

---

---

Fylde Coast Academy Trust



## Mereside Primary Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Version & Issue Date	Version 16
Electronic copies of this plan are available from	FCAT Governors' Services
Hard copies of this plan are available from:	FCAT Governors' Services
Review frequency:	Annually / as required
Date of next review:	September 2026
Person responsible for Policy / review:	Governance Lead
Approval by FCAT Board of Trustees:	August 2025

## CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
1 Aims	2
2 Key Contacts	2
3 Introduction	5
4 Scope of the Policy	6
5 Definition of Safeguarding	6
6 General Principles of the Policy	6
7 Equality Legislation	7
8 Safeguarding information that all staff, volunteers and trainees need to know	7
9 Actions to follow when there are concerns about the health/wellbeing of a child or young person	10
10 Developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people	12
11 Supporting children who go missing from education or who are absent from education on repeat occasions or prolonged periods (including persistent and/or unexplainable absence for part or all of the school day)	14
12 Supporting Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children	15
13 Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	15
14 Supporting the Government's Prevent Strategy	15
15 Addressing Child on Child Abuse	16
16 Information Sharing	17
17 Online Safety	17
18 Single Central Record (SCR)	18
19 Mereside Primary Academy Specific Safeguarding Issues	19
20 Appendix A – Types of abuse – definitions and explanations*	24
21 Appendix B – Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)	40
22 Appendix C – Safeguarding: Acceptable Behaviour Code	41
23 Appendix D – Designated Safeguarding Lead: Job Description	43
24 Appendix E – Safeguarding Governor: Roles and Responsibilities	45
25 Appendix F – Guidance on responding to a disclosure	47
26 Appendix G – Procedures following an allegation against a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or trainee	49
27 Appendix H – Safeguarding escalation procedures	52
28 Appendix I – Related policies	53
29 Appendix J – Flow chart for raising safeguarding concerns about a child	54

30	Appendix K – Safeguarding Guidance for Visitors	55
31	Appendix L – Remote learning	56

## 1 Aims

- To embed a safeguarding culture and whole school approach to safeguarding which is enshrined in academy ethos and at the forefront of and underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development and ensuring that all systems, policies and processes operate with the best interests of children at heart.
- To inform all adults working or volunteering in Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) of the regulations that must be followed in order to ensure safeguarding of children and young people in those organisations.
- To clarify the procedures for reporting suspected wrongdoing or bad practice in respect of the protection of children and young people within our organisations.
- To support the development of safe environments for children and young people to learn, develop and grow up in.
- To safeguard children from extremism and radicalisation and to support the Government’s Prevent Strategy.

This policy is informed by statutory guidelines on safeguarding in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ originally published in March 2015, subsequently updated and effective from September 2025.

## 2 Key Contacts

### FCAT Safeguarding Group

c/o Helen Livsey (FCAT Safeguarding Clerk) – 07454824607 or 01253207709

### Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection

	Academic Year 2025/2026	Most recent training
<b>Referral</b>	<b>CPOMs</b> - via desktop icon or start menu	
Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact details	Lauren Richardson <a href="mailto:l.richardson@mereside.fcat.org.uk">l.richardson@mereside.fcat.org.uk</a>	February 2025
FCAT Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Headteacher	Linda Emmett, DCEO Contact: c/o <a href="mailto:governance@fcat.org.uk">governance@fcat.org.uk</a>	Sept 2025

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact details	Patricia Taylor-Royston <a href="mailto:p.taylor-royston@mereside.fcat.org.uk">p.taylor-royston@mereside.fcat.org.uk</a>	April 2025
	Maria Lydon <a href="mailto:admin@mereside.fcat.org.uk">admin@mereside.fcat.org.uk</a>	February 2025
	John McDonald <a href="mailto:j.mcdonald@mereside.fcat.org.uk">j.mcdonald@mereside.fcat.org.uk</a>	September 2025
<i>Designated Person and contact details</i>	Patricia Taylor-Royston <a href="mailto:p.taylor-royston@mereside.fcat.org.uk">p.taylor-royston@mereside.fcat.org.uk</a>	
<i>Designated Safeguarding Governor</i>	Leona Parkinson c/o <a href="mailto:governance@fcat.org.uk">governance@fcat.org.uk</a>	May 2025

**Key Contacts outside the Academy:**

**Blackpool Council Social Care Team for immediate concerns:**

<b>Daytime Hours</b>	<b>01253 477299</b>
<b>Out of Hours</b>	<b>01253 477600</b>

**Blackpool Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):**

<b>Daytime Hours</b>	<b>01253 477541</b>
<b>Out of Hours</b>	<b>01253 477592</b>
<a href="mailto:lado@blackpool.gov.uk">lado@blackpool.gov.uk</a>	

**Lancashire County Council: Immediate Safeguarding Concerns**

<b>8.00am - 8.00pm</b>	<b>0300 123 6720</b>
<b>Out of Hours</b>	<b>0300 123 6701</b>

**Lancashire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): e.g. Mr Tim Booth**

<b>Daytime Hours</b>	<b>01772 536694</b>
<b>Out of Hours</b>	<b>0845 0530009</b>
<a href="mailto:Tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk">Tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk</a>  <a href="https://www.safeguardingpartnership.org.uk/report/">https://www.safeguardingpartnership.org.uk/report/</a>	

### **Pan Lancashire Safeguarding Procedures and Children's Boards**

From 29 September 2019, the arrangements for local safeguarding children boards ceased to exist and in their place is the new 'Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire'.

### **Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership**

<b>Telephone No</b>	<b>01253 477907</b>
Web address	<a href="http://www.blackpoolsafeguarding.org.uk">www.blackpoolsafeguarding.org.uk</a>
E mail	<a href="mailto:paul.threfall@blackpool.gov.uk">paul.threfall@blackpool.gov.uk</a>

### **Training Enquiries:**

<b>Telephone No</b>	01772 538354 or 01254 581161
<b>E mail address</b>	<a href="mailto:lscbtu@lancashire.gov.uk">lscbtu@lancashire.gov.uk</a>
<b>By post:</b>	Room CH3:37/ CH3:40, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD

**NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline – 0800 028 0285.**

## **3 Introduction**

FCAT are committed to safeguarding children and young people within our areas of responsibility and recognise the importance of ensuring that all adults working or volunteering in our organisations clearly understand their legal responsibilities, specific roles and the procedures to follow in order for this to happen.

We also understand that, because of the day-to-day contact with children and young people, we and our colleagues are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse and are in a position to provide support at an early opportunity. In addition, for some children experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, the academy/college may be the only stable secure and predictable element in their lives and key to providing them with the support

needed to ensure their safety and wellbeing. A culture of listening to children and taking account of their views will be embedded in all academies and staff will understand the difficulties that some children may have in approaching staff and will consider carefully how to build trusting relationships and how to facilitate communication.

This policy provides the procedures for staff, volunteers and trainees to carry out in order to protect children and young people in our care and explains what to do when concerns about the safety and welfare of children and young people are identified or suspected. It outlines the procedure and support for managing any allegation made against person(s) working in or on behalf of an FCAT organisation and provides guidance on the promotion of safer environments for our children and young people.

The FCAT Governor Safeguarding Network, made up of Designated Safeguarding Governors from each FCAT academy and FCAT link organisations monitors safeguarding practices across the Trust and provides scrutiny and challenge as required. This scrutiny extends through the FCAT Safeguarding Trustee to the FCAT Board. The FCAT Safeguarding Quality Improvement Group is made up of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) from each FCAT academy, focusing on consistently developing and improving safeguarding practice.

#### 4 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trainees within FCAT (including directly employed staff, those employed through an agency/third party, volunteers, Local Governing Body members, FCAT Members and Trustees, self-employed contractors and frequent visitors to FCAT). **Everybody working for, volunteering or training with FCAT is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people in those organisations.** Standard arrangements for child protection (as set out in this policy) apply to all services/activities provided by Governors under the direct supervision and/or management of school staff. Where services are provided (e.g. on-site lettings) by another body, the governing body will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and that these meet the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. These will be inspected as required and channels for liaison regarding related matters will be implemented. This requirement will be implemented as a condition of use. If allegations are received related to an incident that 'happened' when an individual or organisation was using school premises, safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO as necessary will be implemented.

**This policy incorporates DfE Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safeguarding reforms which apply in full in all Trust Early Years settings.**

#### 5 Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people involves:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting them from maltreatment, abuse and/or neglect whether that is within or outside the home, including online. Specific types of abuse are defined in Appendix A.

- Preventing impairment of mental and physical health and/or development.
- Ensuring the provision of safe and effective care.
- Enabling the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

## 6 General Principles of the Policy

The rest of this policy is divided into the following sections:

- Safeguarding information that all staff, volunteers and trainees need to know in order to protect children, young people and ensure their own safety in respect of working with children and young people.
- Actions to follow when concerns about the health and wellbeing of a child or young person are raised.
- Developing a safe environment for children and young people.

## 7 Equality Legislation

It is recognised that being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, may breach children's rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (in relation to school safeguarding), FCAST academies must:

- not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics
- consider how they are supporting pupils with protected characteristics
- take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these pupils face. For example, by making reasonable adjustments for disabled children and supporting girls if there is evidence they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- be conscious that pupils with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm and integrate this into safeguarding policies and procedures.

LGBTQ+ children must be provided with a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff in line with amended guidance in paragraphs 204-208 of KCSIE 2025.

## 8 Safeguarding information that all staff, volunteers and trainees need to know

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of **everyone** working, volunteering or training in our organisations to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people there. We are in a position to identify concerns early and have a duty to prevent these from escalating and provide support to children and young people when required.
- 8.2 All staff, volunteers and trainees should be prepared to identify children and young people who may benefit from early help i.e. by providing support as soon as the problem emerges at any point in that child/young person's life. In the first instance discussions about requirements should be had with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- 8.3 All staff have an important part to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children, including through the delivery of relationships, health and sex education.

- 8.4 All staff, volunteers and trainees are required to attend safeguarding awareness as part of their induction to the organisation. This training covers Part 1 of the statutory guidance on safeguarding 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Staff, volunteers and trainees are also required to attend refresher training on an annual basis and any supplementary training as required. This training will include online safety training and will be aligned and considered as part of the whole academy safeguarding approach, wider staff training and curriculum planning and will be regularly updated. This training will include an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- 8.5 All staff, volunteers and trainees must know the name of their DSL and how to contact him/her should it become necessary to raise any concerns about the health and wellbeing of a child or young person. A list of DSL from each organisation is at Appendix B.
- 8.6 All staff need to be aware of the different types of abuse and specific safeguarding issues as outlined in Appendix A and be prepared to report any suspected cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation or bad practice to their DSL.
- 8.7 All staff, volunteers and trainees working in our organisations have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children and young people can learn. This is a legal duty of care in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Training will be provided to staff, volunteers and trainees in how they can fulfil this responsibility.
- 8.8 All staff, volunteers and trainees need to recognise that some children and young people may be especially vulnerable to abuse, for example, those with Special Educational Needs and those living in adverse circumstances and to be mindful of this as part of their working practice. All staff need to also understand that children and young people that are abused, neglected and/or exploited may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or to view the world in a positive way and to take this into consideration if their behaviour becomes challenging.
- 8.9 All staff, volunteers and trainees must maintain an attitude of professional curiosity and of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child or young person, staff, volunteers or trainees must always act in the best interests of the child or young person.
- 8.10 Staff, volunteers and trainees must be aware that failure to act in accordance with their duty of care to safeguard children (the law, professional guidelines or organisational policies and procedures) may result in criminal and/or for staff disciplinary action up to and including dismissal being taken.
- 8.11 All staff, volunteers and trainees are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motives or intentions. (Appendix C: Safeguarding Acceptable Behaviour Code)

8.12 Any person working or training in or on behalf of the organisation has a legal duty to report any concern(s) they may have regarding another individual working in or on behalf of the academy/college. It is understood this may be difficult as it may relate to a colleague or a person may feel that the concern is not serious enough. All concerns must be reported to the DSL and any individual that does raise a concern will be supported to do so.

8.13 If an allegation against a member of staff is made, the procedures identified in Appendix G will be instigated.

8.14 If, as a result of a disciplinary investigation, a member of staff is dismissed, or removed from working in a regulated activity with children and young people because it is believed that they:

- harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child/young person under the age of 18 through their action or inaction or
- received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence

the organisation, has a legal duty to refer that individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for them to consider if that person will be listed on the DBS Children or Adults' Barred Lists, preventing them from engaging in regulated activity with children, vulnerable adults or both in the future. The DBS must be informed immediately if a person is dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned. This is a legal duty and failure to do so is a criminal offence.

8.15 In line with the Inspection Framework, all Ofsted inspections will report on whether or not arrangements for safeguarding children and young people on site are effective.

8.16 Appropriate Adult

The Headteacher and DSL need to be aware that there is a requirement for a child to have a responsible adult and its implications. In English law, an appropriate adult is a parent, guardian or social worker; or if no person matching this is available, any responsible person over 18.

8.17 Enhanced Governor/Trustee Training

All Governors and Trustees should have appropriate safeguarding/child protection training, which should be distinct from the training provided to all staff, tailored and not operational. This at induction and in an ongoing manner with annual updates.

Training should provide knowledge for strategic challenges and enable Governors to test and assure that safeguarding policy and procedures are effective and support the delivery of whole-school safeguarding. Training is likely to be more effective if 'face to face' (even if virtual) rather than online alone and needs to be strategic in focus. It is important for data to be used effectively and for DSL to provide the right information to Governors. The system needs to check that the right safeguarding measures are in place at a school and that the DSL has the right time allowance, team and processes and to scope safeguarding strategy over 3-5 years.

8.18 Domestic abuse has been added to the list of safeguarding issues that all staff should be aware of. The guidance makes it clear that domestic abuse:

- can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional
- can impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their intimate relationships.

8.19 All staff must be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused.

## 9 Actions to follow when there are concerns about the health/wellbeing of a child or young person

9.1 If, at any point, there are concerns about or there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child or young person, the DSL at the organisation must be informed. A list of DSL from each organisation and an outline of the role is at Appendix B. Staff will immediately report:

- any suspicion that a child/young person is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child/young person may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play)
- any concerns that a child/young person may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from mental health problems (which could be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation)
- any concerns that a child/young person is presenting signs or symptoms known to be indicators of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation
- any significant changes in a child/young person's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children/young people (e.g. living in a household with children/young people present).

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. If staff members are unsure they should always speak to the DSL.

9.2 If the DSL is not available, the Headteacher (unless the concern is about the Headteacher) must be informed of any concerns. If the concern is about the Headteacher, concern should be raised with the Chair of Governors and/or FCAT Chief Executive.

9.3 If neither the DSL nor the Headteacher is available, and there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child or young person, a referral to **Children's Social Care on 01253 477299 (office hours) or 01253 477600 (out of office hours) for Blackpool based children and young people and 01772 536694 (office hours) or 0845 0530009 (out of office hours) for Lancashire County based children and young people must be made immediately.** The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Blackpool Council is Laura Dalton – [lado@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:lado@blackpool.gov.uk). The LADO for Lancashire County Council is Tim Booth – [tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk) **Anyone can make a referral.** The DSL must be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

- 9.4 If the child/young person's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns must use the escalation procedures (See Appendix H). **Concerns must always lead to help for the child/young person at some point.**
- 9.5 In cases where a child/young person discloses information, staff must handle this with sensitivity, recognising that this will have been difficult for him/her to do. However, the child/young person disclosing must be made aware that the information cannot remain confidential and that the DSL will need to be notified. Staff must not take it upon themselves to investigate any claim but, where possible, elicit and clarify any information disclosed in order to pass this on to the DSL. A record of the conversation must also be taken. Guidance on how to respond to a disclosure and how to record incidents is at Appendix C. Staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children. The DSL will liaise with the Mental Health Lead (and where appropriate the mental health support team) and will take lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing (or have experienced) and in identifying the impact that these issues may have on children's attendance, engagement and/or achievement at school, underpinned by statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (paragraph 177 KCSIE 2025).
- 9.6 If a member of staff, volunteer or trainee discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, this must be reported to the Police as well as the DSL. See Appendix A, Page 18 for a definition of FGM.
- 9.7 Any child may benefit from early help, but all academy/college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
  - is homeless or is at risk of homelessness
  - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
  - has a mental health need
  - is a young carer
  - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
  - is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
  - has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
  - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
  - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
  - has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
  - is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
  - is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
  - has returned home to their family from care

- is at risk of ‘honour’-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage (legal and unofficial)
- is a privately fostered child
- is persistently absent from education, including unexplainable and/or persistent absences for part or all of the school day

Any Early Help provision should be coordinated by the DSL or a Deputy in liaison with external agencies as appropriate.

9.8 Mereside Primary Academy is a full participant in Operation Encompass, which seeks to protect children from the impact of domestic abuse.

## **10 Developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people**

- 10.1 All recruitment and selection must be carried out in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures of the relevant organisation which must comply with safer recruitment statutory guidance. As part of this process, DBS checks must be carried out prior to a new employee starting in post. For the majority of appointments, an enhanced DBS check will be required. In certain exceptional circumstances, for example, where it may not be possible for educational provision to be maintained, it may be necessary for employment to start prior to receipt of DBS disclosure, and in such instances a risk assessment must be completed to ensure sufficient control measures are in place.
- 10.2 In addition to DBS checks, a check on the Teachers’ Services’ System should be carried out for all new teaching staff and on the NCTL Teacher Services System to identify any teacher sanctions or restrictions applied by the European Economic Area (EEA) Regulations for teaching staff from overseas.
- 10.3 DBS checks for existing members of staff need to be carried out every five years. In addition, each organisation must ensure that individuals appointed to carry out teaching work are not prohibited from teaching or disqualified from working with children and young people under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.
- 10.4 Online searches for shortlisted candidates should be considered as part of the appointment process for student-facing staff. Consent is not required although candidates should be told. This should be implemented at the shortlisting stage. Candidates should be asked for social media ‘handles’. It is anticipated that results will be interpreted as with the DBS process. Systems must avoid discrimination e.g. on the basis of sexuality and/or gender. Recruitment must reflect this requirement.
- 10.5 All staff members must undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with any published local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In addition, all staff members should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- 10.6 Regulations also apply in terms of appointment of casual and temporary employees, volunteers, contracted workers, governors, regular visitors and students in placements across the organisations.

- 10.7 All governors need to be enhanced DBS checked on appointment and every five years.
- 10.8 All staff are required to work in an open and transparent way and to discuss and/or take advice from management over any incident which may give cause for concern.
- 10.9 Any incidents and/or decisions in respect of safeguarding practice must be recorded.
- 10.10 Children and young people need to be made aware of how best to keep themselves safe and to counteract danger. They must be provided with information on how to do this and of their right to be listened to should they suspect danger to themselves or their peers for example, through the organisations' Personal Social Health Citizenship and Education programmes.
- 10.11 Children and young people must also be made aware of appropriate people within the organisation that can provide them with support in respect of safeguarding issues and/or any matters they would like to disclose and how to contact them.
- 10.12 All staff must ensure that children and young people are protected from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material and are taught online safety. Governors must ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children and young people from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Clear policy regarding the use of mobile and smart technology will be implemented.
- 10.13 All organisations must implement a clear, holistic approach to mobile technology in relation to the impact on online safety. The management of children's personal access to the internet on school premises will be reflected in both mobile/smart technology and child protection policies.
- 10.14 We are committed to working with parents and carers in a positive, open and honest way and will discuss any concerns with them as far as possible. However, **we will not** discuss concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:
- where sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected
  - where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
  - where Fabricated or Induced Illness (previously known as Munchausen by proxy syndrome) is suspected
  - where female genital mutilation (FGM) is suspected
  - in cases of suspected forced marriage
  - in cases of where a child/young person is suspected of being subjected to radicalism and/or extremism
  - where contacting the parents/carers would place a child, young person or others at immediate risk.

In these cases, staff must contact the DSL and or Headteacher for advice and support.

- 10.15 We are committed to inter agency working and the sharing of valuable information in order to provide a co-ordinated offer of help when additional needs of children and young people are identified.

10.16 All staff, volunteers and trainees must feel able to raise concerns about poor and unsafe practice and potential failures within organisations' safeguarding procedures and be assured that those concerns will be taken seriously. Concerns need to be raised firstly with the DSL, and then with the Headteacher. Valid concerns and revisions to safeguarding practice must also be reported to the FCAT Governor Safeguarding Network and FCAT Safeguarding Trustee and shared with the FCAT Safeguarding Quality Improvement Group for implementation. If a member of staff or volunteer feels unable to raise the issue within their organisation or feels their concern is being overlooked, they need to report the matter to the FCAT Safeguarding Network Lead and/or FCAT Safeguarding Trustee via Helen Livsey ([helen.livsey@fcat.org.uk](mailto:helen.livsey@fcat.org.uk))

10.17 All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include:

- a. the safeguarding and child protection policy;
- b. the behaviour policy;
- c. the FCAT Code of Conduct
- d. the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- e. the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (including the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies)

## **11 Supporting children who go missing from education or who are absent from education on repeat occasions or prolonged periods (including persistent and/or unexplainable absence for part or all of the school day)**

- 11.1 Going missing or being absent, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risks and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.
- 11.2 Academies must monitor pupil attendance through daily registers and poor or irregular attendance must be investigated.
- 11.3 Where reasonably possible, academies should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil in order to identify the reasons for a pupil's absence as early as possible.
- 11.4 The local authority must be informed as early as possible if a pupil is consistently absent from school in order for multi-agency support to be provided where appropriate. Social Care Services should be informed if there are any concerns about a pupil's welfare.
- 11.5 Academies must follow statutory guidance procedures for pupils who are excluded.

## **12 Supporting Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children**

- 12.1 Academies need to assign a designated teacher, with appropriate training, qualifications and experience, to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children, recognising that these are particularly vulnerable groups of children/young people and the importance of working with other agencies to ensure they are safeguarded.

- 12.2 The role of virtual school head includes a non-statutory responsibility for oversight of the attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker. Virtual school heads should identify and engage with key professionals to help them understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children.

### 13 Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 13.1 Academies need to be aware that children and young people with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges and that there are barriers to recognising when these pupils are being subjected to abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. Children and young people with SEND are more prone to peer group isolation and indicators of abuse might be put down to a child's behaviour, mood or injury relating to his/her disability. Children and young people with SEND are also disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and may have difficulty communicating their fears and concerns.
- 13.2 Academies should consider providing extra pastoral support to children and young people with SEN where necessary.
- 13.3 When applying disciplinary measures such as restraint, physical intervention or isolation to children and young people with SEND, staff need to be aware of the vulnerability of this group and safeguard against the use of these as far as possible by planning positive and proactive support to reduce the risk of dangerous behaviour in the first place.

### 14 Supporting the Government's Prevent Strategy

- 14.1 All staff, volunteers and trainees must be aware of the organisation's duty in terms of safeguarding children and young people against radicalisation, extremism, becoming terrorists and/or supporting terrorism as identified in the Government's Prevent Strategy (section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) and the CONTEST strategy updated in 2018. Everyone working, volunteering and training in the organisation is expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We believe that children and young people need to be given the opportunity to explore diversity and understand that Britain is a multi-cultural society and that everyone should be treated with respect whatever their race, gender, sexuality, religious belief, special need or disability. This incorporates the new definition of extremism published in March 2024 and set out below:

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation and/or being drawn into terrorism. 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** is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

**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.

- 14.2 All staff, volunteers and trainees must be aware of the indicators of vulnerability that may put children/young people at risk of radicalisation (See page 12 of this policy) and be prepared to identify any concerns about individuals/groups to the DSL.
- 14.3 All staff, volunteers and trainees must be aware that numerous factors can contribute to, and influence, the range of behaviours that define violent extremism but that this does not necessarily mean that children/young people become involved in extremist action. Appropriate interventions may not, therefore, relate to the threat of radicalisation but to other issues, for example, mental health, relationship and/or abuse of drugs and alcohol issues etc.

Mereside Primary Academy recognises its key responsibilities in fulfilling the Prevent Duty (Jun 2015) to:

- 1) Protect young people from being drawn into extremism or terrorism (becoming terrorists and/or supporting terrorism) by having in place robust safeguarding policies which:
  - Identify young people at risk of radicalisation
  - Report any risks or concerns
  - Promote and exemplify British values
  - Build resilience in young people to radicalisation
- 2) Implement robust ICT policies
- 3) Assess the risk of radicalisation across the organisation
- 4) Train staff

Work in partnership with agencies including the 'Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire'.

Use DfE guidance 'Protective preparedness for educational settings' to reduce academy vulnerability and to respond appropriately to the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, known as 'Martyn's Law'.

## 15 Addressing Child on Child Abuse

- 15.1 All staff, volunteers and trainees should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. This can take a number of different forms including sexual violence and harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, biting or causing physical harm through any other means; sexting, initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.
- 15.2 Staff, volunteers and trainees need to recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators) and that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.
- 15.3 Academies must ensure procedures are in place to monitor, investigate and address child on child abuse. In the case of sexual or physical abuse, the DSL may be called

on to work with the Police and/or social care services to provide appropriate support to the victim and the perpetrator.

- 15.4 Academies have a responsibility to ensure that pupils and staff, volunteers and trainees are aware that child on child abuse should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. All academies have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.
- 15.5 Victims of child on child (and all) abuse will be taken seriously, kept safe and never made to feel like they are creating a problem for reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- 15.6 Reporting procedures for concerns regarding child-on-child abuse are the same as those for any safeguarding concern (see flow chart at Appendix J) and will follow guidance encapsulated in KCSIE.
- 15.7 Academies will be aware that perpetrators may present an ongoing risk to other children and will address harmful sexual behaviour to help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- 15.8 Academies will ensure that children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and which services to provide, operating at all times within the legal framework
- 15.9 Academies will ensure that reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse
- 15.10 Children can also abuse their peers online and this can take the form of abusive, harassing and/or misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially in chat groups and the sharing of abusive images and/or pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.
- 15.11 Children need to know that whilst consensual sharing of indecent images of children may not be abusive it is illegal. Non-consensual sharing of indecent images of children is illegal and abusive.

## 16 Information Sharing

- 16.1 Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information.

## 17 Online Safety

The Governing body will regularly review the effectiveness of online filters and monitoring systems and ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff are:

- aware of and understand the systems in place
- manage them effectively
- know how to escalate concerns when identified.

FCAT academies will communicate with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online, sharing information with parents/carers about:

- systems they have in place to filter and monitor online use
- what children are asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access

- who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

- 17.1 The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues and can be a significant component in safeguarding and wellbeing issues. In terms of child sexual exploitation; radicalisation and sexual predation technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. Academies and colleges must ensure an effective approach to online safety to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incident where appropriate.
- 17.2 Academies and colleges must be mindful of the content that their students/pupils may be exposed to online and do their very best to ensure that they are not able to access illegal, inappropriate or harmful material whilst using technology in their settings.
- 17.3 Academies and colleges must do their very best to ensure that students using technology within settings are not subjected to harmful online interaction with others
- 17.4 Academies and colleges must do their very best to ensure that staff and students/pupils conduct themselves appropriately when using technology in their settings in order to reduce the likelihood of harm.
- 17.5 Academies and colleges must ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems for their hardware and software are in place and be mindful of the proportion of time used.
- 17.6 Online safety will be considered when planning the academy curriculum, in teacher training, in the roles and responsibilities of the DSL and in parental engagement activities.

## **18 Single Central Record (SCR)**

- 18.1 Each academy/college is required to have a SCR and to manage and maintain this. The purpose of the SCR is to act as a register to demonstrate that the academy/college has carried out all mandatory pre-employment checks on people working there in line with safer recruitment requirements. The SCR will be kept in electronic form in accordance with FCAT's template issued and updated by FCAT's Safeguarding Lead.
- 18.2 Each SCR must record pre-employment details for the following people working at the academy/college:
- all staff directly employed to work at the academy/college;
  - anyone working in the academy/college who may be employed by a third party e.g. supply staff or contractors;
  - anyone working in the academy/college who may be self-employed;
  - all trainee teachers (student or employed);
  - all members of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) (including Members, Trustees and centrally employed staff);
  - all volunteers including governors.

18.3 The following pre-employment details should be included in the SCR for each of the above groups of people:

- an identity check
- a barred list check
- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- a prohibition from teaching check
- a Section 128 check (for those in management positions)
- further checks on people living or working outside the UK, including checks for restrictions or sanctions imposed by a European Economic Area (EEA) regulating authority
- a check of professional qualifications
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the UK
- date 2 satisfactory references received and checked
- disqualification by association check
- safer recruitment and safeguarding training completion date (optional)

The SCR should be updated daily to demonstrate that mandatory pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily carried out on everyone working in the academy/college that day and record specifically:

- whether the check has been carried out and its outcome
- the name of the person carrying out the check
- the date on which each check was carried out or the certificate was obtained

18.4 For any people working in the academy/college who are employed by a third party e.g. supply staff or contractors, the academy/college is required to seek confirmation from the third party employer that they have satisfactorily completed mandatory pre-employment checks and that these have been recorded in the SCR. The confirmation needs to be provided by a manager or the Human Resources Department of the organisation concerned and not the individual working in the academy/college in order to ensure the information has been verified by an appropriate source. For any people working in the academy/college employed by a third party, the following additional information must be recorded on the SCR:

- that written confirmation that the third party employer has satisfactorily carried out the pre-employment checks on the individual(s) concerned and has obtained documentation to evidence this;
- whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided
- the date the confirmation was received.

The third party employer must also be asked to provide a photograph of the individual(s) who will be working in the academy/college. Upon arrival at the academy/college, the person will be asked to present a photo ID to reception to confirm their identity. The ID check should be recorded by the person at the academy/college performing this check.

18.5 Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding compliance is that of each academy Headteacher and the SCR should be regularly audited (at least termly) by the Headteacher and the DSL. Audits will be monitored by FCAT's Safeguarding Lead.

## **19 Mereside Primary Academy Specific Safeguarding Issues**

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

The DfE's advice on Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges has been merged into Keeping Children Safe In Education. As part of this merger, the term "**child-on-child** abuse" rather than "peer-on-peer abuse" is used throughout the updated guidance.

FCAT academies will:

- emphasise the importance of explaining to children that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise
- emphasise the importance of understanding intra-familial harms, and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners as required

Mereside Primary Academy takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and has appropriate school-wide policies in place that make it clear that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) are unacceptable and the academy behaviour policy outlines appropriate potential sanctions.

Staff are aware that harmful sexual behaviour can happen inside or outside of school and online.

These policies are reflected in the academy curriculum, Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy and procedures, which specifically address sexual harassment, online abuse, sexual violence and issues of consent, ensuring that:

- academy staff have appropriate knowledge of paragraphs 128 and 129 of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' revised statutory guidance
- all pupils are supported to report concerns about harmful sexual behaviour freely
- all (such) concerns are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately and that pupils are confident that this is case
- comprehensive records of all allegations are kept
- work to prevent sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence operates through a culture-led, whole-school approach that includes an effective behaviour policy, pastoral support and a carefully planned relationships, sex and health education curriculum

Academy staff will remain alert to factors that increase vulnerability or potential vulnerability such as mental ill health, domestic abuse, children with additional needs, and children from groups at greater risk of exploitation and/or of feeling unable to report abuse (for example, girls and LGBTQ+ children) and that if a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern immediate action will be taken following the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and informing the DSL.

Academy staff are aware of the very high local incidence of multiple combinations of such potentially adverse childhood experiences and the needs this could present.

Academy staff will also seek to understand and minimise any barriers that could prevent a pupil from making a disclosure, for example communication needs, are identified and addressed.

Academy staff will assume that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence are happening in and around the school, even when there are no specific reports, and deliver a whole-school approach to address them.

Academy staff will be regularly trained to:

- have good awareness of the signs that a child is being neglected, abused and/or exploited, as described in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- understand how to handle reports of sexual violence and harassment between children, both on and outside school premises (in line with DfE guidance)
- be confident about what to do if a child reports that they have been sexually abused by another child
- ensure that children are taught about safeguarding risks, including online risks in the areas of content (including misinformation, disinformation, 'fake news' and conspiracy theories, contact, conduct and commerce).
- support pupils to understand what constitutes a healthy relationship (online and offline)

## **Early Help**

Systems are designed to identify students who may be especially vulnerable and in need of early help. As part of this, staff must be aware of the fundamental differences between safeguarding and child protection, even though the terminology is sometimes used interchangeably. Safeguarding is the 'wrap around' culture of safety provided for all children and Child Protection refers to the procedures used for children at risk of significant harm or who have been harmed. It is critical to understand the difference between a safeguarding concern and a child in immediate danger or at significant risk of harm. All staff and adults working with children must seek advice if in any doubt and always share any concern about any student using the procedures set out in this Policy.

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

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- is homeless or is at risk of homelessness
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit. This will

include frequent (at least half termly) reviews to ensure that a child is attending their Alternative provision and that the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. In addition, schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage (legal and unofficial)
- is a privately fostered child
- is unexplainably and/or persistently absent from education, for all or part of the school day

Early help will be needs-driven and may take a variety of forms including the overview of the Academy's own 'multi-agency' panel, enhanced vigilance and monitoring, emotional health support, assigned pastoral worker support and the intervention of other professionals including liaison with Social Care. All colleagues including the champion for Looked After Children are aware of and additional vigilant towards the needs of the very high number of Looked After Children attending Mereside Primary Academy.

All staff and adults working in Mereside Primary Academy are aware of and additionally vigilant towards the increased risks of child sexual exploitation (CSE), radicalisation (chiefly 'far right') and activities associated with the local night-time economy, such as so called 'card tricking' and their potential harmful impact on young people. Other significant local factors include (not limited to) poor overall health, poor mental health, domestic violence (experienced, seen and/or heard), drug and alcohol abuse, transience, low standards of accommodation and poverty. Many children have experienced/continue to experience a number of adverse childhood experiences and support in school is tuned to identify and work to minimise the impact of these. The proportion (and number) of children in care and supported by Child Protection Plans is very high in Blackpool and our academy is no exception. We liaise with all services to support children and their families.

Mereside Primary Academy has a Pupil Welfare Officer, who ensures that attendance is supported in accordance with 'Children missing education: statutory guidance for Local Authorities – September 2016'.

The Safeguarding Governor also plays an integral part in monitoring our safeguarding procedures. She can be contacted by contacting FCAT Governance Lead at the Fylde Coast Academy Trust, Mereside Primary Academy Langdale Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY4 4RR, Tel: 01253 207709 or [governance@fcat.org.uk](mailto:governance@fcat.org.uk)

All visitors to Mereside Primary Academy are requested to provide their current DBS certificate in order to be able to work independently with a child within school. A badge system is in place denoting a visitor's ability to work independently with a child. Where volunteers are supporting school on an ad-hoc basis (i.e. a one-off class trip), a risk assessment is completed with them and they are not permitted to be left unaccompanied with children or support with toileting. All visitors discuss our 'Safeguarding for visitors' leaflet with a member of school staff so that they are clear about expectations and procedures to raise concerns whilst in school or after they have left. The leaflet also states clearly behaviours that visitors need to abide by in order to keep children safe (see Appendix K).

A flow chart of what happens when a safeguarding concern is raised within school can be found in Appendix J.

## Referral

Mereside Primary Academy has an online system (CPOMs) for recording concerns, including Safeguarding concerns, about a child or any behaviour incidents. This system provides an important timeline record of reported concerns, incidents and subsequent responses. It also automatically alerts DSL deputies when the category 'Safeguarding' is selected. Our procedures state that staff members should also verbally alert the DSL and/or deputies as soon as possible regarding safeguarding concerns. See Flow Chart of school procedures in Appendix J.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported via the CPOMs system via the desktop icon, by typing CPOMs into the start menu or via the following link:

Please **also** alert the DSL and/or a member of SLT.

## 20 Appendix A – Types of abuse – definitions and explanations\* (KCSIE)

**All academy and college staff should be aware of abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.**

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child/young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child/young person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely, by others (e.g. via the Internet). They may be abused by an adult or another child/young person or children/young people.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child/young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child/young person.

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

**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/young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children/young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children/young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child/young person 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/young people.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child/young person'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/young person from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child/young person's basic emotional needs.

### **Specific Safeguarding Issues**

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example information on the TES website [www.tes.com](http://www.tes.com) and NSPCC [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) offer information for schools and colleges. Schools and colleges can also access broad government guidance, including on the issues listed below via the GOV.UK website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

- child abduction and community safety incidents
- child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- child sexual exploitation (CSE) – further information
- county lines
- children and the court system
- children missing from education / children who are absent from education
- children with family members in prison
- children missing from home or care
- Children Looked After

- cybercrime
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- Operation Encompass
- Homelessness
- Child on child abuse
- domestic abuse/violence (experienced, seen and/or heard), including teenage relationship abuse
- drug abuse
- fabricated or induced illness (FII)
- faith abuse
- so-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation
- The Prevent Duty
- Channel
- serious violence
- sexting
- trafficking, Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

### **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)**

Different forms of harm often overlap and perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or

criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse including County Lines. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

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
- 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
- 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***

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – further information**

### **Statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology and the indicators / experiences of girls being sexually exploited can be very different to boys.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms, ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber bullying and grooming.

It is also important to recognise that some children/young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child/young person may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children and young people who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Some of the following signs may be indicators of CSE:

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

## **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 CCE and CSE 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 (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged 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/children absent from education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow the organisation’s procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child 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, so called '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 or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

### **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). Paragraph 144 of KCSIE 2025 offers useful guidance to help schools improve their cyber resilience.

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
- 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](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk).

### **Bullying, including cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks and mobile phones. Cyberbullying can include spreading rumours about someone, or posting nasty or embarrassing messages, images or videos. Children may know who's bullying them online – it may be an extension of offline peer bullying - or they may be targeted by someone using a fake or anonymous account. It's easy to be anonymous online and this may increase the likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviour. Cyberbullying can happen at any time or anywhere - a child can be bullied when they are

alone in their bedroom - so it can feel like there's no escape. (Definition from <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>)

### **Domestic abuse/violence**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), all of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

The statutory definition of domestic abuse 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". 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.

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.

***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***
- ***Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support, information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse***
- ***Home: Operation Encompass***

## **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 new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourage 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.

It should also be recognised that 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.

## **Child on Child Abuse**

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to bullying (including cyberbullying); physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals; upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Incidents of child on child abuse have increased significantly in the last few years. Children living away from home are particularly vulnerable to abuse from their peers. This form of abuse and a significant proportion of sex offences are committed by teenagers and, on occasion, younger children. Staff and carers need to understand the difference between consenting and abusive sexual behaviour and not consider abusive sexual behaviour between young people as 'normal'. Suspected incidents of child on child abuse should be treated and taken as seriously as would incidents perpetrated by an adult and reported to the DSL as early as possible. Children and young people who abuse their peers have often suffered considerable disruption in their lives and / or witnessed or been the victims of abuse themselves. They, as well as the victims, may need support to reduce the potential for them to harm other children and young people in the future.

See the pan Lancashire procedures in respect of this at [http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_peer\\_abuse.html?zoom\\_highlight=peer](http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_peer_abuse.html?zoom_highlight=peer)

## **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 gender 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. A victim will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation in collaboration with the Home Office, has developed 'Shore Space', an online resource which works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour. Shore Space offers a confidential chat service supporting young people who are concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviour.

## **Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that 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. The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

### **Contextual safeguarding**

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. The involvement of a Social Worker in a child's life should inform decisions about safeguarding. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their family, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence, including County Lines.

### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties where duress is a factor. This is a crime in England and Wales. Duress may take the form of emotional, financial, physical and sexual threats and abuse. Forced marriage is also viewed by some as falling into the definition of 'honour' based abuse. Early or child marriage refers to any marriage of a child younger than 18 years old. The UN recognises it as a forced marriage because minors are deemed incapable of giving informed consent. Girls are the majority of the victims and hence are disproportionately affected. Forced marriage occurs within many cultures and classes. A person at risk of a forced marriage may suffer a range of abuses including emotional and physical abuse, unlawful imprisonment, abduction, rape, forced pregnancy or enforced abortion. Both women and men may be victims of forced marriage.

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.

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

***The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (chapter 8 provides guidance on the role of schools and colleges) and,***

***Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage which can be found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK (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).***

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

So called Honour based abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community and include FGM, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of ‘honour’ based violence (HBV) are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies need to be alert to a child being at risk of (or having suffered) HBA and/or HBV.

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 and additional risk factors when deciding which safeguarding action to take.

**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.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers**

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. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM or already having suffered FGM.

### **Signs that a girl may be at risk of (or already have undergone) FGM**

These indicators are not exhaustive and whilst the factors detailed below may be an indication that a child is facing FGM, it should not be assumed that is the case simply on the basis of someone presenting with one or more of these warning signs. These warning signs may indicate other types of abuse such as forced marriage or sexual abuse that will also require a multi-agency response.

The following are some signs that the girl may be at risk of FGM:

- The family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised
- The family makes preparations for the child to take a holiday, e.g., arranging vaccinations, planning an absence from school

- The child talks about a 'special procedure/ceremony' that is going to take place
- An awareness by a midwife or obstetrician that the procedure has already been carried out on a mother, prompting concern for any daughters, girls or young women in the family

The following are some signs that FGM may already have taken place:

- Prolonged absence from school and noticeable behaviour change on return to school
- Avoidance of specific classes or activities such as PE or sports, giving reasons of bladder, menstrual or abdominal problems
- Girls finding it difficult to sit still in class or looking uncomfortable when sitting
- Girls complaining of pain between their legs, or talking about something someone did that they are not allowed to talk about.

Girls are particularly at risk of FGM during the summer holidays as this is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they could be at risk of undergoing FGM.

**There is a mandatory/statutory personal duty to report the discovery or suspicion (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Note that visual evidence will be rare and teachers and/or school staff will not carry out examinations. All such cases must be discussed with the DSL at the first opportunity.**

All staff must speak to the DSL (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM) and be aware that there is a specific legal duty on teachers if, in the course of their work in the profession, they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, to report this to the police.

**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.

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

## **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, attendance and progress at school. 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. 149 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.

## **Trafficking, 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**

**Radicalisation** is defined as causing someone to become an advocate of radical political or social reform by supporting terrorism and violent extremism and as the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Radicalisation of children and young people may include encouraging them to undertake violent activities on the grounds of religious belief. This may include attacks on others including suicide attacks. Children and young people may be exposed to messages about and/or drawn into terrorism through a family member or friend, a religious group, or through social media or the Internet. This creates risk of a child or young person being drawn into criminal activity and exposure to significant harm.

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. 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.

Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors. It is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that all our staff, volunteers and trainees are able to recognise these vulnerabilities.

**Extremism** is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as 'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. Also included in the definition is 'calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

Extremism is the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

- encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

(Definition from the Crown Prosecution Service).

**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 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 radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern. It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism.

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.

**Indicators of vulnerability and potential risk factors** include:

- Identity crisis – the child/young person is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society.
- Personal crisis – the child/young person may be experiencing family tensions, a sense of isolation and low esteem. They may have disassociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with new and different groups of friends. They may be searching for answers to questions about identity, gender, faith and belonging. The DfE will publish updated guidance on gender questioning children.
- Personal circumstances – migration, local community tensions and events affecting the child/young person's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- Unmet aspirations – the child/young person may have perceptions of injustice, a feeling of failure, rejection of civic life.
- Experiences of criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement/reintegration.
- Special educational needs – children/young people may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others and awareness of the motivations of others.

This is not an exhaustive list and more critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social media networking element
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature
- Using extremist narratives and global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in identity/personal crisis.

(Indicators taken from Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board Guidelines)

It is essential that academies/colleges work with students and their families to address extremism and tackle radicalisation.

## **The Prevent Duty**

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting 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 education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments. The school 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 susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multiagency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multiagency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of 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 will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided. 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 and Channel training from the Home Office.***

***Additional support The Department has published further advice for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities 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 and college teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.**

**The Education and Training Foundation ([etfoundation.co.uk](http://etfoundation.co.uk)) 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 has also produced useful resources on Prevent (Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning ([lgfl.net](http://lgfl.net))).**

## **21 Appendix B – Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**

Linda Emmett, DCEO is the overarching Safeguarding Lead Officer for FCAT contactable via the Clerk to the Safeguarding Quality Improvement Group: c/o [governance@fcats.org.uk](mailto:governance@fcats.org.uk)

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>DSL</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Armfield Academy	Julie Jones	01253 207702 <a href="mailto:j.jones@armfield.fcat.org.uk">j.jones@armfield.fcat.org.uk</a>
Aspire Academy	Sian Rawson	01253 353155 <a href="mailto:s.rawson@aspire.fcat.org.uk">s.rawson@aspire.fcat.org.uk</a>
Garstang Community Academy	Laura Royds	01995 603226 <a href="mailto:l.royds@garstang.fcat.org.uk">l.royds@garstang.fcat.org.uk</a>
Gateway Primary Academy	Emma Frankland	01253 402936 <a href="mailto:e.frankland@gateway.fcat.org.uk">e.frankland@gateway.fcat.org.uk</a>
Hambleton Primary Academy	Holly Wood	01253 70033 <a href="mailto:h.wood@hambleton.fcat.org.uk">h.wood@hambleton.fcat.org.uk</a>
Mereside Primary Academy	Lauren Richardson	01253 761531 <a href="mailto:l.richardson@mereside.fcat.org.uk">l.richardson@mereside.fcat.org.uk</a>
Montgomery Academy	Gill Smith	01253 356271 x 5158 <a href="mailto:g.smith@montgomery.fcat.org.uk">g.smith@montgomery.fcat.org.uk</a>
Unity Academy	Ben Mashiter	01253 478129 <a href="mailto:b.mashiter@unity.fcat.org.uk">b.mashiter@unity.fcat.org.uk</a>
Westcliff Primary Academy	Natalie Vanderwal	01253 353792 <a href="mailto:n.vanderwal@westcliff.fcat.org.uk">n.vanderwal@westcliff.fcat.org.uk</a>
Westminster Primary Academy	Jenny Campbell	01253 621703 <a href="mailto:j.campbell@westminster.fcat.org.uk">j.campbell@westminster.fcat.org.uk</a>

**FCAT**

The best we can be

## 22 Appendix C – Safeguarding: Acceptable Behaviour Code

Staff, volunteers and trainees must behave professionally, treat all pupils with respect and ensure their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse. These standards should be applied regardless of the age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity of the pupil.

Staff, volunteers and trainees should understand the need to act as good role models for pupils and be aware that safe practice also involves using their judgment and integrity outside the academy setting.

In particular, staff, volunteers and trainees should:

- Ensure that all communication and contact with pupils takes place within clear professional boundaries and does not allow for misinterpretation of motives or behaviour (including 'grooming'). Staff, volunteers and trainees should not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, texts, emails or physical contact. Likewise, staff, volunteers and trainees must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing or strengthening a friendship. Meetings with pupils off academy/FCAT premises, including for private tuition during term or holiday time should not be arranged without the prior permission of the Headteacher/Deputy Chief Executive. Engagement of any sexual activity with, or in the presence of, a pupil, may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.
- Ensure that when one-to-one situations occur, reasonable and sensible precautions are used to protect children and adults. Ideally, these should take place where visual contact with others can be maintained for the duration of the meeting. One to one situations should only take place when necessary and should be properly managed and reported when they do take place.
- Not attend private pupil parties. Staff, volunteers and trainees should also be aware of their professional responsibilities if attending parties arranged by parents at which pupils might be present.
- Never swear, blaspheme or use offensive language in front of pupils.
- Never make sexual innuendos or comments of a sexual nature (other than for educational purposes) or make comments trivialising alcohol or drug abuse. Staff, volunteers and trainees should also avoid discussing their own sexual relationships in the presence of pupils.
- Never make demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils.
- Ensure they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs when undertaking duties on site at the academy or on behalf of the academy. This includes on school trips. Smoking and the consumption of alcohol is not permitted on any FCAT site.
- Ensure their dress and appearance is smart, appropriate to the role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or provocative.
- Not transport pupils in their own vehicle other than on approved academy/FCAT business with permission from the Headteacher/Deputy Chief Executive.
- Not be alone in a vehicle with a pupil. At least one other member of staff should also be in the vehicle acting as an escort.
- Adhere to the academy's/FCAT's fire and evacuation procedures.
- Adhere to the academy's policy on use of mobile phones.
- Refrain from making comments about pupils, staff, the academy and FCAT on social media networks.
- Refrain from making 'friends' of and/or contacting pupils and ex pupils under the age of 18 on social media networks.
- Not email pupils and ex pupils unless for professional purposes. Appropriate formal language and tone must be used if/when using email to staff, pupils and parents.

- Not photograph pupils using their own cameras or phones unless with permission of the Headteacher/Deputy Chief Executive. All photographs taken should be for academy/FCAT use only and should only be uploaded onto academy/FCAT computers by FCAT staff. Images used by the academy/FCAT should not name the pupils in them, unless by prior consent of parents.
- Avoid conferring special attention/favour on a child or give presents outside of the official rewards system, as this may be construed as 'grooming'.
- Report any accidents, incidents of bullying, or warning signs of 'grooming' they witness to the academy.
- Ensure that any work or activity that may conflict with the interests of the academy/FCAT, or which makes use of academy/FCAT resources or property is agreed in advance with the Headteacher/Deputy Chief Executive Officer.
- Ensure that any confidential information that comes into their sight/possession remains confidential and is not disclosed to others either inside or outside the academy/FCAT.

## **23 Appendix D – Designated Safeguarding Lead: Job Description**

DSL should be appointed from within each organisation’s Senior Leadership Team and the post holder should take the lead and overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the organisation. This should be explicit within the post holder’s own job description.

The DSL and Deputies should have as complete a picture as possible of safeguarding issues at their setting and are the most appropriate people to advise on responses to safeguarding concerns. The DSL must be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out this role effectively.

### **Summary of responsibilities:**

- Manage safeguarding referrals.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the Academy’s/College’s Safeguarding and/or Child Protection Policy and Procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Ensure Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy is reviewed and updated annually and is available publicly
- Keep detailed records of cases.
- Where children leave the Academy/College, ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main student file.

### **Duties:**

1. To keep abreast of developments in the field of safeguarding/child protection by liaising with the local safeguarding partnership and outside agencies, attending relevant training or events and reading relevant bulletins and publications.
2. To work with outside agencies in line with ‘Working Together to Safeguard’
3. To attend FCAT Safeguarding Quality Improvement Group meetings to learn about good practice at other academies and work together to continually improve safeguarding practices
4. To help promote children’s educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare safeguarding and child protection issues that children (including those with a Social Worker) are experiencing or have experienced with teacher, leaders and other staff
5. Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and procedures in place, including the review of DfE filtering and monitoring standards, the ‘plan technology for your school service’ self-assessment tool and guidance on the use of generative AI in education (paragraphs 142 and 143 of KCSIE 2025).
6. Ensure the Academy’s/College’s Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
7. Ensure the Policy is available publicly.
8. Ensure that all new staff receive basic safeguarding awareness training during induction and all staff receive refresher training at least once every three years.
9. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding.

10. Respond appropriately to all safeguarding concerns in line with LSCB procedures and refer all cases of abuse or suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and to the Police where a crime may have been committed.
11. Liaise with the Headteacher to inform him/ her of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
12. Ensure that students who are victims of abuse are supported appropriately and sensitively and that all actions are successfully carried out and monitored.
13. Update the school or college's anti-bullying and online safety policies and ensure that staff respond appropriately to incidents/allegations.
14. Receive Level 3 safeguarding training every two years in order to carry out the DSL role and regular updates to maintain currency of knowledge.
15. Maintain accurate, confidential and up to date documentation on all cases of safeguarding and child protection.
16. Where children leave the Academy/College, ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main student file
17. Work directly with young people in need and their families in order to prevent young people suffering significant harm.
18. Review the safeguarding provision, identifying areas for improvement and producing termly reports for SLT.
19. Create a climate in the Academy/College whereby students are encouraged to talk about their issues and concerns.
20. Quality assure the work of colleagues in relation to safeguarding and child protection
21. Support the Headteacher in safer recruitment practices including in the referral of cases to the DBS and the Police where a person is dismissed or leaves due to risk/harm to a child/young person.

## 24 Appendix E – Safeguarding Governor: Roles and Responsibilities

### Summary

To be the lead person on the Local Governing Body with an understanding of the safeguarding requirements for the academy. Safeguarding governors have an **oversight** rather than an operational safeguarding role.

A key part of this is to **monitor** safeguarding **provision and delivery** in the respective academy. This is best achieved through liaison with the academy DSL, analysis of information presented to the Local Governing Body and from other relevant sources e.g. FCAT Governor Safeguarding Network, FCAT Safeguarding Quality Improvement Group and/or Ofsted and subsequently asking questions of senior leaders (as necessary and most commonly at Local Governing Body meetings).

It is critical to challenge leaders to ensure that sufficient resources and training are in place to meet safeguarding needs and to evaluate the impact of this through data trends.

**It is for senior leaders to act** to resolve any concerns.

FCAT is expected to ensure effective safeguarding culture and practice in all academies and to satisfy itself that this is the case through monitoring e.g. peer and other review, data capture and to prompt action through senior leaders if any shortfall is identified.

Safeguarding (and all) Governors can provide a very useful 'early warning' aspect to this through their monitoring role. The positive actions of Governors also add significant value to safeguarding both in terms of culture and practice within academies and across the Trust as a whole.

### Key Duties

- To liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on a regular basis to keep abreast of safeguarding priorities at the academy/college.
- To attend FCAT Safeguarding Governor Network meetings.
- To contribute to discussions to inform the development of safeguarding plans and strategies for the academy/college and FCAT, including the annual revision of the FCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- To take a lead role in holding senior leaders to account on the implementation of safeguarding procedures at the academy/college during Local Governing Body meetings.
- To take a lead role in challenging senior leaders on the use of resources to maintain safeguarding of children and young people on the site, including the allocation of staff and training to meet specific safeguarding needs, at Local Governing Body meetings.
- To have a broad overview of the FCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the Government's key guidance document in this area.
- To evaluate safer recruitment practices and participate in safeguarding training as required.
- To meet at least once per term with the academy DSL to audit the safeguarding areas outlined below, to discuss any wider concerns and to subsequently report the outcome to the Local Governing Body.

### Suggested Annual Audit Activities

**Autumn Term**

- 1) Quality assure transition arrangements for vulnerable students
- 2) Review safer recruitment procedures

**Spring term**

- 1) Review specific risks for students of the academy, the curriculum for safeguarding, including its intent, implementation and impact
- 2) Review online filtering and monitoring, especially for vulnerable students

**Summer Term**

- 1) Review the safeguarding record keeping system, check for impact, review academy data and analysis of trends
- 2) Review academy safeguarding training record

## **25 Appendix F – Guidance on responding to a disclosure**

Disclosures or information may be received from students, parents or other members of the public. The organisation recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity and the organisation will make specific arrangements to ensure that students with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to an appropriate member of staff.

Such information cannot remain confidential and children and young people should never be promised that information they disclose will be kept confidential as, ultimately, this may not be in their best interests. Staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the DSL and make a record.

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit and clarify enough information to pass on to the designated person in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next. The person against whom any allegation is made must not be alerted or approached about the matter until a decision to investigate has been made.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child/young person may be at risk of harm
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of academy/college staff
- clarify the information
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child/young person.
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the DSL
- reassure and support the person as far as possible
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate.

### **Guidance on Recording and monitoring**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions must be recorded in writing.

Accurate records need to be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records must be signed and dated. Any information given should be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All child protection documents must be retained, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and be accessible only to the DSL or other designated person. These records will be copied and transferred to any academy/school/college or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of DSL. Original copies will be retained until the young person's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

An overview of collated referrals, academy/school/college action, timescales and social care responses must be maintained.

## **26 Appendix G – Procedures following an allegation against a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or trainee**

If a person receives an allegation regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of organisation that they have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to children and/or behaved (or may have behaved) in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children e.g. an incident outside school which may not involve children but which could have an impact on suitability to work with children the following actions need to be followed:

### **Low Level Concern**

The term low level concern does not mean that the concern is insignificant. It means that the behaviour towards the child does not meet the threshold of harm but is not consistent with the code of conduct.

All academies will address this issue by:

- ensuring that staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, 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' safeguarding concerns with the DSL (or DDSL)
- addressing unprofessional behaviour (and supporting the individual to correct this) 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 academy safeguarding system

### **Procedure/s**

1. Ensure that where necessary, the child/young person receives appropriate medical attention.
2. The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the DSL and the Headteacher and make a record. Each academy will establish a confidential procedure for sharing such information.
3. The Headteacher will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children/young people and any urgent medical needs.
4. The person whom the concern or allegation has been made against will not be approached at this stage, unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children/young people.
5. The Headteacher will be informed of all low-level concerns and will discuss the concern or allegation with Human Resources. Low level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers and schools and identified academy colleagues will consult with their LADO to establish if low-level concerns shared about a member of staff meet the harm threshold.
6. With regard to supply teachers and other staff, the academy is not the employer and will work with the agency involved to ensure that allegations are dealt with properly. This will usually involve the academy taking the lead in the investigation and liaison with the LADO.

