscoe). Should there be any signs that the child is at risk or that there is a threat or has been self-harm, this should also be reported to the DSL. Children will

be monitored, and if needed, a referral should be made to the CHAT Team. Where parents are able to keep them safe, they will be contacted and advised to seek medical advice from their GP/A&E.

The child will be provided with support in school through the pastoral care systems and external agencies. Should there be a significant risk in school, a risk assessment may be put in place to ensure the child is safe. These will be sent to staff on a termly basis following a review or as required.

Kooth in Sefton
Kooth is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and is free at the point of use. Kooth is an early intervention resource which targets improvements in young people's emotional and mental wellbeing.

Online support will address a wide range of health and wellbeing issues such as relationships, bullying, self-harm, suicide, loneliness, self-confidence, self-esteem, pregnancy, abuse, bereavement, anger, and risk-taking behaviours, although this list is not exhaustive.

Young people aged 11 to 19 will self-refer into the service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, although only dedicated counsellor hours will be provided. Outside counselling hours, young people will be able to access such features as online articles, forums, and message boards. The online facility must be compatible with mobile media devices.
https://xenzone.com/free-online-counselling-sefton/

10.5 CHILDREN WITH SEN/DISABILITIES/HEALTH CONDITIONS

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Pupils with SEND are 3 times more likely to be abused than their peers. Abuse that involves SEND pupils will require close liaison with the DSL or the deputy and the SENCO

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. These can include:

- ✔ Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- ✔ Children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- ✔ The potential for children with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- ✔ Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges - visuals, communication tools (ie PECS), additional adult support or translators are used as appropriate - this is in line with the plans in place for individual pupils and the knowledge that staff hold with regards to the needs of each pupil.

✔ Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

To support children with SEND/facilitate staff training, we work closely with/signpost families to services such as:

- **Applied Psychologies (EP Dan Small)**
- **Sefton/Liverpool SEND teams and Inclusion Consultants (including Early Years Team)**
- **EHCP caseworkers**
- **Team Around the School (TAS) practitioners**
- **Graham Chatterley/Team Teach/Positive Handling Plans**
- **Dr Jenny Nock - Trauma/Attachment**
- **Nurture UK - we have x2 Nurture UK trained HLTAs in school**
- **Hayley Morgan School Nurse/School Health Team**
- **Education Mental Health Support Team**
- **OSSME**
- **ADDvanced solutions**
- **Hope's Therapy Dogs**
- **CEWB Counselling Services - Play Therapists**
- **Alder Hey/Community Paediatricians**

We also signpost families to SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service). They can be contacted by calling 0151 433 7442 or by emailing seftonsendiass@kids.org.uk or visiting SENDIASS Home - Kids

Children who are identified with having additional needs on the school SEND register will have an individualised SEND Support Plan/One Page Profile. These are reviewed termly by class teachers, in line with the Graduated Approach. Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will also have an annual review of this plan.

As appropriate or required due to the individual needs of a child, health/care plans will also be in place.

10.6 HARM OUTSIDE THE HOME – (EXTRA FAMILIAL HARM)

We recognise safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school including online. All staff, especially the DSL (or deputy), should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or

behaviours occur. Assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. It is important that staff provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process.

10.7 CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

Many adults find themselves looking after someone else's child without realising that they may be involved in private fostering. A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 or under 18 if disabled), by someone other than a parent or immediate relative. If the arrangement is to last, or has lasted, for 28 days or more, it is categorised as private fostering. The Children Act 1989 defines an immediate relative as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a step- parent. People become involved in private fostering for all kinds of reasons Examples of private fostering include:

- ✔ Children who need alternative care because of parental illness.
- ✔ Children whose parents cannot care for them because their work or study involves long or antisocial hours.
- ✔ Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities.
- ✔ Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children.
- ✔ Teenagers who stay with friends (or other non-relatives) because they have fallen out with their parents.
- ✔ Children staying with families while attending a school away from their home area.

Our school will fulfil the mandatory duty to inform the CHAT Team of a private fostering arrangement.

A Social Worker will then undertake:

- ✔ An assessment of the needs of the child and consider whether there is any help that should be provided.
- ✔ Check that private fostering carers are suitable people to care for children, and that the accommodation where children will be cared for is adequate.
- ✔ Decide whether the private fostering arrangements are satisfactory and can go ahead.
- ✔ Visit children who are privately fostered to ensure their needs are met, and they are being properly looked after.

11. RECOGNISING AND IDENTIFYING ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SIGNIFICANT HARM

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse is defined as a form 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 a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. 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 another child or children. Types of abuse as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) **Definitions and indicators of abuse**

11.1 **PHYSICAL ABUSE - 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

11.2 **EMOTIONAL ABUSE -** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so 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, though it may occur alone

11.3 **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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

11.4 Neglect - 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 caregivers)
- ✔ ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- ✔ provide suitable education

12. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

12.1 SHARING OF NUDES AND SEMI NUDES (Sexting) (CHILDREN WILL BE INFORMED ABOUT THE POLICY)

If staff are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), they must report it to the DSL immediately.

We will **not**:
View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download it (if a member of staff has already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL).

- ✔ Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it.
- ✔ Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility).
- ✔ Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- ✔ Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

Staff will explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support.

Initial Review Meeting
Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- ✔ Whether there is an immediate risk to child(ren).
- ✔ If a referral needs to be made to the police and/ Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT)
- ✔ If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed).
- ✔ What further information is required to decide the most appropriate response?
- ✔ Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms. (this may be unknown).
- ✔ Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services.
- ✔ Any relevant facts about the children involved which would influence a risk assessment.
- ✔ If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- ✔ Whether to contact parents or carers of the children involved. In most cases we will contact parents/carers.

The DSL will make an immediate referral to Police and/or Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) **if:**

- ✔ The incident involves an adult.
- ✔ There is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent. (for example, owing to special educational needs).
- ✔ What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage or are violent.
- ✔ The imagery involves sexual acts and any in the images or videos is under 13.
- ✔ The DSL has reason to believe a is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT). The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further Review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT), the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks. This may involve: -

Holding interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). If at any point in the process there is a concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) and/or the police immediately.

Informing Parents/Carers

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the child at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through [insert details of your existing arrangements, e.g. a Safer School's Officer, Police Community Support Officer, Local Neighbourhood Police, dialing 101].

Recording incidents

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded on our CPOMS system.

Addressing nudes and semi -nudes through the curriculum

As/when age appropriate, children in our school are taught about the issues surrounding the safe sharing of information online. The content taught in each year group via our SCARF PSHE programme is detailed within the document below.

Keeping Myself Safe - Bedford Primary School Progression Map

Our Bedford computing curriculum has a strong online safety thread running through it.
computing-curriculum.pdf
Key components from EYFS to Y6 that deepen in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding (year upon year) include: Online Relationships, Online Reputation and Self-image and Identity.

Coverage of the sharing of images (via PSHE)

- During Autumn 2, all year groups do 'Speak Out, Stay Safe', which recaps speaking out about any aspects that make them feel uncomfortable, which includes online behaviours.
- Year 4 (Spring 1) Under Pressure: They explore scenarios where they are put under pressure by friends and peers - both in real life and online. This includes the sending of images.
- Year 4 (Summer 2) Sharing Pictures Online: Looking at the warning signs of someone trying to manipulate you into sharing personal information or content.
- Year 5 (Spring 1) Online Safety: Snapchat: Recapping the age restrictions of social media and the potential for children to be communicating with older children / adults and the risks this can pose.
- Year 5 (Summer 2) Think Before You Click: The children look at the ease of clicking a friend request, a reaction to a post or sending images / content. It also looks at the repercussions of these actions.
- Year 5 (Summer 2) Being Assertive: Strategies for saying no, both online and offline. The discussion around scenarios where we have to be very clear and concise with our words and actions.
- Year 6 (Autumn 2) Online Presence and Behaviour: Recognising the importance of your online conduct and how this can impact you in the real world. Conduct and material shared online has a direct impact on your friendships / relationships in the real world.
- Year 6 (Summer 2) Communicating Online: To explore the risks of social media platforms, the impact on your mental health and the potential risks it can have on their safety.

External providers such as Karl Hopwood, Everton in the Community and local charity, Conquer life may also deliver staying safe online sessions.

Conquer Life sessions for Y5/6 focus upon online behaviour. These sessions include the motto: 'Think, Check, Block, Tell', which encourages pupils to be aware of their decision making online. The session also includes different scenarios, including the request of images.

Advice and guidance can be located at: **Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK**
The NSPCC also provide support if children have been sharing nudes and semi nudes (sexting)
Safeguarding, sexting and sharing nudes | NSPCC Learning

12.2 ONLINE SAFETY AND THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND CAMERAS (see Trust policy below)
We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the

best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered, and respectful way, so they can reap the benefits of the online world. Advice about teaching online safety can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811796/Teaching_online_safety_in_school.pdf

SLT Online Safety Policy Oct 25 - Oct 26 (1).pdf

There are four categories of risk:

- ✔ **Content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- ✔ **Contact:** being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- ✔ **Conduct**: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying
- ✔ **Commerce**: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams

12.3 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in School

Generative AI tools are widely accessible and increasingly used in education. Bedford Primary School recognises the potential of AI to enhance teaching, support learning, and assist with safeguarding. However, AI also brings risks, such as exposure to harmful content, misuse for bullying, or the creation of fake media ('deepfakes').
To ensure safe and responsible use:

- Misuse of AI will be addressed under school policies (e.g. behaviour and safeguarding).
- Staff must assess risks before using new AI tools and follow existing filtering and monitoring procedures.
- Safeguarding responses will apply to AI-related incidents, including any involving AI-generated harmful content.

The school is committed to balancing the benefits of AI with the need to protect pupils and support staff through safe and informed use.
Further guidance is available from the Department for Education:

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK

Using AI in education settings: support materials - GOV.UK

Our school will:

- ✔ Undertake an annual review of online safety to identify any risks that the school community may be exposed to.
- ✔ Ensure our governors have knowledge in relation to online safety.

- ✔ Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents. This includes making parents aware of what we ask children to do online including sites they will have access to or who they will be interacting with online).
- ✔ Provide online guidance and support to children and their parents to remain free from risk, exploitation, grooming and radicalisation.
- ✔ Ensure staff receive training as part of their induction on using the internet safely and online safeguarding issues, including cyberbullying and the risks of online radicalisation. **There will be an annual refresher training session.**
- ✔ Educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology including mobile/smart phones.
- ✔ Ensure they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place, in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving **cyber-crime** technologies.
- ✔ Ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to safeguard children and young people from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The use of filters is routinely monitored and updated by the Network Manager (put in role) and any breaches dealt with in accordance with school procedures and reported to governors.
- ✔ Be careful to ensure that these systems do not place unreasonable restrictions on internet access or limit what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.
- ✔ Ensure a comprehensive whole school curriculum response is in place to enable all children to learn about and manage online risks effectively and will support parents and the wider school community (including all members of staff) to become aware and alert to the need to keep children safe online. computing-curriculum.pdf
- ✔ Ensure all members of the school community are aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology.
- ✔ Ensure the governing body has had due regard to the additional information and support set out in **KCSiE (2025 Annex D** and will ensure that the school has a whole school approach to online safety and has a clear policy on use of communications technology in school.
- ✔ Guidance supporting schools to teach their children how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subjects can be found at: **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools**
- ✔ Ensure staff, children and parents are aware that staff have the power to search children's' phones. **https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674416/Searching_screening_and_confiscation.pdf**

Staff can bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when children are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils. Staff will not take pictures or recordings of children on their personal phones or cameras. We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school. **SLT Online Safety Policy Oct 25 - Oct 26 (1).pdf**

See also Trust Code of Conduct for more information SLT-Staff-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

12.4 REMOTE LEARNING AND SAFEGUARDING

In the event of any children being asked to learn online at home, schools and colleges should follow advice from the DfE on safeguarding and remote education (DfE, 2022).

Where children are remote learning and the DSL has identified a child to be vulnerable, on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that or young person. The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Details of this plan and any contacts must be recorded.

If children are open to social care, we will report to Sefton Council through the School Attendance First Day Response Scheme. We will also inform the child's allocated social worker.

12.5 CHILDREN WHO ARE ABSENT FROM EDUCATION/ MISSING EDUCATION

Our school works closely with the local authority, in line with the statutory guidance on school attendance set out by the Department for Education (DfE)."

A child being absent from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. All staff should be aware that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent and have unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education.' **/ or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:**

- ✔ **Are at risk of harm or neglect.**
- ✔ **Are at risk from criminal/sexual exploitation.**
- ✔ **Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM.**
- ✔ **Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families.**
- ✔ **Come from the families of service personnel.**
- ✔ **Risk of travelling to conflict zones.**
- ✔ **Go missing or run away from home or care.**
- ✔ **Are supervised by the youth justice system.**
- ✔ **Cease to attend a school.**
- ✔ **have a mental health need that has an effect on school attendance and progress.**
- ✔ **Come from new migrant families.**

Our attendance procedures are designed to ensure that a child being absent from school is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will refer to/use this resource: Flow chart - Pupil Leaving Premises.pdf

If a child leaves the school without permission the school has developed a flow chart for all staff to refer to, clearly outlining the steps to be taken. Staff are reminded of this flow chart at termly safeguarding briefings. The flowchart highlights key roles/responsibilities and includes details of

when/who will contact emergency services. The same flowchart would be used if a child failed to arrive at school or was deemed to be truant. The SLT member acting as incident manager would allocate roles to key staff and decide when to contact police/other key professionals (see flowchart). See also the section below regarding children going missing from home/care.

Our school will hold at least **two** contact numbers for every child. These will be used as part of the First Day Response (FDR) attendance team process. It is good practice to hold additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Notifying the Local Authority

Our school notify the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The school (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any child who is to be deleted from the admission register.

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered missing from education.

Where a child leaves the school without a destination or another school is not identified, our school follow Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures and they can be found at: **https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-(cme).aspx.** The school will liaise with Clare Johanson the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator who can be contacted on 0151 934 3181 or clare.johanson@sefton.gov.uk

During the school day, we are responsible for the safeguarding of our children who receive an education at another establishment but remain on our roll. We will keep in touch on a regular basis with the alternative provision and will to monitor the attendance. Communication between Jigsaw (AP provider, is strong). As part of e.g. Jigsaw's first day response system, they will alert us to the non-attendance of any of our pupils at the earliest opportunity in the school day. Daily individual pupil report sheets are also sent to us each week.

We will ensure we regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meet our pupils' needs. If there are any safeguarding concerns, we will contact the Local Authority and immediately review the placement and end it if necessary. paragraphs 169 and 170 of KCSiE 2025).

Children who are on a managed move supported by the in- year fair access/off-site direction

Our school will work with the receiving school to monitor attendance. We will attend all the reviews and if the decision is taken for the child to return, we will ensure they are fully supported.

Elective Home Education

If a parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove their child from our school roll to be electively home educated, we will work together with key professionals including the Complementary Education Service/LA EHE team to coordinate a meeting with the parent or carer to discuss the reasons and options. This is particularly important if a child has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), is vulnerable or has a social worker.

If the parent/carer of a child with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan has expressed their intention to educate their child at home, the LA should review the plan working with parents and carers.

Non-collection of children

- Contact parents/carers via main contact telephone numbers (and text if required as back-up)
- If we are unable to contact parents/carers via main contact telephone numbers, we will attempt to contact other adults for whom we have signed 'permission to collect' information.
- A home visit may also be undertaken.
- Additional advice will be sought if there are welfare/safeguarding concerns - this may include contact with CSC/police.
- Record any incidents on our CPOMS facility under the category of 'late collection' - incidents/the need for any additional next steps will be reviewed by the SLT.

12.6 MISSING: CHILDREN WHO RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE

The school/college recognises that children who run away or go missing - and are thus absent from their normal residence - are potentially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, offending and placing themselves in situations where they may suffer physical harm.

As soon as the Local Authority receives notification that a child has gone missing from home or care, contact will be made with parents/carers seeking their consent to a Return Home Interview (RHIs) with their child. Direct contact will then be made with parents/carers and the child, to plan for the interview.

To fulfil the timescale of within 72 hours, it is essential that all opportunities to interview children and young people, including times during the school/college day are utilised. When necessary and in conjunction with the Local Authority, the school/college will facilitate RHIs, both in terms of releasing them from their normal timetable to participate in an interview and in providing an appropriate and safe space on the school/college site for the interview to take place.

RHI's are intended to ascertain the factors that triggered the child's absence. Those factors may include difficulties at home, in school and in the community. The short timescale of 72 hours is imposed to ensure that the RHI remains relevant to the child and enables any required action to be initiated at the earliest opportunity. RHI's are undertaken by professionals who are independent, to facilitate a discussion with the young person that is as open as possible. The school/college will check with the Local Authority whether parents/carers have given their consent to the interview. However, children aged 16 and 17 years old are generally considered to be able to consent and withhold consent to their own information being shared and therefore to participate in a RHI or not.

12.7 DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate

relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.
Domestic abuse as defined under the DA Act 2021 is:

Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is "domestic abuse" if:

A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive. The Act says behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:

- ✔ physical or sexual abuse
- ✔ violent or threatening behaviour
- ✔ controlling or coercive behaviour
- ✔ economic abuse
- ✔ psychological, emotional, or other abuse

Types of domestic abuse include **intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse.**

Teenage Relationship Abuse is when there is actual or threatened abuse within a romantic relationship or a former relationship. One partner will try to maintain power and control over the other. This abuse can take many forms: physical, sexual, financial, emotional, or social. This includes coercive and controlling behaviour.

In Sefton, we have many agencies who support people who are experiencing domestic abuse:

- ✔ **Sefton Safer Families Practice Hub -** are part of Sefton Council CHAT and FAST Integrated front door working with children and their families to address domestic abuse.
- ✔ **Sefton Independent Domestic Violence Advisors [IDVA]-** they offer free crisis intervention support to high-risk victims of domestic abuse, provide practical help including safety planning for the whole family, support through the Criminal Justice System, and home security checks. They work with male and female victims aged 16+ and work with victims even if they choose to remain in their relationship. They can be contacted by phone on 0151 934 5142 between Monday and Friday 9.00am until 5.00pm or at **IDVA.Team@sefton.gov.uk**
- ✔ **Sefton Women & Children's Aid [SWACA] –** they help women, young people and children survive the impact of domestic violence and abuse by giving free practical and emotional support. SWACA will see people in the community, including the family and well-being centres. They also work with young people who are experiencing relationship abuse. They can be contacted on 0151 922 8606 or **help@swaca.com**
- ✔ **Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (RASA)-** they provide **essential** crisis and therapeutic support to individuals of all ages who have been affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives. This includes specialised counselling, support, and an Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service, which includes support through the Criminal Justice process. They also provide an opportunity to give anonymous intelligence in relation to sexual violence if an individual does not want to make a formal complaint. They operate a help line on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6pm until 8pm, Friday 12noon until 2pm, Sunday 10am until 3pm. They can be contacted on 0151 558 1801 or **sefton@rasamerseyside.org**

OPERATION ENCOMPASS SCHEME

Our school is part of the Operation Encompass Scheme which is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse, and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales. Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school about **all** police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day. Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputy/ies (DDSLs) have attended either an Operation Encompass briefing or completed the online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other school staff and Governors. All schools staff and Governors can undertake the online training.

Operation Encompass Key Adult Training:

- Our DSL completed 11.7.24
- Christine Wookey completed 7.3.24
- Heather Shelton completed 6.2.24
- Alex Cowley completed 29.4.25

Next training date for DSL and all DDSL 27.3.26

Other advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/crime-and-emergencies/domestic-abuse.aspx

✔ **NSPCC-UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects**

✔ **Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children**

✔ **Safelives: young people and domestic abuse**

✔ Disrespect Nobody
https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/relationship-abuse/what-is-relationship-abuse/

12.8 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual CSE does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through technology. Like all forms of sexual abuse, CSE can:

✔ Affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex.

✔ Still be abused even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

✔ Include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity.

✔ Take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both.

- ✔ Involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- ✔ Occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying Videos or images they have created and posted on social media).
- ✔ Be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- ✔ Be typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of Sexual Exploitation:

- ✔ Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- ✔ Children who associate with other children and young people involved in exploitation.
- ✔ Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- ✔ Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.
- ✔ Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- ✔ Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- ✔ Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- ✔ Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

12.9 CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)

Some specific forms of 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.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of CCE too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- ✔ Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- ✔ Associating with other young people involved in exploitation.
- ✔ Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing.
- ✔ Misusing drugs and alcohol.

- ✔ Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late.
- ✔ Regularly missing school or education.
- ✔ Not taking part in education.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- ✔ Go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home.
- ✔ Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- ✔ Are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- ✔ Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- ✔ Are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity.
- ✔ Owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters.
- ✔ Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

In Sefton My SPACE is a wraparound exploitation service for Sefton young people who are at risk of significant harm by virtue of Child Sexual and Child Criminal Exploitation. Our school will work closely with the team to implement a plan to protect the child.

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's CHAT team and the police, if appropriate. If the potential victim is under 18 a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral should be considered. This is usually undertaken by the Police or Local Authority.
Further advice on this issue may be found in the Home Office document 'Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines. **Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK**

12.10 SERIOUS VIOLENCE
Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- ✔ Increased absence from school.
- ✔ Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.
- ✔ Significant decline in performance.
- ✔ Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing.
- ✔ Signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- ✔ Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- ✔ Being male.
- ✔ Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.
- ✔ Having experienced maltreatment.

✔ Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

Abuse and Exploitation can:

✔ Affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years.
✔ Affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years.
✔ Still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual.
✔ Involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
✔ Be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children, young people or adults; and
✔ Be typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors, including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Where there are concerns that a child or young person may be or is at risk of becoming involved in gang related activity and being exploited, we will complete the checklist in accordance with the local procedures. **CE Screening tool.docx**

The school understands that Early Help can be crucial in the early identification of children who may need additional support due to gang related activity and as such will provide an early help response when concerns are raised about indicators of gang activity.

If, however information suggests a child may be at risk of significant harm due to gang related activity, a referral will be made to Sefton CHAT team

Our school will use advice produced by the Home Office for staff to have an understanding of the risks associated with gang related behaviour and what measures can be taken to address these issues. The guidance can be found at:-**Criminal exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults County lines - GOV.UK**.

12.11 MODERN SLAVERY TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Our school recognises Trafficking is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to be moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for sexual and criminal exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic slavery, forced labour, committing crime like theft, county lines.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a new statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency (NCA) (section 52 of the Act) on observing signs or receiving intelligence relating to modern slavery. The public authority (including schools) bears this obligation where it has 'reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking', we will report our concerns in relation to the above and contact the DSL should we suspect or receive information that either parents or their children may be victims of modern

slavery. Our DSL will speak to the CHAT Team and consider whether a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be undertaken in order to safeguard that child and/or other children. National NRM guidance available at:
https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/learn-more/frontline-professionals/nrm-overview-and-form?gclid=EAIaIQobChMInpLM0pm66wIVEu7tCh2YwAbQEAAYASAAEgKrKfD_BwE.

12.12 HOMELESSNESS

We recognise that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include the following: **household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, the family being asked to leave a property.** Our school will work closely with the Housing Options Team and other services if children in our school are homeless or are at risk from becoming homeless. **The Housing Options Team can be contacted on 0151 934 3541.**

12.13 CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM

All staff should be aware that any child involved in legal proceedings should be made known to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Where there is a family break up, making arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. There are two age appropriate guides to support children **5-11 year olds** and **12-17 year olds**, they explain each step of the process and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Going to court 5-11 year olds.pdf

12.14 CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children https://www.nicco.org.uk/. Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they know a has a family member in prison. Our school will offer an early help assessment to the family if they need additional support.

As a school, we have also accessed support for pupils and their families via a local, Liverpool based charity.
PSS: Family impact: prisoners' families service

12.15 BULLYING, INCLUDING PREJUDICED BASED ABUSE, RACIST INCIDENTS, AND CYBER BULLYING

We have an anti-bullying policy which is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms, e.g., cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying.

We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with and analysed by the Governing Board. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences or perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied or victims of abuse.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Head teacher and DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

At Bedford Primary School:

We believe that **all** pupils have a right not to be bullied. They have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment.

We take **all** forms of bullying seriously including; cyber-bullying, prejudice-based bullying related to special educational needs, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability in the school and on off-site activities.

It is made clear to our whole community that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour, it is always wrong, unacceptable and will **not** be tolerated.

We also recognise our role in resolving bullying perpetrated outside school, which spills over into our school community. In these circumstances we engage our families with other community partners to seek solutions to overcome these problems.

We aim to **empower our whole community** to support everyone to identify and protect those who might be bullied or vulnerable.

Our policy also seeks to

- define what bullying is
- outline the responsibilities of all stakeholders
- detail how our anti-bullying policy and its aims are woven into the school curriculum
- highlight some of the possible signs of bullying
- share how incidents/allegations of bullying will be dealt with, including changing attitudes, sanctions, counselling and support, recording and reporting and monitoring and review.

A copy of our Anti Bullying policy is available on the school website. Our behaviour policy specifically mentions bullying, cyberbullying and prejudice based abuse.

We keep a CPOMS record of all known bullying incidents. Incidents are always taken seriously and key actions and systems for monitoring agreed. Data related to all forms of bullying/prejudice is shared with and analysed by, the Governing body. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences or perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied or victims of child abuse. Our anti-bullying policy acknowledges that repeated incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

The subject of healthy friendships and bullying is addressed at regular intervals in our PHSE SCARF curriculum, via focus days or visits from Bully Busters.

Our school ethos and approaches to behaviour management promote high standards of behaviour, inclusion and **RESPECT FOR ALL. MR C** our very own school 'character' plays a key role in this by promoting key values and rewarding pupils who consistently demonstrate **M**anners, **R**espect and **C**ourtesy.

These are the behaviours agreed and compiled with all pupils - they are revisited regularly via assemblies.

Which Behaviours Do We Want To Be The Norm at Bedford?

Ready	**Respectful**	**Safe**
We are in school every day and on time (Rise & shine, Bedford starts at a quarter to nine) We listen to the person who is talking We have all the equipment we need in school - our reading books, swimming kit, water bottles We wear the correct uniform for school We follow instructions the first time or ask for help if we are unsure We settle quickly to start our work We line up sensibly and quickly; ready to move from	We use our marvellous manners **MR C** (saying please, thank you, you are welcome and we hold doors open for each other) We are friendly, kind and caring (both online and offline) We listen to others We include everyone We look after our school building, our property and the environment We speak quietly and calmly We use our words and good listening to solve any problems we encounter We win and lose gracefully	We walk calmly around school We regularly wash our hands We chose games that are fun but safe We use all equipment safely and sensibly We use technology responsibly and keep personal information and passwords safe. We let an adult know immediately if something that is worrying or upsetting happens online . We have kind hands and feet We walk to and from school safely We always talk to someone or use the Bedford worry box on our

lesson to lesson and around school	We give our best effort to our work	school website if we have any worries

Behaviour-for-Learning-Policy.docx

The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE/Online Safety Curriculum and by the use of external visitors/providers such as Bully Busters or Everton in the Community.

Prejudice Based Abuse
Prejudice based abuse or hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's real or perceived: Disability; Race; Religion; Gender Identity; Sexual Orientation.

Although this sort of crime is collectively known as 'Hate Crime', the offender doesn't have to go as far as being motivated by 'hate', they only should exhibit 'hostility';

This can be evidenced by:

- ✔ Threatened or actual physical assault.
- ✔ Derogatory name calling, insults, for example racist jokes or homophobic language.
- ✔ Hate graffiti (e.g., on school furniture, walls or books).
- ✔ Provocative behaviour e.g., wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known right wing, or extremist organisations.
- ✔ Distributing literature that may be offensive in relation to a protected characteristic.
- ✔ Verbal abuse.
- ✔ Inciting hatred or bullying against children who share a protected characteristic.
- ✔ Prejudiced or hostile comments in the course of discussions within lessons teasing in relation to any protected characteristic e.g. sexuality, language, religion or cultural background.
- ✔ Refusal to co-operate with others because of their protected characteristic, whether real or perceived.
- ✔ Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend or influence the behaviour of others.
- ✔ Attempts to recruit other pupils to organisations and groups that sanction violence, terrorism, or hatred.

Racist incidents
Our policy on racist incidents, and online racist incidents, is included in our Anti-bullying policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Cyberbullying
Central to our School's anti-bullying policy is the principle that '*bullying is always unacceptable'* and that '*all pupils have a right not to be bullied*'.

The school recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school, and so we will respond to any cyber-bullying we become aware of carried out by pupils when they are away from the site.

Cyber-bullying is defined as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself".

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- ✔ Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones.
- ✔ The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear, or humiliation.
- ✔ Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory, or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites.
- ✔ Using e-mail to message others.
- ✔ Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts.

Cyber-bullying may be at a level where it is criminal. If we become aware of any incidents of cyberbullying, we will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The school will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate or are required to do so.

12.16 GAMING

Online gaming is an activity that many children and adults get involved in. The school will raise awareness by:

- ✔ Talking to parents and carers about the games their children play and help them identify whether they are appropriate.
- ✔ Supporting parents in identifying the most effective way of safeguarding their children by using parental controls and safety mode.
- ✔ Talking to parents about setting boundaries and time limits when games are played.
- ✔ Highlighting relevant resources.
- ✔ Making our children aware of the dangers, including grooming and how to keep themselves safe.
- ✔ Making our children aware of how to report concerns.

12.17 ABUSE LINKED TO FAITH AND BELIEF

The term 'belief in spirit possession' is the belief that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling him or her. Sometimes the term 'witch' is used and is the belief that a is able to use an evil force to harm others. There is also a range of other languages that are connected to such abuse. This includes black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah, demons, and sorcerers. In all these cases, genuine beliefs can be held by families, carers, religious leaders, congregations, and the children themselves that evil forces are at work. Families and children can be deeply worried by the evil that they believe is threatening them and abuse often occurs when an attempt is made to 'exorcise', or 'deliver' the child. Exorcism is the attempt to expel evil spirits from a child. The belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread. It is not confined to countries,

cultures, or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country. Any concerns about a child which arise in this context must be taken seriously.

Where the concerns about abuse linked to witchcraft and spirit possession for the welfare and safety of the child or young person are such that a contact to Sefton CHAT team must be made. Information for those who work with children to help raise awareness, and prevent abuse arising from religion or superstition, a national action plan has been developed. This can be found at: **National action plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief - GOV.UK**

12.18 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE/VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The government have a strategy looking at specific issues that women and girls face. Within the context of this safeguarding policy the following sections are how we respond to violence against girls. Female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse and teenage relationship abuse all fall under this strategy. This can be found at: **https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls**

12.19 SO-CALLED 'HONOUR-BASED' ABUSE (INCLUDING FGM, FORCED MARRIAGE AND BREAST IRONING)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing is where young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down using hard or heated objects for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. The custom uses large stones, a hammer or spatulas that have been heated over scorching coals to compress the breast tissue, or an elastic belt to press the breasts to prevent them from growing, in girls as young as 9 years old. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (**FGM**) is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM and what procedures they need to follow.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- ✔ A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place.
- ✔ A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out.
- ✔ A family/already being known to children's social care in relation to other safeguarding issues.

A girl:

- ✔ Having difficulty walking, sitting, or standing, or looking uncomfortable.
- ✔ Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously).
- ✔ Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- ✔ Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- ✔ Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE.
- ✔ Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period.
- ✔ Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour.
- ✔ Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations.
- ✔ Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem.
- ✔ Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

The girl's family having a history of practicing FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider).

FGM being known to be practiced in the girl's community or country of origin. A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out. A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues.

A girl:

- ✔ Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM.
- ✔ Having a limited level of integration within UK society.
- ✔ Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
- ✔ Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period.
- ✔ Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM.
- ✔ Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to consider the context of the discussion)
- ✔ Being unexpectedly absent from school.
- ✔ Having sections missing from her 'red book' (health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication.

Any teacher who either:

- ✔ Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- ✔ 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 that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health, or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. Unless they have been specifically

told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) **as appropriate.**

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a child **under 18** should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a child is *at risk* of FGM, or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine children https://www.seftonscp.org.uk/scp/policy-and-guidance/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-1

Forced marriage.
Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Being subject to any conduct where the purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages (Law change on Forced Marriage, February 2023)

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the **'one chance'** rule, i.e., we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them. If a member of staff suspects that a child is being forced into marriage, they will speak to them about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- ✔ Speak to the child about the concerns in a secure and private place.
- ✔ Activate the local safeguarding procedures.
- ✔ Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or **fmu@fco.gov.uk;**
- ✔ Refer the child to the pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published **statutory guidance** and **Multi-agency guidelines**, with pages 35-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges.

12.20 PREVENTING RADICALISATION (TRAINING)

The Prevent duty
All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.
The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the **Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales,** especially paragraphs 57-76 which are specifically, concerns with schools (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: Risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Terrorism is an action that:

- ✔ Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people.
- ✔ Causes serious damage to property; or
- ✔ Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system.

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.
Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk. We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our children to stay safe online at school.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period. Staff will be alerted to changes in children's behaviour.

Signs that a child is being radicalised can include:

- ✔ Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves.
- ✔ Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution.
- ✔ Changes in friendship groups and appearance.
- ✔ Rejecting activities, they used to enjoy.
- ✔ Converting to a new religion.
- ✔ Isolating themselves from family and friends.
- ✔ Talking as if from a scripted speech.
- ✔ An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views.
- ✔ A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
- ✔ Increased levels of anger.
- ✔ Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.
- ✔ Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions.
- ✔ Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter.
- ✔ Possessing extremist literature.
- ✔ Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations.

It is possible to intervene to prevent those children susceptible or at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alerted to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who may be susceptible or at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) making a referral to the Channel Programme.

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be susceptible to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages. Guidance on Channel is available at: Channel Guidance, and a Channel awareness e-learning programme is available for staff at: Channel General Awareness.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral. As a Channel partner, the school or college may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred, to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. **Channel Flowchart**
Tackling Extremism & Racism Policy.docx

12.21 Parental Mental Health

The term "mental ill health" is used to cover a wide range of conditions, from eating disorders, mild depression, and anxiety to psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Parental mental illness does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child's developmental needs, but it is essential to always assess its implications for each child in the family. It is essential that the diagnosis of a parent/carer's mental health is not seen as defining the level of risk. Similarly, the absence of a diagnosis does not equate to there being little or no risk.

For children, the impact of Parental Mental Health can include:

- ✔ The parent / carer's needs or illnesses taking precedence over the child's needs.
- ✔ A child's physical and emotional needs being neglected.
- ✔ A child acting as a young carer for a parent or a sibling.
- ✔ Having restricted social and recreational activities.
- ✔ Finds it difficult to concentrate - impacting on educational achievement.
- ✔ A child missing school regularly as (s)he is being kept home as a companion for a parent / carer.
- ✔ Adopt paranoid or suspicious behaviour as they believe their parent's delusions.
- ✔ Witnessing self-harming behaviour and suicide attempts (including attempts that involve the child).
- ✔ Obsessional compulsive behaviours involving the child.

If staff in our school become aware of any of the above indicators, or others that suggest a child is suffering due to parental mental health, the information will be shared with the DSL who will undertake an assessment of the situation and seek support from Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) or other relevant agencies.

12.22 SELF-HARM

Self-harm is a coping mechanism which enables a person to express difficult emotions. Young people who hurt themselves often feel that physical pain is easier to deal with than the emotional pain they are experiencing, because it is tangible. But the behaviour only provides temporary relief and fails to deal with the underlying issues that a young person is facing. For some people, self-harm may last for a short time. For others, it can become a long-term problem. Some people self-harm stops for a while, and return to it months, even years, later, in times of distress.

Risk factors that indicate child or young person may be at risk of taking actions to harm themselves or attempt suicide can cover a wide range of life events such as: bereavement, bullying, cyber bullying, mental health problems including eating disorders, family problems such as domestic violence, any form of abuse or conflict between the child and parents.

The most common forms of self-harm are:

- ✔ Cutting.
- ✔ Biting self.
- ✔ Burning, scalding, branding.
- ✔ Picking at skin, reopening old wounds.
- ✔ Breaking bones, punching.
- ✔ Hair pulling.
- ✔ Head banging.
- ✔ Ingesting objects or toxic substances.
- ✔ Overdosing with a medicine.

Self-harm is usually a secretive behaviour, but signs may include:

- ✔ Wearing long sleeves at inappropriate times.
- ✔ Spending more time in the bathroom.
- ✔ Unexplained cuts or bruises, burns or other injuries.
- ✔ Unexplained smell of Dettol, TCP, etc.
- ✔ Low mood - seems to be depressed or unhappy, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness.
- ✔ Any mood changes - anger, sadness.
- ✔ Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- ✔ Losing friendships, spending more time by themselves, and becoming more private or defensive.
- ✔ Withdrawal from activities that used to be enjoyed.
- ✔ Abuse of alcohol and or drugs.

We recognise that any child who self-harms or expresses thoughts about self-harm and/or suicide, must be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention will be offered at the earliest point. Any member of staff who is made aware that a child has self-harmed or is contemplating self-harm or suicide will record and report the matter to the DSL as soon as possible as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will contact the relevant agency. Where a child has suffered harm or is at risk from significant harm a referral will be made to the CHAT team

12.23 CHILD ABDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INCIDENTS

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends, and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe.

For a list of the agencies/resources utilised within school, click **here** to visit an earlier section of this policy.

Our school will deliver lessons that focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. We will contact the nominated person in Sefton Council who deals with community safety incidents.

13. WHAT TO DO IF STAFF ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD'S WELFARE

If staff members have concerns about a child, they should raise these with the DSL. This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members.

All staff are required to report any concerns in writing. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm; it is crucial that staff record and pass on their concerns in accordance with these procedures to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child in question.

The DSL will decide whether to make a referral to Sefton CHAT team, but it is important to note that where a staff member feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may refer their concerns to the Sefton CHAT team directly. Alternatively, the NSPCC have a whistleblowing advice line for professionals who have concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in either theirs or another organisation
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood/news-opinion/new-whistleblowing-advice-line-professionals/

Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support an Early Help Assessment needs to be undertaken. These assessments should identify what help the child and family require and prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment. The Early Help Assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional that identifies there are additional needs and support is required from outside agencies.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Sefton's CHAT team immediately. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and serious case reviews /local childcare practice reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes failing to act on and refer (to CSC) the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to

the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be acting.

14. DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES/LISTENING TO CHILDREN/NOTIFYING PARENTS

The way in which a member of staff talks to a child who discloses abuse could influence the evidence that is put forward if there are subsequent proceedings, and it is important that staff do not jump to conclusions, ask leading questions, or put words in a child's mouth.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or other adult working in school s/he should write a record of the conversation as soon as possible, stating exactly, in the child's words, what has been said, noting any action taken in cases of possible abuse. This must be signed and include the day of the week, date, time and place of the disclosure. A body map needs to be used when appropriate. All records must be locked in a secure place.

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will evaluate the assessment and concern record. The DSL will utilise LA level of need documentation and make a decision if a referral is to be made to the CHAT team.

If a referral needs to be made, or consultation with any other agency is deemed necessary then we recognise that it is good practice to inform parents and of actions to be taken, unless this puts the child at further risk of harm.

Sefton CHAT Team Tel: 0151 934 4013/4481

Staff must be aware that:

- ✔ It is not the responsibility of teachers, other staff or volunteers to investigate suspected cases of abuse
- ✔ They should not take any action beyond that agreed in the procedures established by the school and Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP)
- ✔ They cannot promise a complete confidentiality - instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe

Listening to Children

Experience and consultation with children show that a child will talk about their concerns and problems to people they feel they can trust, and they feel comfortable with. This will not necessarily be a teacher. It is therefore essential that all staff and volunteers in a school or establishment know how to respond sensitively to a child's concerns, who to approach for advice about them, and the importance of not guaranteeing complete confidentiality.

Any member of staff or volunteer in our school who is approached by a child wanting to talk will listen positively and reassure the child. They will record the discussion with the child as soon as possible and act in accordance with the school's child protection procedures.

If a child chooses to disclose, the member of staff or other adult in the school will:

- ✔ Be accessible and receptive.
- ✔ Stay calm and listen carefully at the child's pace.

- ✔ Accept what is said - take what is said seriously.
- ✔ Reassure the child that they are right to tell.
- ✔ Tell the child that this information must be passed on.
- ✔ Make a written record, which should be signed and include the time, day, date, location, and your position in school.
- ✔ Pass to the DSL or deputy with no delay.

Staff or other adults will **never**:

- ✔ Make the child feel they are creating a problem or feel ashamed for reporting abuse.
- ✔ Take photographs or examine an injury.
- ✔ Investigate or probe, aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse, never ask leading questions.
- ✔ Make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets'
- ✔ Assume that someone else will take the necessary action.
- ✔ Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger, or horror.
- ✔ Speculate or accuse anybody.
- ✔ Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved.
- ✔ Offer opinions about what is being said or about the person/s allegedly involved.
- ✔ Forget to record what has been said.
- ✔ Fail to pass the information on to the correct person.
- ✔ Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication/language difficulties or who use alternative/ augmented communication systems, staff and other adults may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in the same manner as for other children. In some cases, it may be appropriate to seek the services of a professional interpreter.

Bear in mind that some children may:

- ✔ Not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.
- ✔ Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- ✔ Feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers.

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

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 contact 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, the DSL will explain as to why that decision was taken

Where there are concerns about fabricated illness, forced marriage or honour-based abuse, parents should not be informed a referral is being made as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- ✔ Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what is being put in place to safeguard them and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed.
- ✔ Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g., moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s)

15. Concerns about a child/Support Services for children Sefton CHAT & FAST team

Concerns about a pupil or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL who will help decide whether a referral to the Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) needs to be made. If a referral is needed, then the DSL should make it. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one has not been made, they can and should consider making a referral themselves. *Please refer to the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Level of Need Guidance May 2024.*

If a referral is considered a Child Protection issue (Level 4) parental consent should be obtained. This ensures open and honest working relationships with families. In most cases it is appropriate and good practice to seek consent however there are some cases where it is not. (as taken from the Level of Need Guidance:)

'Consent should not be sought if doing so would:

- ✔ Place a person (the individual, family member, worker or a third party) at increased risk of significant harm (if a child) or serious harm (if an adult).
- ✔ Prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime - this is likely to cover most criminal offences relating to children.
- ✔ Lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm (to a child) or serious harm (to an adult).

If a pupil is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm the police or emergency services should be contacted as priority to ensure the child/family's safety and wellbeing. A referral should then be made to Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT). Anybody can make a referral. CHAT: 0151 934 4013

Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

The person making the referral should provide the following information if available - note - absence of information must not delay a referral:

- ✔ Full name, any aliases, date of birth and gender of child/children
- ✔ Full family address and any known previous addresses
- ✔ Identity of those with parental responsibility.
- ✔ Names, date of birth and information about all household members, including any other children in the family, and significant people who live outside the child's household.
- ✔ Ethnicity, first language and religion of children and parents/carers
- ✔ Any need for an interpreter, signer, or other communication aid
- ✔ Any special needs of the child/ren
- ✔ Is the child/ren registered at a school or regularly attending a school? If so, identify the school.
- ✔ Any significant/important recent or historical events/incidents in the child's or family's life
- ✔ Has the child recently spent time abroad or recently arrived in the area?
- ✔ Cause for concern including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location.
- ✔ The identity and current whereabouts of the suspected/alleged perpetrator
- ✔ The child's current location and emotional and physical condition
- ✔ Whether the child is currently safe or needs immediate protection because of any approaching deadlines (e.g. about to be collected by alleged abuser)
- ✔ The child's account and the parents' response to the concerns if known.
- ✔ The referrer's relationship and knowledge of the and parents/carers
- ✔ Known current or previous involvement of other agencies/professionals.
- ✔ Information regarding parental knowledge of, and agreement to the referral

CHAT team in a conversation with our school will offer help and advice where there is a*** level 4 safeguarding concern for a child and it is felt there is need for a social worker led intervention; they will talk through the issues with the person calling and will both agree some next steps which might include arranging an assessment, directing families to our Early Help services, or signposting to some general support and advice in the community. The recommendations being made are jointly agreed, therefore if school do not agree with the recommendations discussed, they need to make this known to the CHAT Social Worker. It is also expected that School will speak to the families about possible outcomes (such as C&F assessment/EH Support) when they make a referral to CHAT to ensure continued open and honest working with families. Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) (sefton.gov.uk)

Early help intervention can be accessed by contacting The FAST team (Family advice support team) on 0151 934 4545. FAST is a team dedicated to supporting the Early Help offer for Sefton children and families. FAST is the first point of contact for accessing support and advice about Early Help. Referrals are consent led by parents and carers. The referrer needs to provide family details and provide a clear understanding of the support requested to ensure families receive intervention promptly.

The FAST team work closely with Early Help services and partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes for children and their families. The team will have a discussion with the referrer/family to identify how we can help families get the right support at the right time. This may include help with: Behavioural difficulties, domestic abuse, managing family conflict, parental support, maintaining positive relationships and strategies to improve home life.

Early Help is everyone's responsibility, working together will get the best outcomes for families.

Please refer to the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Level of Need Guidance May 2024 and consider Level of Need 3/2 when making a referral to FAST.

Our school accesses support from Sefton FAST Team by telephone who offer the same service as CHAT but in an Early Help setting where a family may need some support across a range of issues. They can be contacted on 0151 934 4545. Please refer to the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Level of Need Guidance May 2024 and consider Level of Need 3/2 when making a referral to FAST. Information can be found at Family Advice and Support Team (sefton.gov.uk)

16. CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

At our school we recognise that children can abuse their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" "boys will be boys" or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

We also recognise the gendered nature of Child-on-Child abuse. However, all child -on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Child on-Child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school and online. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via Child-on-Child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- ✔ Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- ✔ Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- ✔ Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- ✔ Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- ✔ Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone 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 nudes and semi nudes' images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
- ✔ Upskirting, 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 could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

Child on Child Abuse can include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation.
In areas where gangs are prevalent, older children may attempt to recruit younger children using any or all the above methods. Children and Young People suffering from Criminal and Sexual Exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Response from school to the allegation
When an allegation is made by a child against another child, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a child protection/safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern:

- ✔ Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed.
- ✔ A factual record will be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- ✔ Our DSL will have a conversation with the CHAT team. It is possible that they may already be aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person.
- ✔ The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both children's files.
- ✔ If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the children being complained about and the alleged victim).
- ✔ It may be appropriate to exclude the child being complained about for a period according to our behaviour for learning policy and procedures.
- ✔ Where neither Children's Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- ✔ In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s) The plan should be monitored, and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
- ✔ If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation. Allegations-Against-Staff-Policy.pdf
- ✔ The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.
- ✔ Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them

Our staff understand that, even where Child on Child abuse is not being reported, it does not mean it's not happening.

17. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS/SEXUALLY HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS

We recognise that sexual violence and/or sexual harassment can happen anywhere including educational settings. Where concerns of sexual violence or sexual harassment are witnessed, disclosed, or reported to the school (including those that have happened outside of school) the concern will be taken seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that does not mean that this kind of abuse is not happening.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single or group of children. It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable at Bedford Primary School. Behaviours such as making sexual remarks, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia is not 'banter' or 'having a laugh' and will never be tolerated.

At our school if a (victim) reports an incident, our staff will

- ✔ Reassure the child that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment and nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- ✔ Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them.
- ✔ Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt.
- ✔ Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns.
- ✔ Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again.
- ✔ Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence and show sensitivity to their needs.
- ✔ Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes, and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners.
- ✔ Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed.

We recognise that the following children can be especially vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- ✔ Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- ✔ Children/young people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Trans, Questioning (LGBTQ) or who are perceived to be LGBTQ by their peers.

Sexual Violence:
Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- ✔ **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- ✔ **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- ✔ **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- ✔ **Consent:** Someone consents to vaginal, anal, or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

Sexual Harassment:
Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline.

Sexual harassment is likely to:

- ✔ Violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include:

- ✔ Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names
- ✔ Sexual 'jokes' or taunting
- ✔ Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- ✔ Online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos (see Sharing of nudes and semi nudes, Youth produced sexual imagery (Sexting), inappropriate sexual comments on social media. exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be stand alone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

Harmful sexual behaviours:
Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Harmful sexual behaviours refers to problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours which are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. For more information see NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviours. This can be found at.**Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) framework and audit.**

When considering harmful sexual behaviours, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older. However, a younger person can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them. A useful tool is the Brook_Traffic_Light_Tool (002).pdf

Harmful sexual behaviours will be considered in a child protection context.
We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and they will be offered appropriate support.

We have a clear set of values and standards (you may wish to refer to your specific values), and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The school has a Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy (amend as appropriate). The PSHE and SRE curriculum (amend as appropriate) covers the following issues according to the age and stage of development of the children: healthy and respectful relationships:

- ✔ What respectful behaviour looks like?
- ✔ Gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- ✔ Body confidence and self-esteem
- ✔ Prejudiced behaviour
- ✔ That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- ✔ Addressing cultures of sexual harassment (amend as appropriate)

Up skirting
We will ensure that all staff and children are aware of the changes to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which criminalise the act of 'up skirting'. The Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) defines 'up skirting' as: "a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or

mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks, shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders". Incidents of up skirting in the school will not be tolerated.

Responding to allegations of sexual harassment and sexual violence
If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them,

We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) and the police as required. The management of children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour is complex and Bedford Primary will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community.

Our school will complete a risk and needs assessment for all reports of sexual violence that take place both on and offline. The need for a risk and needs assessment for reports of sexual harassment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The assessment will consider:

- ✔ The victim, especially their protection and support.
- ✔ The alleged perpetrator.
- ✔ All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

See Appendix 7 Risk Assessment sexual harassment and sexual violence.

We will ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard and support the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and the school community.

We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) and the Police as required.

The DSL will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation needs help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) may be appropriate.

if a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school or college should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

Lucy Faithful Foundation provides support, advice, and information on how to prevent it, links to organisations and helplines, resources about HSB by children, internet safety, sexual development and preventing sexual abuse. **What is harmful sexual behaviour - Lucy Faithfull Foundation**

18. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly, and honestly.

We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child.

The school will, in most circumstances, endeavour to discuss all concerns about their children with parents. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances when the school will discuss concerns with Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) and/or the Police without parental knowledge. The school will, of course, always aim to maintain a positive relationship with all parents.

Our Child Protection Policy and procedures are available on request.

19. WORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS/MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

The school recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies both to ensure children's needs are met and to protect them from harm. We will endeavour to identify those children and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals (in discussion with parents) as appropriate. Information on the Early Help Assessment process is available at: Early Help (sefton.gov.uk)

Our school is part of the 'Team Around the School' initiative. With parent consent we will work with other professionals for example from early help, education, health to identify the best package to support children and their families.

Schools are not the investigating agency when there are child protection concerns and thus, the school will pass all relevant cases to the statutory agencies, which we will support in undertaking their roles. Staff should understand that alongside this, the school may have a crucial role in supporting the child whilst investigations and assessments take place.

Multi-Agency Working -The School recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will ensure that staff are enabled to attend relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Group meetings, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings and Early Help/Team around the Family meetings.

We will also work with local partners, families, and communities in our efforts to ensure our school understands and embraces our local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our children's experiences and horizons. We will help support pupils who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities, offering support and assistance from external agencies where required.

20. SUPERVISION

At Bedford Primary School, supervision provides support, coaching and training for staff and promotes the interests of children and fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision provides opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing.
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Regular staff appraisals are carried out to review their practice to ensure they improve; identify any training needs and secure opportunities for continued professional development.

Staff will be supported and supervised by their link Assistant Headteacher/Appraiser or as appropriate, the DSL team or, if appropriate to role/need, Applied Psychologies.

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for a child's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL. The DSL can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish.

21. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Effective sharing of information between practitioners and local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe. Previous Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) have highlighted that missed opportunities to record and thereby understand the significance of sharing information in a timely manner can have severe consequences for the safety and welfare of children (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 para 23).

We will adopt the information sharing principles detailed in statutory safeguarding guidance contained within:

- ✔ **DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025**
- ✔ **HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**
- ✔ **Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership policies and procedures.**

Timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. This school/college will share safeguarding information as appropriate in keeping with the principles outlined in the government guidance document, **Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (DfE 2018)**. This guidance has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces the risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their well-being.

Safeguarding and child protection information is confidential and personal. Other than the agreed communication lines in school, it is for the DSL(s) to decide what information needs to be shared, with whom, how and when, and whether consent needs to be gained for this process.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.

If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- ✔ There is no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies.
- ✔ The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

The DSL should consider that:

- ✔ Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).
- ✔ The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care.
- ✔ Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- ✔ Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system.
- ✔ Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved.
- ✔ Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.
- ✔ The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.
- ✔ If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy).

Neither the Data Protection Act 2018 nor GDPR prevent, or limit, the sharing, or withholding, of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Information which is sensitive and personal will be treated as 'special category personal data' for the purposes of compliance with GDPR.
Legal and secure information sharing between schools, Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) and other local agencies is essential for keeping children safe and ensuring they get the support they need. Information can be shared without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a at risk.

Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children. As with all data sharing, appropriate organisational and technical safeguards will be in place.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, schools are permitted to withhold children's' personal data where, for example, a child is in a refuge or other form of emergency accommodation and to provide the information would place a child at risk.

All staff are made aware that they cannot keep secrets and absolute confidentiality with children, and that if a child discloses abuse or gives information that suggests they may be at risk, this MUST be passed on to the DSL as soon as possible. The child should be told who their disclosure will be shared with and what will happen next.

22. RECORD KEEPING/CHILD PROTECTION FILE

Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing as soon as possible. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded this should be clearly stated as such.

At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures. The body map should be used in accordance with the guidance. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services e.g., CHAT team or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.

A chronology/full report of incidents can also be found on CPOMS. Staff, particularly pastoral staff, will record any minor concerns on the chronology and will take responsibility for alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead should the number of concerns rise or, in their professional judgement, become significant.

Child Protection File

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. 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.

They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in KCSiE 2025.

When children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as DSLs and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in colleges, are aware as required.

Where there is an existing risk management plan/assessment in place for behaviours that are deemed potentially harmful to the pupil or others (i.e., self-harming or harmful sexualised behaviour), this information must be shared with the destination provision prior to the pupil starting so that appropriate care and control measures can be put in place to mitigate the potential of any risk of further harm occurring. The DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a leaving, for example prior to a transfer programme.

Why recording is important.
Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is comprehensive and accurate and what the messages from previous serious case reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information. It is often when a chronology of information is pieced together that the level of concern escalates or the whole or wider picture becomes known.

We acknowledge without information being recorded it can be lost. This could be crucial information, the importance of which is not always necessarily apparent at the time. On occasions, this information could be crucial evidence to safeguard a child or be evidence in future criminal prosecutions.

Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Snr Designated Safeguarding Lead to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging their safeguarding arrangements. Original notes will be retained (but clearly identified as such) as this is a contemporaneous account; they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect.

A record will be made of all incidents where pupils have expressed racist, homophobic, extremist, or radical views which will be monitored at a senior level.

A record of the number of children open and subject to Early Help, CP, CIN and LAC concerns is maintained and shared with the governing body at least annually.

A record or data on the cohort of children having or have had a social worker and social care involvement will be maintained.

We will maintain, keep and store records, where a concern about a child has been identified in accordance with statutory guidance in KCSiE 2025.

We will ensure all our files will be available for external scrutiny, for example by a regulatory agency or because of a serious case review or audit.

23. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OR SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OR PERSON IN SCHOOL.

These procedures must be followed in any case in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including supply staff and contractors), governor, visiting professional or volunteer has met the harm test, this includes where an adult has:

✔ Behaved in a way that has harmed a or may have harmed a child

- ✔ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- ✔ Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- ✔ Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. **(This includes any behaviour that may have happened outside of school that might make the individual unsuitable to work with children. This is known as transferable risk.)**

All adults working in school have a duty to disclose to the head teacher/principal (or chair of governors where appropriate), where their relationships and associations both within and outside of the workplace (including online) may have implications for safeguarding children in school.

Examples of behaviours that would warrant an allegation or safeguarding concern by a member of staff could include:

- ✔ Physical, for example intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects or rough physical handling.
- ✔ Emotional, for example intimidation, belittling, scapegoating, sarcasm, lack of respect for children's rights, and attitudes which discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, sex, disability, or sexuality.
- ✔ Sexual, for example sexualised behaviour towards pupils, grooming, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape, sending inappropriate messages through social media and other technologies.
- ✔ Neglect which may include failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to carry out appropriate/proper risk assessment etc.

A safeguarding complaint that meets the above criteria must be reported to the Head teacher ("case manager") immediately. If the complaint involves the head teacher, then the next most senior member of staff and the chair of governors must be informed. Head teacher Ruth Braithwaite/next most senior member of staff (named as case manager) will follow the processes outlined in this section.

Where a Headteacher determines that a safeguarding allegation does not meet the harm threshold in line with the criteria above they will refer the matter to be managed in line with Part 4 KCSiE 2025 by a designated manager with appropriate safeguarding training. It is important for Head teachers to carefully consider who in school is best placed to manage concerns that do not meet the harm threshold and ensure appropriate action is taken given the sensitive and confidential nature of the information relating to staff over time. In many cases Head teachers may decide to retain this role if they have appropriate safeguarding training.

All staff must fully understand that any adult behaviours that deviate from the Guidance for Safer Working Practice, including inappropriate conduct outside of work are a concern, even if they are low-level. Staff in our school can share low-level concerns confidentially.

23.1 Low-level concerns

Definition of low-level concerns
The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority (LADO)

Low-level concerns are concerns that do not meet the harm test/allegations threshold. Examples of such behaviour as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024 include:

- Being over familiar with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- Humiliating pupils
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
- Not sharing/reporting low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:
- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per Part 4 section 2 of KCSIE 2022
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any areas for improvement in the school's safeguarding training
- Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher (or their delegate) will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff code of conduct and advice from HR or, potentially LADO. Our procedures have been developed in response to updated KCSIE guidance.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance.

If we are in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult out Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The case manager should ensure that the child is not at risk and where appropriate ensure that the child is referred to the Sefton CHAT team.

The case manager should gather as much information about the alleged incident as necessary in order to establish whether there is substance to the allegation. In situations where the case manager determines that the harm test has not been met the case manager must ensure that there is a clear record of the incident, include any actions (including whether any Schools Personnel Team/ HR advice had been sought and actioned) taken to address the concern raised. This will be completed on the Low-level concerns form (See Appendix 8 **Low level concern form 2024.docx**)

This record must be kept confidential, stored securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR (2018). All low-level concern records are kept in accordance with our Trust retention policy.

In situations where the case manager has sufficient information to suggest that the harm test/allegations threshold has been met, the case manager must use the Local Authority Designated

Officer (LADO) notification form **(see Appendix 9a LADO notification form)** in order to assess the level of concern, **prior to contacting the LADO**. As part of this initial consideration, the case manager should consult with their school's HR Advisor/provider/contact or in the case of a supply member of staff the supply agency safeguarding lead/senior manager. The completed LADO notification form must be sent to SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk **within one working day of the allegation being made**. This will assist the case manager and HR/supply agency senior manager in consultation with the LADO to decide on the most appropriate course of action. This includes when to inform the member of staff of the concerns raised. Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it.

The case manager **must not** carry out an investigation or **directly interview** an individual about whom there is a concern until the above process has been duly completed, and relevant partners have been consulted.

A multi-agency allegations management strategy meeting may be arranged to look at the allegation in its widest context. The case manager must attend this meeting, which will be arranged by the LADO. All issues must be recorded, and the outcome reached must be noted to ensure closure.

In many cases it may be appropriate to provide further training and support to staff/volunteers and ensure that they are clear about the expectations for their conduct.

In more serious cases, allegations may be investigated under the formal disciplinary procedures and, where allegations are upheld, formal warnings issued as well as specific training and support. In cases where children/young people may be at further risk and/or evidence/witnesses may be compromised and/or the allegations are so serious that they may, if upheld, constitute gross misconduct, suspension of the member of staff/volunteer may be appropriate and should be considered in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy.

Any staff/volunteers who are dismissed by the school for gross misconduct or cumulative misconduct relating to safeguarding of children/young people will be referred to the DBS for consideration of barring. Similarly, where the school has a reasonable belief that the member of staff/volunteer would have been dismissed by the school had they been employed at the time of the conclusion of investigations, they will be referred to the DBS. The school will keep written records of all the above. Teaching staff may also be referred to the TRA.

Early years providers add:
We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

LADO Contact: Tracey Holyhead 0151 934 3783
Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they can contact:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline 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 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

24. WHISTLEBLOWING

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Adults working in the school may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or for fear of harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Staff must remember that it is often the most vulnerable who is targeted. These children need adults they can trust to safeguard their welfare.

Reasons for whistleblowing:

- ✔ Everyone has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- ✔ To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- ✔ To protect or reduce risks to others.
- ✔ To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistleblowing?

- ✔ Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control.
- ✔ Disrupting the work or project.
- ✔ Fear of getting it wrong.
- ✔ Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- ✔ Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- ✔ Voice concerns, suspicions, or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- ✔ Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is causing concern and why.
- ✔ Approach the Designated Safeguarding Lead - Lucy Gordon/another senior leader (as appropriate)
- ✔ If the concern is related to the Head teacher, the Chair of Governors should be contacted or, if it is felt that the issue needs to be reported to someone outside the school, contact Sefton CHAT team
- ✔ Staff should ensure they get a satisfactory response - do not let matters rest. If a staff member feels their genuine concerns are not being addressed, the issue should be referred to Sefton CHAT team
- ✔ Ideally, concerns should be put in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, and places wherever possible.

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- ✔ The individual reporting the concerns will be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- ✔ The employer has a responsibility to protect individual members of staff from harassment or victimisation.
- ✔ No action will be taken against an individual if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- ✔ Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Self-reporting:
There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support:
It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from senior managers, our Trust HT ream and/or your professional or trade union. . Whistleblowing-Policy.pdf

25. THE USE OF 'REASONABLE FORCE' IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

At our school there may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.
When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), mental health or with medical conditions, our school will consider the risks and carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. We will also consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and their Public Sector Equality Duty.

At our school/as needed we are committed to planning positive and proactive behaviour management and support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour supportive

steps/plans/visual supports for more vulnerable children and agreeing them with parents and carers.

Update policy from 1.4.26 can be found **here**
Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools (1).pdf
In line with updated DfE guidance, groups of staff will be trained on an annual basis.

26. USE OF SCHOOL/COLLEGES PREMISES FOR NON SCHOOL/COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

When services or activities are provided by the governing body of our school under the direct supervision or management of our staff all arrangements for child protection and safeguarding will apply.

Our school will seek assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe including a child protection policy when the premises are hired, leased, and rented out to organisations who provide activities and services and who are not part of the school.

If our school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, we will follow our school child protection/safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as we would with any safeguarding allegation. Procedures set out in section 24 of this policy will be followed.

We will inspect all associated documentation and ensure the organisation will liaise with the school when any concerns are raised. We will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

27. COMPLAINTS

Our school has a published complaints procedure available to parents/carers and for anyone across the school community who wishes to report concerns. Any concerns that are related to an allegation against a member of staff including volunteers and contractors will be dealt with under the Managing allegations against staff procedures that are in place.

28. USEFUL CONTACTS:

NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Sefton CHAT Team	0151 934 4013
Sefton FAST Team	0151 934 4545
Out of Hours Service	0151 934 3555
PREVENT (Single point of contact) Chris White	0151 934 3370
Merseyside Police	101 / Emergency 999
Local Authority Designated Officer Tracey Holyhead	0151 934 3783
Education Safeguarding Tracy McKeating	0151 934 3359
Children Missing Education Co-ordinator Clare Johannsen	0151 934 3181
CAMHS (single point of access)	0151 282 4527
Bully Busters	0800 169 6928
Sefton Women & Children's Aid (SWACA)	0151 922 8606

OPERATION ENCOMPASS - **Pippa Wilcox**	Phillippa.Wilcox@merseyside.police.uk
Independent domestic abuse advisors (IDVA)	0151 934 5142
VENUS	0151 474 4744
Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre [RASA] Sefton	0151 558 1801
Parenting 2000	01704 380047 / 0151 932 1163
Housing Options	0151 934 3541
Change Grow Live drug and alcohol service Bootle/Southport	**0151 203 9755** Sefton.Services@cgl.org.uk
LSCB Business Manager – Tracy Overs	0151 934 4706
LSCB Administrator Donna Atkinson	0151 934 4706
SENDIASS Barnardo's	Telephone on 0333 323 8003. Email sefton.sendiass@barnardos.org.uk

Contacts for children who go to school in Sefton but live in neighbouring local authorities.

Local Authority	**Telephone number**	**Out of hours**
Liverpool Care line	0151 233 3700	0151 233 3700 (same as Care line)
Knowsley MASH	0151 443 2600	0151 443 2600 (same as MASH)
Lancashire Care Connect	0300 123 6720	0300 123 6722

Appendix 1: STATUTORY FRAMEWORK KEY STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Bedford Primary School will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the Governance Handbook.

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school

The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

Statutory Guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism

The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination.

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium 2021)

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and UK Council for Internet Safety 2020)

Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) (DfE, 2021b)

Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE September 2016)

When to call the police – Guidance for schools and colleges (NPCC – 2020)

Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/16/contents/enacted

Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Schools and colleges are under a statutory duty to cooperate with the published Sefton Strategic Safeguarding arrangements.

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children

This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. (DfE 2021)

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Appendix 2: SAFER RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT VETTING

Recruitment and selection process [Policies and Procedures | Southport Learning Trust](#) **-** our Trust-wide policy can be found here

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Advertising

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

- Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account

Application forms

Our application forms will:

- Include a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
- Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we may ask for includes:
    - ✔ If they have a criminal history
    - ✔ Whether they are included on the barred list
    - ✔ Whether they are prohibited from teaching

- ✔ Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
- ✔ Any relevant overseas information
- ✔ If they are known to the policy and children's local authority social care and
- ✔ If they have been disqualified from providing childcare

- Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that we may carry out these checks as part of our due diligence process.

Seeking references and checking employment history

Wherever possible, we will obtain references before the interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed - prior to this any offer would be subject to receipt of satisfactory references.

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made.

Pre-appointment vetting checks

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
    - ✔ For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants
    - ✔ For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach
- Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

* Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. When we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. When we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. When we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK

- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Appendix 12: Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. (LCSPRs)

Key Findings

- Limited evidence of professional curiosity
- Failure to recognise the impact on the children of the hostility and aggression displayed within the family
- Shortcomings in single and multi-agency practice, with a tendency to focus on what was observable, rather than taking a more analytical approach
- The lived experience of the children was not understood
- Early recognition and identification of the signs of neglect was lacking
- Little exploration of the link between the individual child and joint histories of the adults involved in the children's lives
- Communication between different professionals, agencies and organisations was variable
- The risk of harm to the children was not effectively assessed
- The impact of the family and children's social isolation was not recognised
- Insufficient information was not gathered about important aspects of the family's living arrangements and daily life experiences
- Relationships between family members was not understood
- Professionals did not consider an array of missed health appointments as an indicator of neglect
- No evidence of formal professional challenge when decisions reached were not collectively agreed within the Child Protection process
- Differing expectations between professionals of what information can be shared between agencies

Lessons

- Actions agreed at strategy meetings should be understood in relation to Child Protection enquiries
- Using the Graded Care Profile (GCP) assessment tool will support the early recognition and identification of signs of neglect
- Partner agencies must contribute to the decision-making process before the Children in Need (CIN) plan is ended
- Professionals should follow the SSCP Escalation Procedure for formal challenge.
- Information sharing between agencies should be shared willingly and legally.
- The impact of drug misuse is a significant aspect of assessment of need and risk of abuse or neglect.
- Professionals must consider the link between children's tooth decay and/or missed medical appointments as an alert for neglect.
- Professionals must follow their duties and responsibilities in responding specifically to the needs of an individual, where (learning) disability is known.
- Professionals must take time and be given the opportunity, to reflect on their practice through professional supervision

Other useful documents:

Prevent National Referral Form 2024 (002).pdf

Liverpool Prevent referral form.docx

Liverpool guide to making a Prevent referral.docx

Merseyside Police Cyberchoices Referral Form.docx

Flow chart - Pupil Leaving Premises.pdf