

# Child protection and safeguarding policy

## Hamilton Academy



Date of last central office review:	NOV 20223	Review Period:	1 year (minimum)
Date of next central office review:	SEPT 2024	Owner:	STEPH MORAN
Date of next school level review:			
Type of policy:	ESPRIT Policy	Local Community Governing Committee	Recommends school policy for TRUST Board approval
		Trust Board:	Board approves ESPRIT Policy

### REVIEW TIMETABLE

The Policy will be reviewed annually, as set out below:	
Policy reviewed centrally	JULY 2023
Policy tailored by individual schools	SEPTEMBER 2023
Policy ratified by Local Governing Bodies	SEPTEMBER 2023
Policy approved by the Trust Board	SEPTEMBER 2023
Implementation of Trust Policy	SEPTEMBER 2023

<b>Approved by:</b>	Trustees	<b>Date:</b> 15.12.2022
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	November 2023	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	November 2024	

## Contents

<b>REVIEW TIMETABLE</b> .....	1
Important contacts .....	3
1. Aims .....	5
2. Legislation and statutory guidance .....	5
3. Definitions .....	6
4. Equality statement .....	7
5. Roles and responsibilities .....	8
6. Confidentiality .....	11
7. Recognising abuse and taking action.....	13
8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology.....	24
9. Notifying parents or carers .....	26
10. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues .....	26
11. Pupils with a social worker .....	26
12. Looked-after and previously looked-after children .....	27
13. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies .....	27
14. Record-keeping .....	27
15. Training .....	29
16. Monitoring arrangements.....	30
17. Links with other policies.....	30
Appendix 1: types of abuse .....	31
Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures .....	32
Appendix 3: allegations of abuse made against staff.....	36
Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues .....	43

---

## Important contacts

### Internal

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designed Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)</b>	<b>DSL for the School</b> Mrs Y Glaister TEL: 01782 234420 EMAIL: <a href="mailto:yglaister@espritmat.org">yglaister@espritmat.org</a>  <b>Deputy DSL</b> Mrs C Robinson EMAIL: <a href="mailto:crobinson@espritmat.org">crobinson@espritmat.org</a>  <b>Designated E-Safety Lead</b> Miss M Bailey EMAIL: <a href="mailto:mbailey@espritmat.org">mbailey@espritmat.org</a>
<b>Designated Teachers for Looked After Children</b>	Mrs C Robinson EMAIL: <a href="mailto:crobinson@espritmat.org">crobinson@espritmat.org</a>
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Y Glaister TEL: 01782 234420 EMAIL: <a href="mailto:yglaister@espritmat.org">yglaister@espritmat.org</a>
<b>Local Governing Body (LGB)</b>	<b>Nominated Safeguarding Governor of LGB</b> Mrs D Wilshaw TEL: 01782 234379 EMAIL: <a href="mailto:nbc@espritmat.org">nbc@espritmat.org</a>  <b>Nominated E-Safety Governor of LGB</b> Mrs D Wilshaw TEL: 01782 234379 EMAIL: <a href="mailto:nbc@espritmat.org">nbc@espritmat.org</a>
<b>ESPRIT Trust</b>	<b>Chair of ULT</b> Paul Atkins EMAIL: <a href="mailto:patkins@espritmat.org">patkins@espritmat.org</a>  <b>Head of Safeguarding</b> Stephanie Moran CEO EMAIL: <a href="mailto:smoran@espritmat.org">smoran@espritmat.org</a>

### External

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS
-------------------	--------------------------

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS
<b>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</b>	Children's advice and duty service (CHAD) on 01782 235100 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6pm). Out of hours emergency duty team on 01782 234234.
<b>NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline</b>	Weston House, 42 Curtain Road London
<b>Disclosure and Barring Service</b>	DBS customer services, PO Box 3961, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 4HF, United Kingdom TEL: 03000 200 190 EMAIL: customerservices@dbb.gov.uk
<b>Teaching Regulation Agency</b>	TEL: 0207 593 5393 EMAIL: <a href="mailto:misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk">misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk</a>
<b>OFSTED Safeguarding Children</b>	TEL: (0300 12344155) EMAIL: <a href="mailto:Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a>
<b>Local authority designated officer (LADO)</b>	John Hanlon TEL: 01782 233342 / 07942676060 EMAIL: John.Hanlon@stoke.gov.uk
<b>Local Authority helpline</b>	Children's advice and duty service (CHAD) on 01782 235100 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6pm). Out of hours emergency duty team on 01782 234234.
<b>Support and Advice about Extremism</b>	Police Becky.murphy@staffordshire.gov.uk TEL: 01785 238239 EMERGENCY: 999 NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER: 101 EMAIL: prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk  Staffordshire Police Prevent Team TEL: 01785 232054  Department for Education NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER: 020 7340 7264 EMAIL: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS
Channel helpline	020 7340 7264

## 1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- › Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- › All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- › Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), and the Governance Handbook. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- › 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
- › The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") 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

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

- › **This policy also takes into account the procedures and practice of Stoke on Trent local authority and the published safeguarding arrangements set out by the SSCB safeguarding partners <https://www.staffsscb.org.uk/> . The Local Governing body and their senior leadership teams, especially their designated safeguarding leads, will:**
  - make themselves aware of and follow their local arrangements (including the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment)
  - ensure this is reflected in their own policies and procedures
  - supply information as requested by the three safeguarding partners
  - work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm

### 3. Definitions

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

- › Protecting children from maltreatment
- › 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
- › Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains all forms of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

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). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- › The local authority (LA) - Stoke
- › A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA
- › The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but 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 be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, 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.

#### 4. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- › Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions (see section 10)
- › Have a mental health need
- › Are young carers
- › Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behavior, including gang involvement and association with organized crime groups and county lines
- › Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- › May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- › Have English as an additional language
- › Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- › Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- › Are at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- › Are at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage Are asylum seekers
- › Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health and domestic abuse Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12), privately fostered or have returned to their home from care.
- › Are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day Whose parent/carers has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated
- › Have a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

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 system
- › Planned programme of safety (including e-safety) and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - 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 child on child abuse including sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable
  - Online bullying and relationships
  - Privacy and security

### 5.1 All staff

All staff will:

- › Read and understand **at least** part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually
- › Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have read and understood the guidance
- › Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents. This includes making parents aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- › Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBT to speak out and share their concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- › Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and [deputy/deputies], the behaviour policy, online safety policy and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education



- › The early help assessment process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- › The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- › What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused, exploited or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM. How to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals and to ensure they never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about any form of abuse.
- › The signs of all forms of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- › The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- › The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online as well as at risk of harm from other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse) both inside and outside of school and online.
- › The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by other children
- › What to look for to identify children who need help or protection and be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected.

Section 15 and appendix 4 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

## **5.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Mrs Y Glaister, Principal. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

For concerns out of school hours please contact LA contact from previous page.

When the DSL is absent, the deputy Mrs C Robinson, Deputy Principal will act as cover.

If the DSL and deputy are not available, Mrs R Orbell, Safeguarding and Attendance Officer will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out the role effectively:

- › Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- › Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- › Contribute to the assessment of children
- › Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- › Have a good understanding of all forms of abuse including child-on-child abuse

The DSL will also:

- › Keep the headteacher informed of any issues
- › Keep accurate records of all concerns, discussion and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.
- › Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate
- › Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- › 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

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy are set out in their job description.

### **5.3 The governing board**

The governing board will:

- › Hold a strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements and ensure compliance with their duties under legislation.
- › Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- › Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- › Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- › Appoint a link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL
- › Receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction.
- › We ensure:
  - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
  - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
  - The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the IT filters and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns
  - The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure
  - That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised

- › Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
  - Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
  - Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
  - Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see appendix 3).

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

#### **5.4 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- › Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
  - Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
  - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- › Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- › Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- › Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, and updating the content of the training regularly
- › Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
- › Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- › Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- › Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person

#### **5.5 Virtual school heads**

Virtual school heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils with a social worker.

Our school staff will identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. Virtual school heads, DSLs, SENCOs, social workers, mental health leads and others.

### **6. Confidentiality**

We believe that:

- › Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- › Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- › The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- › If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: 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 child at risk
- › 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 the DSL will 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)
- › Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 14, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

Consent: Whilst professionals should in general discuss any concerns with the child, their parents / carers and where possible seek their agreement to making referrals to ChAD, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place the child or others at increased risk of suffering significant harm. Consent / agreement is not required for child protection referrals; however, you, as the referring

professional, would need to where possible discuss with and inform parents or carers that you are making a referral as stated above, unless by alerting them you could be putting that child or others at risk

## 7. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

### 7.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

Where there is a safeguarding issue, the Academy will work in accordance with the principles outlined in the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board Interagency policies and procedures:

- A child’s welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded
- Each child is unique. We are child-centered, taking account of a child’s cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs
- Children, parents and other carers are made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances. Parents will be advised about our Safeguarding Policy on admission to our Academy (e.g. in ‘welcome’ meetings). The policy is also available on the website.
- If a child is at risk of significant harm, we have a duty to share information with Stoke on Trent Children’s Social Care (CSC) or, other authorities as necessary.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It will only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned (and/or those with parental responsibility) unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child or promote their welfare. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict “need to know” basis. For further guidance please refer to the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board’s joint Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners
- Professionals are mindful of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do, however this should not override the safety and welfare of the child.
- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers are plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology are explained in simple terms.
- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation.
- In order to gain the child’s voice, Signs of Safety work may be completed with the child by a professional with whom the child has a good relationship. This will be done in a child- friendly way, and staff have received appropriate training in order to facilitate this.

- We deliver regular safety lessons (including e-safety), PSHE lessons and RHE (Relationships, Health Education) and teach the children about positive relationships, developing resilience, how to keep themselves safe in school and out of school, online safety and how to contribute to wider society.
- Early intervention in providing support services will utilise the Stoke-on-Trent Early

Help Assessment (EHA) and if necessary an assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989). This is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

## **7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you**

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- › Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- › Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- › Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- › Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- › Write up your conversation on CPOMS as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- › Sign and date the write-up and inform the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

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.

## **7.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM**

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4 of this policy.

**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 children's social care as appropriate.

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

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out they should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

Our Multi Academy Trust recognises its duty to protect children and young people against the practice female genital mutilation and to immediately report to the police, under section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) where it is known that FGM has been carried out on a child. We will follow the Safeguarding Children Board procedure which can be found at:-

<http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/safeguardingchildren/professionalsfolder/procedure-manuals/f-vulnerable-cyp.en>

Our staff will be vigilant to look for signs that may indicate FGM is planned. These include:

- Child talking about preparing for a special ceremony, procedure or celebration either abroad or in the UK;
- Family taking a long trip abroad;
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (examples include Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan;)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM;
- Child talks about going to be 'cut'
- Child talks about preparing for marriage or preparing to become a woman; (NB – families travelling abroad for long holidays is not in itself unusual, and not all families from the countries above will practice FGM.)

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities;
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued;
- Bladder or menstrual problems;
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable;
- Complaining about pain between the legs;
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about;
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the peers;
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity;
- Repeated urinal tract infection;
- Disclosure.

Where a member of staff sees one or more of these indicators, or otherwise has cause for concern, this information will be recorded and passed on without delay to the DSL following usual safeguarding procedures. Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation can be found at:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

NSPCC FGM helpline can be contacted on 0800 028 3550 or use the NSPCC email address to request support at: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

#### **7.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)**

Figure 1 below, before section 7.7, illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. This is the most appropriate person to initiate any referral. Concerns are recorded on CPOMS and the appropriate staff members are alerted to these concerns. This allows for prompt action to be taken in order to safeguard the child. For staff without access to CPOMS, a written concern form is completed and is then given to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) who will then make the decision whether a referral is needed to the ChAD Team; the child's existing social worker or implement an Early Help Assessment.

If the child lives outside of Stoke-on-Trent, the matter will be referred by the DSL to the relevant Children's Social Care team in the area where the child resides.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care (CHAD). You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

Our safeguarding approach expects all staff will be vigilant and follow the robust procedures in place. Children will be placed on the vulnerable register following any concerns under the CPOMS category of Watching Brief.

Further concerns will be recorded in order to offer support in the form of an Early Help.

#### **Early help assessment**

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

We obtain parental consent as part of the Early Help Assessment and refer to Stoke on Trent Threshold Criteria for the Guide to Levels of Need for Children, Young People and Families and the Joint SCB Information sharing guidance for practitioners for clarity over what to do if consent is refused. We keep a written record on CPOMS of when Early Help is offered and refused. The child is also placed on the vulnerable register.

#### **Referral**



If it is appropriate to refer the concern to the local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support a staff member to do so.

If a staff member makes a referral directly (see section 7.1), they must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded on CPOMS.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

### **Child in Need**

A 'Child in Need' referral is considered under the Children Act 1989 for any 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. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989.

If the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) considers that the welfare concerns indicate that a 'Child in Need' referral is appropriate, he/she will speak with parents / carers and the child where appropriate and obtain their consent for referral to Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD)

- In the few cases where parents / carers have expressed an unwillingness to agree to the assessment process, the MASH consultation line (for Stoke on Trent) will help to manage this difficulty.
- Staff are invited to participate in Child in Need (CIN) meetings convened by CSC when children are deemed to require section 17 services.
- Some children in 'acute need' (see SSCB Threshold guidance/ Stoke on Trent Guide to the levels of Need) may require Child in Need Section 17 support.

### **Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm – Section 47- Child Protection**

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect.

### **7.5 If you have concerns about extremism**

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- › Think someone is in immediate danger
- › Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- › See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

## **7.6 If you have a mental health concern**

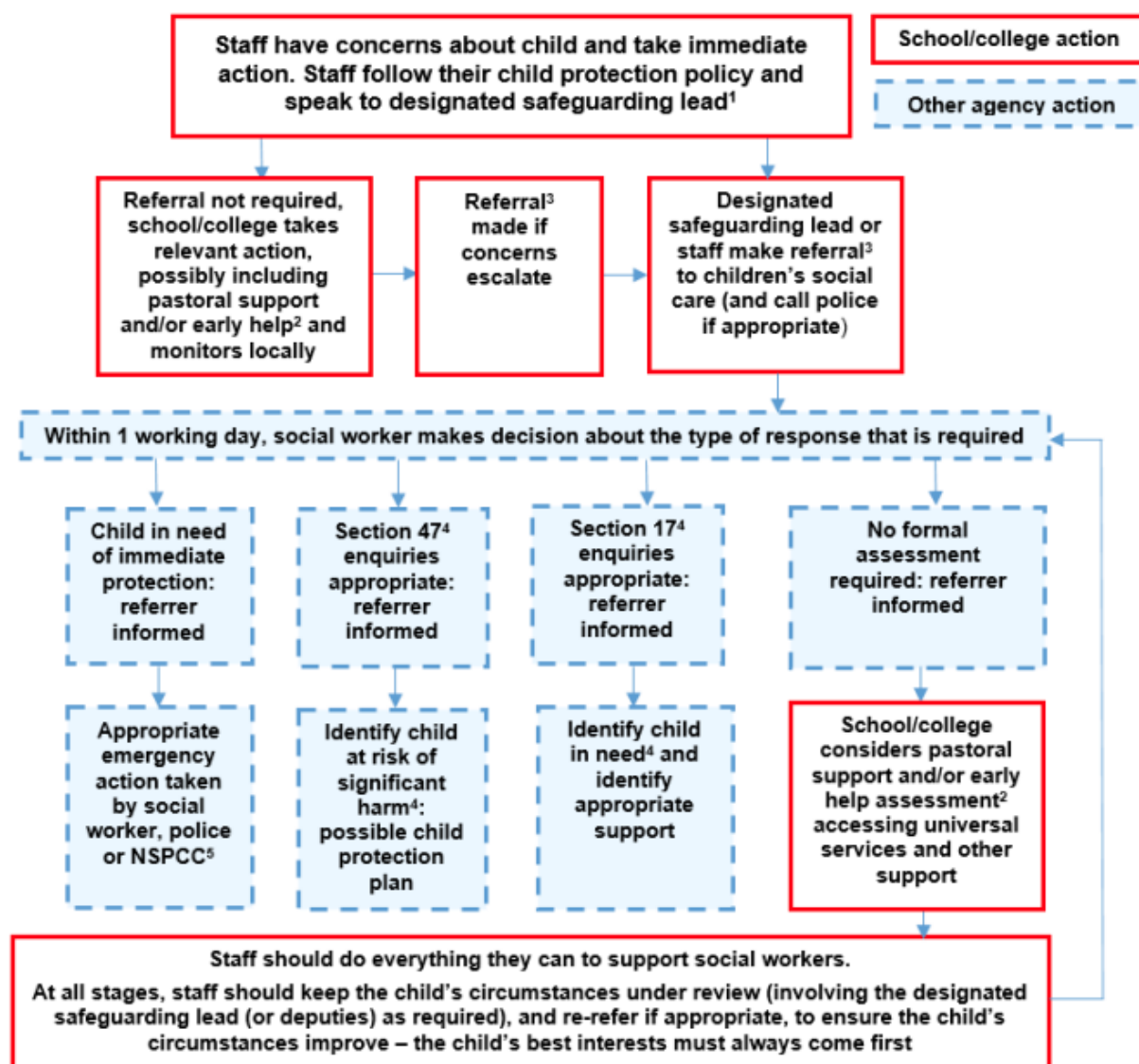
Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action. (Also see our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for further information).

Figure 1: Actions where there are concerns about a child



## 7.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the chair of governors.

The headteacher/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 3, if appropriate.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the school or college low-level concerns policy. Further details can be found in Part four of this guidance.

## 7.8 Allegations of child on child abuse

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

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

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- › Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- › Could put pupils in the school at risk
- › Is violent
- › Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- › Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

See appendix 4 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

#### **Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse**

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- › You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- › The DSL will contact the local authority children’s social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- › The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- › The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

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.

Keeping Children Safe in Education paragraph 35, references a list of likely child-on-child abuse, staff will refer to this as required.

#### **Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse**

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- › Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- › Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys

- › Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- › Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 7.10 below)
- › Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- › 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
- › Consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- › Ensure staff are trained to understand:
  - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
  - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
  - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report
    - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
    - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
  - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
  - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
  - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
  - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
  - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s) and will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn’t (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- › Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or LA children’s social care to determine this
- › There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

## **7.9 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (‘sexting’)**

### **Your responsibilities when responding to an incident**

If staff members 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.

Staff members must **not**:

- › View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery themselves, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if they have already viewed the imagery by accident, they 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

All staff should explain that they need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

### **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 pupil(s)
- › If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children’s social care
- › 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 on the best 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 pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- › If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- › Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children’s social care if:

- › The incident involves an adult

- › There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special 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 pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- › The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person 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 children's social care. 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 social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care 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 pupil at risk of harm.

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done by either calling 999, 101 or by contacting the local PCSO, depending on the concern.

Should a member of the public raise a concern to a member of staff, regarding a pupil who attends the academy, they will be advised by staff to call the police themselves, using 999, to share their concern. Our school has effective links with local police services and will call whichever service the DSL determines to be most appropriate.

### **Recording incidents**

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 14 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our relationships and sex education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- › What it is
- › How it is most likely to be encountered
- › The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- › Issues of legality
- › The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- › Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- › The receipt of such images

This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

#### **7.10 Reporting systems for our pupils**

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- › Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse
- › Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils
- › Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

#### **7.11 Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will follow procedures outlined in our attendance, punctuality and late collection policy.

#### **7.12 Missing pupils**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will follow procedures outlined in our attendance, punctuality and late collection policy.

### **8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology**

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- › Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- › Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- › Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- › Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

#### **The 4 key categories of risk**

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:



- › **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism
- › **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- › **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- › **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

**To meet our aims and address the risks above we will:**

- › Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
- › Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year
- › Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- › Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
  - Staff will use school technology, when capturing and uploading child observations of learning onto Tiny Tracker.
- › Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors 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
- › Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- › Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- › Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems and review their effectiveness regularly.
- › Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community

## **9. Notifying parents or carers**

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of child on child abuse, 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 local authority children's social care 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's 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)

## **10. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues**

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, and are 3 times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- › Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- › Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- › The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- › Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils.

Any abuse involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO.

## **11. Pupils with a social worker**

Pupils 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 and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- › Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- › The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

## **12. Looked-after and previously looked-after children**

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- › Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- › The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher, Mrs C Robinson, Deputy Principal who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

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 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

## **13. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies**

### **13.1 Complaints against staff**

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3).

### **13.2 Other complaints**

Other complaints will be handled in accordance with our procedures set out in our complaints policy.

### **13.3 Whistle-blowing**

We have a separate whistle-blowing policy that covers concerns regarding the way the school safeguards pupils – including poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures.

## **14. Record-keeping**

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If in any doubt about whether to record something, staff members will discuss it with the DSL.

Records will 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

Concerns and referrals will be recorded on CPOMS for each child.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse will be retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- › **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or within
- › **The first 5 days** of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

#### **14.1 Further information about our safeguarding record-keeping arrangements:**

- › Records are electronic on CPOMS unless a member of staff does not have access then paper based systems will be used.
- › Paper records are held in locked cabinets in main office or safeguarding room. Majority of records are stored in CPOMS.
- › CPOMS is password security protected. All other records are in locked cabinets
- › Safeguarding information will be retained for 25 years.
- › We share information as the ultimate aim is to keep pupils safe.

In addition:

- › Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-appointment checks
- › Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

#### **14.2 Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in using the Inventory system and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- › 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 other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. 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 pupils or staff.

## **15. Training**

### **15.1 All staff**

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- › Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- › Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- › Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
  - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
  - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

### **15.2 The DSL and deputy DSL**

The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

### **15.3 Governors**

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- › Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- › Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

### **15.4 Recruitment – interview panels**

At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See appendix 2 of this policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

### **15.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families**

All staff who have contact with children and families have regular meetings with their line managers which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

## **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Executive board. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## **17. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- › Positive behaviour
- › Staff code of conduct, including mobile phone use
- › Complaints
- › Health and safety
- › Attendance
- › E-safety
- › Online teaching
- › Equality
- › Relationships and health education
- › First aid and medical care
- › Curriculum
- › Privacy notices

- › Whistle blowing
- › Freedom of information

**These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.**

### **Appendix 1: types of abuse**

**Abuse**, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

**Physical abuse** 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.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- › Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- › 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
- › Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- › Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**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
- › Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- › Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

- › Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- › Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- › Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures**

### **Recruitment and selection process**

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 safer recruitment policy

### **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 will 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
- › 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.

### **Seeking references and checking employment history**

We will obtain references before 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

### **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.

- › 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. Where 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.

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. Where 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. Where 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, Trustees and members**

All trustees, local governors and members 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). [Section 128 checks are only required for local governors if they have retained or been delegated any management responsibilities.]
- › 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.

### **Pupils staying with host families**

Where the school makes arrangements for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

## **Appendix 3: allegations of abuse made against staff**

### **Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold**

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- › Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- › Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- › Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- › Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### **Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved**

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- › Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- › Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- › Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- › Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted
- › Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the academy trust.

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's personnel adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

### **Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations**

- › **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- › **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- › **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

- › **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- › **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

### Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- › Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- › Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- › Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- › Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- › Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care
- › **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- › **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- › **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- › Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. This includes trade union representatives, or a colleague.
- › Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if

applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice

- › Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- › Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

### **Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff**

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- › We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- › The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- › We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- › We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

### **Timescales**

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- › Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- › If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- › If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

## **Specific actions**

### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

### **Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated**

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

### **Individuals returning to work after suspension**

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

### **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

If a report is:

- › Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- › Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

### **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is:

- › Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- › Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality



- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

### **Record-keeping**

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

### **References**

When providing employer references, we will:

- › Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- › Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

### **Learning lessons**

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

### **Non-recent allegations**

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

## **Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold**

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- › Suspicion
- › Complaint
- › Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- › Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- › Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

### **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

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- › Being overly friendly with children
- › Having favourites
- › Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- › Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- › Humiliating pupils

### **Sharing low-level concerns**

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially 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 section 7.7 of this policy

- › 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 weakness in the school's safeguarding system

### **Responding to low-level concerns**

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher 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 Principal 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. The Principal will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the Deputy DSL.

### **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 as described in section 1 of this appendix, 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

## **Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues**

### **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. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: [www.actionagainstabduction.org](http://www.actionagainstabduction.org) and [www.clevernevergoes.org](http://www.clevernevergoes.org).

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners

### **County lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. 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.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals

### **Children and the court system**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds. The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

### **Children missing from education**

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child 144 criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

### **Children with family members in prison**

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National

Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

## **Cybercrime**

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

## **Domestic abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long

lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

### **Operation Encompass**

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy)) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. More information about the scheme and how schools can become involved is available on the Operation Encompass website.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

### **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

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

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives
- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- Home : Operation Encompass (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)

### **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be 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 household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this



does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.

### **Mental health**

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education. More information can be found in the Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance, colleges may also wish to follow this guidance as best practice. Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See Every Mind Matters for links to all materials and lesson plans.

### **Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism**

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK

### **Preventing radicalisation**

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. 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 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.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology, there are possible indicators that should be taken into consideration alongside other factors and



contexts. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home). However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) making a Prevent referral. Although not a cause for concern on their own, possible indicators when taken into consideration alongside other factors or context may be a sign of being radicalised. Further information and a list of such indicators can be found at Radicalisation and Extremism - Examples and Behavioural Traits ([educateagainsthate.com](http://educateagainsthate.com))

### **The Prevent duty**

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism 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 deputies) and other senior leaders in schools should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in colleges should familiarise themselves with the Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales. The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

The school's or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

### **Channel**

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme, and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance.

### **Additional support**

The Department has published further advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.

- Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

Educate Against Hate, is a government website designed to support school teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help school staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

For advice specific to further education, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings to comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals.

The ETF Online Learning environment provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

London Grid for Learning have also produced useful resources on Prevent (Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net)).

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Detailed advice is available in Part five of this guidance.

### **Serious Violence**

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit sets out the evidence for what works in preventing young people from becoming involved in violence.

Home Office funded Violence Reduction Units (VRU) operate in the police force areas across England and Wales that have the highest volumes of serious violence, as measured by hospital admissions for injury with a sharp object. A list of these locations can be found [here](#). As the strategic co-ordinators for local violence prevention, each VRU is mandated to include at least one local education representative within their Core Membership group, which is responsible for setting the direction for VRU activity. Schools and educational partners within these areas are encouraged to reach out to their local VRU, either directly or via their education Core Member, to better ingrain partnership working to tackle serious violence across local areas and ensure a joined up approach to young people across the risk spectrum.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act will introduce early in 2023 a new duty on a range of specified authorities, such as the police, local government, youth offending teams, health and probation services, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. Educational authorities and prisons/youth custody authorities will be under a separate duty to co-operate with core duty holders when asked, and there will be a requirement for the partnership to consult with all such institutions in their area.

The Duty is not intended to replace or duplicate existing safeguarding duties. Local partners may choose to meet the requirements of the Duty through existing multi-agency structures, such as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, providing the correct set of partners are involved.

### **So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)**

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

### **Actions**

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers that requires a different approach (see below).

### **FGM**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

#### **FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers**

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in

England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information.

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school’s or college’s designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and involve local authority children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: FGM Fact Sheet.

Further information can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and the FGM resource pack particularly section 13.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into 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. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (pages 75-80 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email [fmu@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fcdo.gov.uk).

England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM.