SYNERGY EDUCATION TRUST

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Person Responsible:	Suzanne Hamilton, Director of Education
Last Updated:	15.05.2026
Review Date:	June 2027
Previous Review Date:	23.09.2024
Adopted by Trustees on:	09.07.2026

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1. Key Contacts

Synergy Education Trust

1.1 Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection for Synergy Education Trust

DSL	Suzanne Hamilton
Deputy DSL	Neill Oldham
Prevent Lead	Neill Oldham
Safeguarding Trustee	Gemma Duxbury
Chair of the Trust Board	Susan Strother

1.2 Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection for each school

School	Moor Park Primary School
DSL/DDSL	Helen Jefferson DSL Faye Haslam DDSL Jane Rhodes DDSL Claire Singleton DDSL Sue Quin DDSL/Family Worker
Email/Contact Number for DSL	admin@moorpark.seteducation.org.uk 01253 353034
LGB Safeguarding Governor	Richard Darby
Chair of Governors	Kath Pope

1.3 Local Authority Key Safeguarding Contacts

Blackpool Council		
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Laura Dalton Catherine Hewer	01253 477558 lado@blackpool.gov.uk

Channel/Prevent helpline		020 7340 7264
Schools Early Intervention and Safeguarding Officer	TBC	@blackpool.gov.uk
Lancashire County Council		
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Online Form	01772 536 694

2. Introduction and aims

Synergy Education Trust and its schools aim to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and all staff must adopt a child-centred approach and whole family focussed.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

3. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Academy trust governance guide. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our local **safeguarding partners** (see section 4).

It is also based on the principles established by the following statutory legislation and guidance:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and head of school should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils regarding these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Statutory Guidance)- The Trust recognises attendance as a safeguarding responsibility and will act in accordance with statutory attendance guidance and local authority procedures.

The Trust will follow procedures and arrangements published by Blackpool Safeguarding Partnership and Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) as applicable.

4. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Safeguarding includes early-help and supporting family networks

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

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. **Appendix 1** explains the different types of abuse.

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

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

Children include everyone under the age of 18.

The following **3 safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will decide to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- An integrated care board for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

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

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

Appendix 2 includes further information on Specific Safeguarding Issues

5. Synergy Trust Commitment and Values

Our commitment to our children

The Trust is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all children in the school. We will protect and support all our children including our vulnerable children, children who need support through early help, children in need and children who have a child protection plan. Our safeguarding practice is anti-discriminatory and anti-racist. Synergy Education Trust recognises that racism, discrimination, unconscious bias and cultural assumptions can adversely affect safeguarding practice and outcomes for children. All staff will actively challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours and ensure that safeguarding decisions are informed by the lived experiences, identity, culture and protected characteristics of children and families. We will consider the impact of disproportionality and discrimination when assessing risk, planning support and evaluating outcomes.

We recognise that children who are abused may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging. We recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all our pupils. We will adopt a child-centred approach to our work, see, hear and understand the child's voice. We will seek to understand and respond to the lived experiences of children, ensuring that their wishes, views, feelings and experiences are central to safeguarding decision making. We will act in the best interests of our children and we will ensure that everyone is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

The school will, normally, endeavour to discuss all concerns with parents or carers about their child or children. However, there may be circumstances when the school will discuss concerns with Social Care and/or the Police without parental knowledge (in accordance with Child Protection procedures and in line with Part 2 of KCSIE). The school will, of course, always aim to maintain a positive whole family approach.

All schools will make their child-protection policy is available publicly via their website.

6. Roles and responsibilities

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

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

6.1 The Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for creating the safeguarding culture in schools and ensuring that measures are in place within schools and the Central Trust, to protect people in the Trust from harm. They will

- Review and embed the Trust Safeguarding Policies
- Appoint a trustee to take responsibility for their trusts safeguarding arrangements.
- Attend relevant training to ensure they understand current legislation and ensure that policies are updated in line with statutory guidance/law.
- Attend meetings, activities or projects to engage with staff to understand safeguarding on the ground.
- Ensure the Central Team are holding schools accountable to their Policy Statement
- Ensure safe recruitment practises are adhered to when appointing to the central team

All Trustees will receive safeguarding training and will read and understand Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 as appropriate to their role

6.2 Local Governors

The Local Governing Body is responsible for ensuring the following:

- There are appropriate policies and procedures in place within school that promote child wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Facilitating a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Evaluate the policy and hold the Head of School to account for its implementation
- Appointing a link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Being aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensuring that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
- Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
- Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards
- Making sure:
    - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
    - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
    - The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the IT filters and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns
    - The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors).
    - That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- Ensuring that where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
    - Seeking assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
    - Making sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate

    - Making sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply
- The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Head of School, where appropriate.
- Child Protection Files are maintained in line with KCSIE.
- A designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children is in place.
- Ensuring that appropriate Safer Recruitment Procedures are in place in line with Part 3 of KCSIE 2026, that adequate safer recruitment training has been undertaken and that procedures are embedded and effective.
- Ensuring the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil (where reasonably possible).
- The school has appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly for prolonged periods of time and/or on repeat occasions
- All Local Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training that equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding, that this training is regularly updated and that training records are maintained.
- The school contributes to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and meets their statutory duty to co-operate and will act in accordance with the arrangements published by the Safeguarding Partnership.
- That children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety.

All Local Governors will receive safeguarding training and will read and understand Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 as appropriate to their role.

6.3 The Headteacher/Head of School

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

Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:

- Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety), and updating the content of the training regularly
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate.

- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting

6.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies (DDSL)

The DSL will be a member of the School Senior Leadership Team.

The DSL and Deputies are responsible for following the guidance as laid out in KCSIE 2026 pertaining specifically to the following.

- Management of referrals
- Working with others
- Information sharing and managing the child protection file.
- Raising awareness
- Training, knowledge, and skills
- Providing support to staff
- Understanding the views of children
- Holding and sharing information
- Manage Operation Encompass Notifications and Police Reports

Furthermore, the DSL and Deputies must ensure that they make themselves available to respond to urgent safeguarding matters and for ensuring that they comply with statutory duties in line with KCSIE.

The DSL and DDSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school
- Make sure that staff have appropriate Prevent training and induction

The DSL will also:

- Keep the Head of School informed of any issues
- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate and escalate concerns as necessary

- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- Liaise with the computing lead and ICT technical support to help provide online safety, including filtering and monitoring processes
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search

6.5 The Designated Teacher

In line with Sections 4-6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Designated Teacher is responsible for.

- Promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Ensuring that they have the appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience.
- Working with the Virtual School Head, to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked-after children in the school to meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan and to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

6.6 The Senior Mental Health Lead

The mental health lead is responsible for creating a whole-school approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing by;

- developing a whole-school approach to support mental wellbeing.
- promoting good mental health and emotional wellbeing for pupils and staff.
- ensuring clear processes to report mental health concerns.
- ensuring clear processes for managing mental health concerns.
- delivering appropriate training

6.7 All School Leaders, Staff and Volunteers

All School staff including volunteers will:

- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Staff with additional safeguarding responsibilities will also read relevant annexes as directed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents. This includes making parents aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns

- Provide professional challenge
- Demonstrate professional curiosity

All staff will be aware of:

- School systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct (including staff responsibility to try to protect themselves against allegations), the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, the online safety policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- School online safety which includes the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring
- The early help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- Children's additional vulnerabilities such as; communication difficulties, SEMH or EAL
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by other children
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

7. If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

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

Synergy Schools **standard procedure is to tell the DSL** / Deputy DSLs as soon as possible of any concerns or if you make a referral directly.

When staff identify something which leads them to suspect that abuse may have taken place, the information is reported verbally to any of the DSL / Deputy DSLs
The concern is also recorded on schools' electronic system as soon as possible.

If physical abuse is suspected, a 'body map' will be used to record the site and extent of any injury that has been noticed. These should be electronically recorded.

Records on electronic Safeguarding Records should include:

- The date and time of the observation/allegation / disclosure
- Full information including verbatim accounts, when possible, of the incident
- Comments about the child's appearance, behaviour, emotional state and actions
- Clear description of any injury as well as detailed on the body map

Requests for support from the Blackpool Families Rock Request for Support Hub (REFERRALS) should be made using the online form here.

8. If a child makes a disclosure to you

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

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation on the electronic safeguarding system as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.
- Verbally inform the DSL / deputy DSL. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process
- Bear in mind that some children may:
- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

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

Appendix 4 includes a clear flow of the above actions

9. Identifying Children and Young People who may Need Early Help

Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area. Some early help is provided through "universal services", such as education and health services. They are universal services because they are available to all families, regardless of their needs.

Other early help services are coordinated by a local authority and/or their partners to address specific concerns within a family and can be described as targeted early help. Examples of these include parenting support, mental health support, youth services, youth offending teams and housing and employment services.

Synergy Education Trust recognises that effective safeguarding begins before birth. Staff should be aware that concerns regarding parental mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse, exploitation, homelessness or other vulnerabilities may indicate that an unborn child requires support, protection or early intervention. Where concerns are identified, the school will work with relevant agencies and contribute to pre-birth planning and assessments where appropriate.

Early help may be appropriate for children and families who have several needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable. It is a voluntary approach, requiring the family's consent to receive support and services offered. These may be provided before and/or after statutory intervention.

The school will support local organisations and agencies to work together to support families within the early help service and will:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help which considers the needs of all members of the family.
- Ensure good ongoing communication, for example, through regular meetings between practitioners who are working with the family.
- Co-ordinate and/or provide support as part of a plan to improve outcomes. This plan will be designed together with the child and family and updated as and when the child and family needs change.
- Engage effectively with families and their family network, making use of family group decision making to help meet the needs of the child.

10. Identifying Children and Young People who are Suffering or Likely to Suffer Significant Harm

Our staff understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can indicate that children are at an increased risk of harm.

Our requirements of staff are aligned to para 19-28 of KCSIE 2026, to ensure that:

- All staff understand Abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- All staff are aware of indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation to assist in the early identification of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- All staff are aware that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others, for example, all forms of domestic abuse.

- All staff are aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events. Staff recognise that children may experience multiple and long-term forms of abuse, neglect exploitation and disadvantage simultaneously. Assessments and support will take account of cumulative harm and the interaction between vulnerabilities, adverse childhood experiences, contextual risks and protective factors. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).
- All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments.
- All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation in situations outside their families.

11. Working Together to Safeguard Children, Our Multi-Agency Commitment

Synergy Schools are aware of and will always act in line with CSAP procedures included within this document.

Furthermore, we commit to:

- Working with social care, the police health services, and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, including providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.
- Maintaining robust professional curiosity and to provide timely, respectful and robust professional challenge where information, decisions, practice or circumstances do not appear to promote the safety, welfare or best interests of a child. Staff are also expected to respond openly and positively to challenge from others as part of effective safeguarding practice.

12. Information Sharing - GDPR

We recognise that information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, in promoting children's welfare, including educational outcomes. We understand our powers and duties to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

- We will proactively share information early
- We will not assume someone else will act

We understand that The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about the sharing of information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

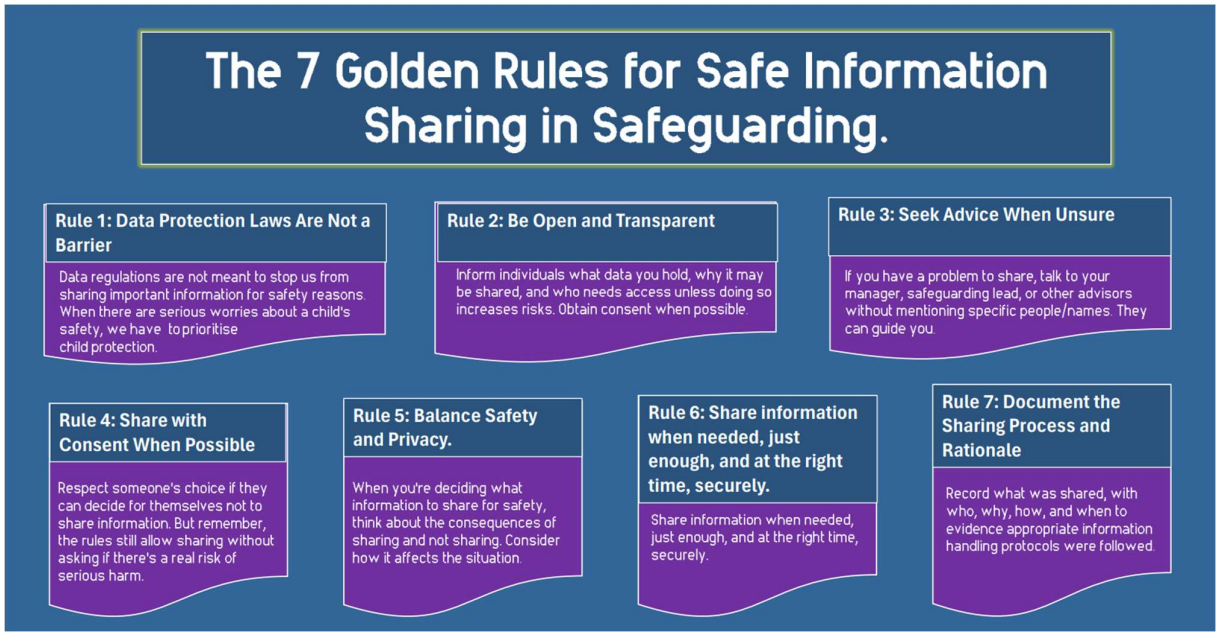
As a Trust we commit to the sharing of information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns regarding the safety and welfare of children.

13. Confidentiality

All Synergy Schools have implemented GDPR procedures and staff are trained annually in this area.

In addition to the above:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information and will support staff who must make decisions about sharing information.



- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or DDSL.

14. Training

14.1 All staff

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

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment in line with the School Behaviour Policy
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils
- Have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

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

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, as applicable.

14.2 The DSL and DDSL/Team

The DSL and DDSL/Team will undertake full child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

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

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

14.3 Governors

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

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding
- As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Head of School, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

14.4 Staff Involved in Recruitment – interview panels

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

14.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families

All staff who have contact with children and families will have access to the Safeguarding team as required for support, coaching and training. This is to promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

A safeguarding training log will be held in the school recording the training that has been undertaken by the DSL, all staff. This log is updated regularly.

15. Opportunities to teach safeguarding

Synergy Schools teach pupils about safeguarding, including online safety and healthy relationships and recognise that effective education is tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

The safeguarding curriculum is considered as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum, including covering relevant issues for schools through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education. In teaching these subjects we commit to ensuring that we comply with statutory guidance.

The Trust recognises that school plays a crucial role in preventative education, in the context of a whole school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

The Trust recognises the national focus on preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). Schools will actively challenge misogyny, gender-based harassment, harmful stereotypes and behaviours which contribute to abuse and violence. Preventative education will promote respectful relationships, equality and consent

When schools invite external organisations and / or visitors to enrich their safeguarding curriculum, they ensure that they review the educational value and age appropriateness of what they will deliver.

16. Online Safety and the use of mobile technology

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

To address this, our schools aim to:

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

Schools will maintain and regularly review clear mobile phone and smart device expectations for pupils, staff, visitors and volunteers.

Please see ICT Acceptable Use and Staff Code of Conduct Policies for further information

16.1 The 4 key categories of risk

Synergy Education Trust approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

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

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

1. Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
    - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
    - Keeping personal information private
    - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
    - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
2. Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year
3. Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We also share clear procedures with them, so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
4. Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
    - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
    - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras unless this has been agreed for a short-term specific purpose and deletion of these images is witnessed by a member of SLT
5. Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones

6. Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems. Reviews are carried our more frequently if concerns arise.
7. The Local Governing Body will ensure filtering and monitoring arrangements are formally reviewed and recorded at least annually, with findings reported to trustees.

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. **Please see ICT Acceptable Use and Staff Code of Conduct Policies for further information.**

17. Remote Education

Where children are being asked to learn online at home, the school will use the information provided by DfE, NSPCC and PSHE Association to do so safely; and our regular communications with parents and carers will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.

We will ensure that parents and carers are aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.

18. Online Information Security, Filters, Access and Monitoring

Surf Protect: Filtering

Securus: Monitoring

Synergy Schools will have appropriate filters in place to reasonably limit exposure to risks from the use of school's technology. In applying appropriate controls, they will consider the number of and age range of our children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often children are accessing technology. Filtering will be monitored routinely to ensure that it is working,

Staff will be trained to understand their role in ensuring that they remain vigilant to the risks associated with accessing technology within school and understand their role in monitoring pupil use as part of their role as much as is reasonably possible.

Each Local governing body commits to ensuring that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, without "over blocking" to avoid unreasonable restrictions as to what children can access to use technology effectively to support their learning.

The leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

19. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Synergy Education Trust recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI also has the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g., through bullying and grooming), allowing for false accusations to be made against other pupils or staff (e.g., using 'deepfakes') and/or expose pupils to harmful content. The Trust recognises the safeguarding risks associated with AI-generated imagery, deepfakes and image manipulation technologies, including the creation or distribution of sexually explicit or abusive content. We will respond to any misuse of AI in line with Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

The Local Governing Body will ensure staff are aware of the risks and capabilities of using AI tools and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

All staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. Our school's filtering and monitoring systems also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

20. External Monitoring of Safeguarding, including Ofsted Inspections

The governing body is aware of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and the guidance to inspectors on inspecting safeguarding and commit to ensuring that internal safeguarding procedures are in line with the requirements laid out within this guidance.

The governing body will seek to explore opportunities for external monitoring of the school's safeguarding processes and expect all staff to engage positively with any external safeguarding monitoring.

21. Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations about any Staff, Volunteers, or Contractors

Synergy Schools have procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) and provides training to staff so that they understand their responsibility to demonstrate professional curiosity and challenge.

Concerns and allegations that may meet the harm threshold will be addressed as set out in Section one of Part 4 of KCSIE and in line with local CSAP procedures. Part 4 of KCSIE sets out the definition of an allegation:

Where it is alleged that a person who works or volunteers with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- The governing body is aware that there is a legal duty in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned and failure to refer when the criteria are met is a criminal offence.

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

The Head of School/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Procedures Manual. 6.4 Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the Head of School, report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

Where appropriate, the school will inform Ofsted of the allegation and actions taken, within the necessary timescale

22. Addressing Child-on-Child Abuse, including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

All Synergy staff are trained to recognise that children can abuse other children (including online). We expect all staff to read Part 5 of KCSIE 2026 to ensure that they have a secure understanding of the types of abuse that can occur, including harmful sexual behaviour between children.

Synergy Education Trust recognises the importance of creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

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

To achieve this, our schools will:

1. Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
2. Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
3. Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
4. Ensure pupils can easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
5. Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
6. Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
7. Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
8. Consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment

Ensure staff are trained to understand:

How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports

- That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
- That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
- Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
- A friend may make a report
- A member of staff may overhear a conversation
- A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they must play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

23. If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

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

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

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

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

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

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

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

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

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

Additional information can be found in **Appendix 2**

24. Supporting Children and Young People Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

We ensure that all staff understand that whilst all children should be protected, we also recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm, including those with a social worker. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. We ensure that all staff understand the full impact of this and are trauma informed in their approach to all children.

Furthermore, for children potentially at risk of further harm, we commit to:

- Working with the Local Authority and other statutory and non-statutory partners to make decisions in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.
- Taking swift and decisive action where there are early indicators of potential harm such as, responding to unauthorised absence or children absent from education where there are known safeguarding risks.
- Ensuring appropriate and swift sharing of information with partners in line with information sharing legislation.
- Promoting the welfare of our children potentially at greater risk of harm in a holistic way (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

25. Children Absent from Education

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from school or missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

26. Elective Home Education (EHE)

We recognise that many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience and expect the parents' decision to home educate be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education

can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

The schools will inform the Trust and the Local Authority of any requests for EHE.

27. Supporting Children Requiring Mental Health Support

We recognise that the school has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils and recognise that Mental Health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We recognise also that poor mental health can pose a significant safeguarding risk for children.

All Synergy Schools work closely and have access to a range of mental health external agencies.

Staff will recognise that mental health difficulties may be both a safeguarding concern and an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation or trauma. Concerns relating to a child's wellbeing will be assessed holistically alongside family, educational and safeguarding circumstances.

Furthermore, we commit to:

- Ensuring that clear systems and processes are in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems and there is an integrated, whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of our pupils.

28. Supporting Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, Including Care Leavers and Kinship Care

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

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads
- There is an appointed designated teacher in each school who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.
- The designated teacher will maintain awareness of the role of the Virtual School Head in supporting children living in kinship care arrangements and will work collaboratively with relevant agencies to support educational achievement, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after, previously looked-after and kinship care children are quickly and effectively responded to

- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plan

29. Supporting pupils with a social worker

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

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

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

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

30. Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities (SEND) or Health Issues

Synergy Education Trust recognises that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect or exploitation for some children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges.

We commit to:

- Training staff to understand the additional barriers that can exist for some children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions.
- Ensuring that we consider what additional and different measures we can put in place to support these children to recognise and communicate abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Adhering to the safeguarding guidance laid out in the SEND code of practice and the supporting pupils at school with medical conditions guidance.

31. Alternative provision and pupils at risk of exclusion

When considering use of exclusion or suspension the school is mindful of the exclusions and suspensions guidance and aware of the potential negative impact of exclusion on mental health and safeguarding risk of being excluded from school.

The school recognises that the cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs and we are aware of the additional risk of harm that our pupils may be vulnerable to. We will have regard for DfE statutory guidance for commissioners of Alternative Provision and will work to local protocols.

The school and Alternative Provision Lead will liaise closely with the attendance and safeguarding lead, ensuring the safeguarding of each pupil. The Alternative Provision must contact the school to confirm attendance within 30 minutes after registers have closed. In the event the school has not been informed the school must contact the Alternative Provision.

Those pupils accessing an alternative provision will receive a first day absence call from the Alternative Provision. Home visits, where absences are unexplained, will be arranged on an individual basis with school and the Alternative Provision.

School will obtain written confirmation that safeguarding checks have been completed by the provider. The provider must notify the school of any staff changes or risks in line with KCSIE 2026 parts 2 and 3. School will keep a record of the AP sites a child attends and will review the child's placement at least every half term to ensure safety and suitability. School will immediately review or end placements if safeguarding concerns arise.

School will maintain accurate records of pupils with regards to safeguarding / Child protection, attendance, behaviour, academic progress and pupil emotional wellbeing. This will be informed by communication with the Alternative Provision.

It is the school's responsibility to invite the Alternative Provision to any social care meetings or reviews. If there are any updates to a pupil's social care involvement (e.g. change of social worker, step-up, step-down) these must also be shared. School will delegate appropriate staff to represent the school and pupil at these meetings.

The school and the Alternative Provision will maintain a copy of each other's safeguarding policy. The school takes responsibility for Pupil Welfare involvement, PVP information, Operation Encompass information, invitation to MARRAC, relaying information to social care.

Making a request for support should be a joint decision unless in the case of an emergency then this lies with the establishment who has the child on the day of need and then relays the information to the other establishment in a timely manner.

32. Supporting Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

Synergy Education Trust recognises that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. All Synergy Schools include detail in their Behaviour policy on how they prevent bullying based on gender or sexuality.

We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

When families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning pupils, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, schools will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Schools will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where pupils can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

33. The use of 'Reasonable Force' to Safeguard Children

'Reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed.' The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

We will ensure that our staff are trained in positive handling to ensure that they are able to undertake this role safely.

The school does not have a 'no contact' policy as this can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils and students. The school adopts policies, which allow and support the staff to make appropriate physical contact. The decision on whether to use reasonable force to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances including consideration of whether the child has Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), mental health or with a medical condition.

34. Use of School Premises for Non-School Related Activities

When Schools hire or rent out school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) they will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

When services or activities are provided by the school, under the direct supervision or management of our school staff, the child protection and safeguarding policy will apply in relation to any safeguarding concerns or allegations.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, schools will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed) though aspects of this policy may not apply. Where this is the case, schools will ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate as outlined in keeping children safe in out-of-school settings guidance 2023.

35. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies

35.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with the procedures set out in the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Procedures Manual.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

35.2 Other complaints

Other complaints will be investigated following the Schools Complaints Procedure (available on individual school websites) and considering the of requirements related to complaints set out in the safeguarding and welfare section of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (paragraph 3.75).

35.3 Whistleblowing

All Whistle-blowing policies are available to staff via the schools individual sharing portals and the school website.

36. Record-keeping and Retention

Schools will hold records in line with Synergy Education Trust's records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme, etc.

Records will include:

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

Concerns and referrals will be kept electronically in a separate child protection file for each child.

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

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period after they have left the school, in line with Synergy Education Trust's records retention schedule

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

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

- 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within
- The first 5 days of the start of a new term
- In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

37. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy Inc. Positive handling
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy.
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- First Aid
- Complaints
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy
- Intimate care policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy.
- Health and safety policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistleblowing policy
- Attendance policy
- Procedures for managing child-on-child abuse.
- Procedures for managing sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Educational off sites visits policy
- Recruitment Policy and Procedures
- PSHE, including RSE policy
- Cyber Security Policy

Appendix 1: Types of Abuse

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

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

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

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 2: Specific Safeguarding Issues

Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

Staff have an understanding that 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.

Staff have a duty of care to ensure as children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe in the community, staff will focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers

Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

Staff are trained in Criminal Exploitation and County Lines. They receive training on gangs and organised crime networks and how they groom and exploit children to sell drugs using dedicated phone lines. Staff are trained to look for the signs that children may be involved. A record of all training is held centrally in school.

Staff have a duty of care towards children with family members in prison. Staff should help to build their resilience. Listen to them. Be supportive. Work with other agencies to provide support.

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- Through violence or the threat of violence.

In addition, CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas, within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". Typically, the gang exploits young or vulnerable people to store and/or supply drugs, move cash and to secure the use of homes belonging to vulnerable adults. There is a crossover between CSE and County Lines and young people are sometimes required to offer sex to pay off perceived debts.

Concerns about young people being possibly involved are passed to the DSL who will refer to Police and the Blackpool Families Rock request for Support Hub.

Modern Day Slavery

Modern slavery includes:

- Forced labour- Victims are forced to work against their will, often for very long hours for little or no pay in dire conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence
- Debt bondage – Victims are forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to
- Sexual exploitation - Victims are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will, such as prostitution, escort work and pornography. Adults are coerced under threat
- Criminal exploitation - Often controlled and maltreated, victims are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing against their will

- Domestic servitude - Victims are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores in private households with little or no pay, restricted movement, very limited or no free time and minimal privacy, often sleeping where they work

Human trafficking involves the recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into one of the above situations.

Concerns about young people or family member possibly being involved are passed to the DSL who will refer to Police and the Blackpool Families Rock request for Support Hub.

Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Missing Pupil During the School Day

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school site during the school day unless authorised in accordance with school procedures.

In the event that a pupil is suspected to be missing from the school site during the school day, the following procedures should be followed:

- The member of staff who identifies that a pupil is missing must immediately inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Relevant administrative staff should be informed and will act as a central point of contact for receiving and sharing information.
- The SLT will coordinate the response and deploy staff as necessary, ensuring appropriate supervision of all remaining pupils.
- An immediate and systematic search of the school site will be undertaken, including classrooms, toilets, communal areas, outdoor spaces and any other areas where the pupil may reasonably be located. Where available, CCTV footage may be reviewed to support enquiries.
- Staff involved in the search should maintain effective communication throughout the process using agreed school communication systems.

If the pupil is not located following the initial search:

- Parents/carers will be contacted using the emergency contact details held by the school.
- Where appropriate, and in accordance with safeguarding procedures, other professionals involved with the child or family may be informed.
- If the pupil's whereabouts remain unknown and all reasonable enquiries have been exhausted, the police will be contacted without delay.

Recording and Reporting

- The incident must be recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding and record-keeping procedures, including a detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing and the actions taken in response.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed and involved as appropriate.

When the Pupil is Found

- Once located, the pupil's immediate safety and welfare will be assessed, and appropriate support provided.
- Parents/carers, the police (if involved), and any relevant agencies will be informed that the pupil has been found.
- The school will consider any appropriate follow-up actions, including safeguarding responses, behaviour support, risk assessment reviews, and any necessary interventions to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence.

Review Following the Incident

- The incident should be reviewed by school leaders to identify any lessons learned and determine whether further investigation is required.
- Relevant policies, procedures, support plans, safeguarding plans and individual risk assessments will be reviewed and updated where necessary.

- Any learning identified should be shared appropriately to strengthen future practice and safeguard pupils effectively.

Professional wanting to take child from the setting during the school day

We have clear safeguarding procedure whenever a social worker, police officer, or other professional wishes to speak to a child or remove a child from the setting during the school day. The process should always be managed through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a senior leader.

Any request by Children's Social Care, Police, or another safeguarding agency to see or remove a pupil from school during the school day must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head. The identity and authority of the professional will be verified before access to the child is granted. Parents/carers will normally be informed unless this would place the child at risk or compromise a safeguarding or criminal investigation. A full written record of the visit and any actions taken will be retained on the pupil's safeguarding file.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence. Girls are at risk of criminal exploitation, but their experience may be different.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Children may become trapped as they or their families may be threatened with violence, and they may be coerced or entrapped into carrying weapons as a form of protection.

Children involved in criminal exploitation must be treated as victims themselves, even though they may commit crimes themselves.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Being secretive
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school and online.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Teenage relationship abuse between peers who are in intimate personal relationships
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical violence)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes' images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

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

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 21 of this policy.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (gifts, status, affection) and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or intimidation to frighten or force the child or young person

making them feel like they have no choice. They may lend them large sums of money that they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse to control them.

Children can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They are moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship and not understand that they are being 'groomed.'

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Domestic Abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. The abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional.

Older children may also be victims or experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships too, but they may also

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the DSL) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This is the procedure where police forces are part of **Operation Encompass.**

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 22 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

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

A girl:

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

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

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
- Having limited level of integration within UK society
- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period

- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to consider the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

'Honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

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

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Terrorism is an action that:

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

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

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

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC says that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others

- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

Staff should always act if they are worried.

Non-collection of children

Parents are reminded of the importance of collecting their children on time and/or being at home to receive their child and of the expectation that they should contact school as soon as it appears there may be a problem. School will ensure that telephones are answered throughout the school day and whilst any pupil may be on the premises. Repeated failures by a parent/carer to fulfil their responsibilities will be considered as part of the school child protection procedures.

School will not release a child to a person who is not known to them or acting with the parent's written permission. Where there is any doubt as to the identity or suitability of a person and there is no other way of ensuring a child's safety, this will be referred to the police as an emergency.

In the event of a child not being collected at the end of the day, school will take active steps to contact the parent, carer or emergency contact by telephone. If contact cannot be established school staff will contact the Pupil Welfare Service who can support (01253 476478/01253 476588) by completing a home visit or supporting liaison between school and the MASH duty team. A timescale for further actions will be agreed, and school will agree on a suitable time to hand-over the child, as appropriate.

After school club:

Where a child who is normally collected at the end of the club or session, is not collected by a responsible person, contact will be made with the child's parent or carer or the emergency contact. If the child remains uncollected 30 minutes after the end of the session, unless other arrangements have been made. i.e. car broke down, parents will get there as soon as possible, a senior member of school staff will contact the Pupil Welfare Service.

Children on transport:

Established procedures require escorts/drivers to notify the pupil' school if they are unable to drop-off a pupil at their home or meeting point due to the absence of the parent or carer.

Schools will ensure that contact telephone numbers are staffed until the end of the transport round to facilitate this communication and to be available to parents to report a problem.

The driver will then be asked to return the pupil to school. School will attempt to call contact numbers on pupil records including the emergency contact in the interim period. If contact cannot be established, a senior member of school staff will contact the Pupil Welfare Service.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, likely, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's or college's duty and responsibilities to protect other children or family members.

If the DSL decides to make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered to them.

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk. Children who have SEN are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Not promising confidentiality
- Understanding that child-on-child abuse may be taking place, even if not reported.
- Understanding that it may be happening online
- Challenging all inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

- If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in this policy, as appropriate.

Responding to a report of sexual harassment and sexual violence:

- The DSL should take the lead role in any investigation
- As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, the DSL should ensure that school staff should protect the anonymity of any children involved
- The DSL should follow normal safeguarding procedures and make a referral to the police or local authority children's social care if a child is a risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed.
- When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The DSL should contact both victim and perpetrator parents or carers to inform them of the incident.
- Social media is likely to play a role in the fallout from any incident/alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side- the DSL should consider appropriate steps to minimise this risk factor.
- School can take disciplinary sanctions whilst other investigations are ongoing (e.g. Police investigations), but this should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis. Both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors in determining appropriate next steps.
- The DSL should ensure that appropriate school and specialist support is offered to both parties as children who display harmful sexual behaviours may have experienced their own abuse and trauma.

Serious violence

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

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

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

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

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

Appendix 3: Safer recruitment

Recruitment procedures will comply with Part Three of KCSIE 2026, including online searches, identity verification, qualification checks, prohibition checks where applicable and regulated activity requirements

- for further information please refer to the recruitment policy