7. The Headteacher may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation; however no person will be interviewed at this stage.
8. The Headteacher with the support of Human Resources must hold an initial discussion with the LADO in order to determine whether the concern or allegation(s) may need to be investigated externally via Social Services or the Police.
9. The Headteacher will discuss with Human Resources whether the concern or allegation(s) will be investigated internally in accordance with the Academy/College Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. An internal investigation may proceed where it is alleged that an individual has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or young person under the age of 18 through their action or inaction or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, even in the event that the LADO determines that no external investigation via Social Services or the Police will take place.
10. If a decision is taken to investigate the allegation internally and/or externally the individual will need to be informed of the allegation and a decision made regarding any restriction which may need to be placed on the individual in the workplace, including suspension as a neutral holding measure to protect all parties whilst the investigation is undertaken. This will be undertaken in accordance with the academy/school/college Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and following discussion and advice from Human Resources and must be confirmed in writing to the individual.
11. The Headteacher, DSL/DSP and Human Resources may be invited and must attend any strategy discussion meeting at which either the Police and/or LADO may be in attendance. This will be to determine and agree the process and timescales of internal/external investigations.
12. The individual must be informed by the Academy/College of the outcome of any internal investigation. Please be aware that an internal investigation in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may and can be concluded before any external investigation.
13. Following any internal investigation, a decision will be taken as to whether there is any evidence to support the allegation(s) and if so, whether the allegation(s) will be considered further at a disciplinary hearing where disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken.
14. If an employee is dismissed or removed from working with children or young people permanently as a result of the internal disciplinary investigation for an allegation that they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or young person under the age of 18 through their action or inaction or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence this may result in a referral to the DBS for their consideration whether the person will be listed on the DBS Children's or Adult's Barred Lists. The referral would be conducted by the Headteacher with the guidance and advice of Human Resources.
15. In the event that an individual resigns from their employment prior to the conclusion of the disciplinary investigation, the investigation process and any hearing must continue and a conclusion reached. This is necessary due to the requirement of the Academy/College to consider whether the allegation(s) are proven, and if so to satisfy their legal duty to refer to the DBS.
16. Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of students, parents/carers and staff. It is important to ensure that appropriate communication is maintained with these parties throughout, whilst ensuring confidentiality is upheld.
17. The Headteacher will inform the Chair of the Governing Body of any allegation.

## **Allegations against the Headteacher**

In the event that an allegation is made against the Headteacher the matter will be reported to the Chair of the Local Governing Body and/or FCAT Chief Executive who will proceed as the 'Headteacher' as from Step 3 above.

## **27 Appendix H – Safeguarding escalation procedures**

The safeguarding escalation procedure is a formal way of ensuring a live safeguarding case can be reviewed, permitting professional dialogue between colleagues, agencies and other organisations involved with the case.

Escalation procedures should be used when all normal channels of requesting further support or action have been exhausted and in situations such as:

- A member of staff has made a referral and is concerned that the outcome does not sufficiently safeguard the child/young person.
- The child/young person's situation does not appear to be improving.
- The referrer or other members of the safeguarding team feel that a child/young person's case is not progressing despite there being a perceived need.
- A member of staff feels safeguarding concerns regarding a child/young person are not being addressed.
- One member of the safeguarding team disagrees with the actions of another.

In all situations where an escalation has been initiated, the first step will be to provide an overview and chronology of the case to date and subsequent actions that have occurred.

At each step, there must be a reported and recorded outcome.

Individual cases to be reviewed by each organisation's safeguarding team

[https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_resolving\\_prof\\_disagree.html#resolved](https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_resolving_prof_disagree.html#resolved)

## 28 Appendix I – Related policies

The following policies (non-exhaustive list) support the FCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

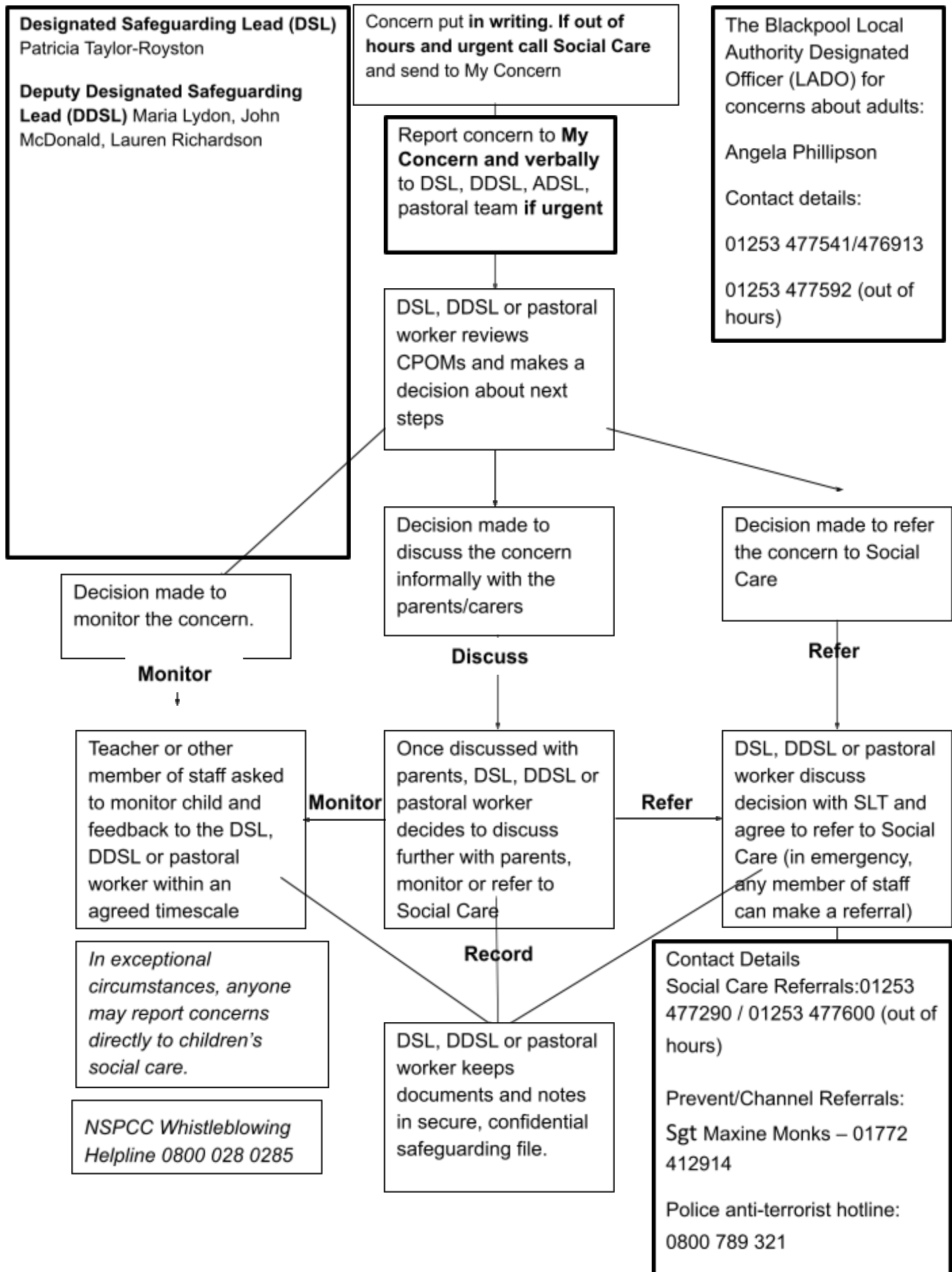
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Communications Policy (including staff/volunteer/student use of social media)
- Confidentiality Policy
- Curriculum Policy (PSHE)
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy
- Drugs and Alcohol Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy/Care and Control Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy (includes safer recruitment procedures)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy

The following academy policies (non-exhaustive list) also support the FCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

- Attendance Policy
- Personal Relationships/SRE Education Policy
- Portable Digital Devices Policy
- Use of Digital and Video Images Policy
- Extremism and radicalisation policy and risk assessment
- Security Policy
- Visiting Speaker Policy
- Volunteer Policy and risk assessment

## 29 Appendix J – Flow chart for raising safeguarding concerns about a child

## CHILD



### **30 Appendix K – Safeguarding Guidance for Visitors**

All visitors to Mereside Primary Academy will be given a copy of our Safeguarding Guidance upon arrival.

## 31 Appendix L – Remote learning

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

Academies must do all that they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the academy.

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk.

**Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the existing safeguarding and child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to Children’s Social Care and as required the police.**

Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) should be used to help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

All staff must consider the safety of children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the academy’s Staff Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy, Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policies, which encompass acceptable use of technologies, staff /pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media.

These policies apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements.

The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) may be helpful.

**Any use of online learning tools and systems must be in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.**

**An essential part of the online planning process** is to ensure that children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as academy reporting routes, this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

### **Parents and Carers**

Academies will be in regular contact with parents and carers during the outbreak. These communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.

**It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be**

**clear who from the academy (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.**

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the academy online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors.

Academies should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children.

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers