



Safeguarding Policy Including Child Protection Policy (Procedures)

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1. Aims

At Willow Bank School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We are committed and passionate in ensuring that everyone feels safe and is safe. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where pupils are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that pupils receive effective support, protection, and justice. Child protection forms part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy underpins and guides procedures and protocols to ensure its pupils and staff are safe.

The school aims to ensure that:

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

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) (statutory guidance for schools and colleges) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- [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
- [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

Willow Bank Schools has a legal obligation to pass on concerns about child welfare to St. Helens Children and Young People's Services (social care). If you need any further information, please visit <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/> or contact them direct on 01744 676767 Emergency Duty Team on 0345 050 0148.

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

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

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

Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children

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

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

4. Equality statement

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

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 9)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 11)

5. Roles and responsibilities

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

5.1 All staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff, code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy, the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The early help 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 sexual exploitation (CSE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation

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

5.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is the first point of contact for any safeguarding or child protection incident or concern. The DSL is responsible for the leadership and management of safeguarding.

The responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead include:

Work with others

The DSL should:

- Work with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure safeguarding is at the heart of an organisation's ethos and that all staff are supported in knowing how to recognise and respond to potential concerns.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to keep them informed of any safeguarding of issues especially ongoing enquiries and police investigations.
- As required, liaise with the local authority Case Manager or the Designated Officer at the local authority if a concern has arisen regarding a member of staff.
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

Manage referrals

The DSL should:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to Children's Social Care, and support staff who have raised concerns about a child or have made a referral to Children's Social Care.
- Where there are concerns about radicalisation, to make referrals to the Channel programme and offer support to other staff who have concerns about radicalisation (England and Wales only)
- Refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Disclosure Scotland, or Access NI where a member of staff has been dismissed following concerns, they posed a risk to a child.
- Refer cases to the police where a crime has been or may have been committed.

Undertake training and develop knowledge

In addition to formal training, the DSL should keep knowledge and skills up to date via online training, e-bulletins, opportunities to network with other DSLs, and attend locally arranged briefings. These opportunities should be taken up at least once a year but more regularly if possible so that the DSL:

- Understands the referral and assessment process for early help and intervention.

- Knows about child protection case conferences and reviews and can contribute to these effectively when required.
- Ensures that all staff have access to and understand the organisation's child protection policy.
- Is aware of the needs of any vulnerable children i.e., those with special educational needs, young carers and those receiving support from the local authority including a child in need, a child on a child protection plan or a looked after child.
- Keeps detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns and referrals.
- Understands the role of the organisation in terms of the Prevent duty where required.
- Attends refresher and other relevant training.
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in terms of what the school does to protect them.

Raise awareness

The Designated Safeguarding Lead's role is to:

- Work with the governing body to ensure the organisation's child protection policy is updated and renewed annually and that all members of staff have access to it and understand it.
- Provide regular briefings and updates at staff, departmental and Trustee meetings to help ensure that everyone is kept up to date on latest policy developments and reminded of their responsibilities.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and that parents are aware of the policy and that organisations may make referrals to children's social care if there are concerns about abuse or neglect.
- Link with the Local Safeguarding Partnership, to keep up to date with training opportunities and the latest local policies.

Record keeping

It is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of safeguarding concerns. These records are confidential and should be kept separately from other records. They should include a chronology of concerns, referrals, meetings, phone calls and emails.

Training of other staff

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, working with the organisations Director/Minister, to ensure all staff:

- Have induction training covering child protection, an understanding of safeguarding issues including the causes of abuse and neglect. Are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, respond to disclosures appropriately and respond effectively and in a timely fashion when they have concerns.

It is good practice to invite all Trustees to this training (not just the nominated Trustee for child protection) so that they all have a basic awareness of child protection.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL at Willow Bank School is Mr Jon McKune (Safeguarding and Engagement Leader) Email: jon.mckune@sthelens.org.uk. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

The deputy DSL's are Mrs Duffy (Senior Mental Health Lead & Pastoral Coordinator) and Mrs Savage (Attendance and Family support officer).

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

Outside of hours, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr McKune (Safeguarding and Engagement Leader) can be contacted by email or phone.

When the DSL is absent, the deputy DSL's Mrs Duffy (Senior Mental Health Lead & Pastoral Coordinator) and Mrs Savage (Attendance and Family support officer) will act as cover.

Safeguarding Governor: Heather Addison. Email: heatheraddison@sthelens.gov.uk (see useful contacts for details)

Role of a Safeguarding Governor

The Safeguarding Governor plays a crucial role in ensuring that the school adheres to safeguarding policies and procedures to protect the welfare of all students. Their responsibilities include:

- Oversight and Monitoring: Regularly reviewing safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to ensure they are effective and compliant with statutory requirements.
- Training and Awareness: Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and are aware of their responsibilities.
- Support and Challenge: Providing support to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and challenging the school leadership to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority.
- Reporting: Keeping the governing board informed about safeguarding issues, trends, and the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding measures.
- Confidentiality: Maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity when dealing with safeguarding matters.

By fulfilling these roles, the Safeguarding Governor helps create a safe and supportive environment for all pupils.

The DSL 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

The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

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

5.3 The governing body

The governing board will approve this policy at each review; ensure it complies with the law and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL.

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

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE statutory guidance for schools and colleges). Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

5.4 The headteacher

The headteacher 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
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, supervision, funding, training, and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent

- › Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly
- › Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
 - Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable

5.5: Roles of Staff

All staff members have a duty to:

- Be Vigilant: Recognise signs of abuse or neglect and report concerns immediately.
- Follow Procedures: Adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Attend Training: Participate in regular safeguarding training to stay updated on best practices.
- Support pupils: Provide a safe and supportive environment for all students, ensuring their well-being is prioritised.
- Adhere to the staff code of conduct (see separate policy)

6. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information sharing and Confidentiality are issues which need to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection.

Questions and Answers:

Q: How do you ensure that parents, governors and every adult working in or with Willow Bank understands the need for and basic principles regarding confidentiality?

A: By direct communication, telephone calls, written Safeguarding article/statements in the Willow Bank Newsletter. Each half-term Parents Evening

Q: Why must an adult working with a child never guarantee confidentiality to a child?

A: To ensure and keep a child from further risk of harm and danger

Q: What should they say to a child who asks the adult to keep a secret and how should the child be advised that the information may need to be shared with others?

A: It is very important to keep you safe from harm and danger from others. To do this I cannot promise you not to tell other adults

Q: Who should be given information relating to a child about there are concerns and who should not be given this information?

A: The designated safeguarding lead (Mr J. McKune) should be told directly any information regarding Child Protection issues or any concerns or worries about a child. The school will always seek consent and discuss concerns with parents or carers unless doing so could place the child or young person at further risk.

Q: Who should be contacted under the Front Door Team procedures?

A: The St Helens Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub / Front Door team as the first port of call. This applies to reports from council staff, the public, and partners and outside agencies.

Online Service Request Forms are completed through <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/concern>

MASH / Front Door Contact Centre team: 01744 676767

Emergency Duty Team: 0345 050 0148.

Immediate risk of significant harm: If a child or young person is in immediate risk of significant harm, staff should call **Police 999** without delay. This action is necessary when:

- There is an urgent threat to the child's or young person's safety or life.
- A serious crime is in progress, such as physical or sexual abuse.
- Immediate intervention is required to prevent harm.

In these situations, contacting the police ensures prompt protection and support for the child or young person at risk

Practitioners work together best to safeguard children where there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties but may be waived in the circumstances set out below.

In some circumstances, achieving consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictate that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt. Where consent cannot be obtained to share information or consent is refused or where seeking it may undermine the prevention, detection, or prosecution of a crime the practitioner must judge from the facts whether there is enough public interest to justify sharing information. A concern in relation to protecting a child from significant harm, promoting the welfare of children, protecting adults from serious harm or preventing crime and disorder are all well within public interest. The Public Interest test means that practitioners must decide whether sharing information is a necessary and proportionate response to the need to protect the child in question. The decision-making process must weigh up what might happen if the information is shared against what might happen if it is not shared.

Further guidance on information sharing can be found at

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/strategy/integratedworking/a0072915/information-sharing>

Further information on our confidentiality and data protection compliance please visit <http://www.WillowBank.st-helens.sch.uk> for full statement and policies.

It is also important to note that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 14, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

7. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue. Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

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

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. You can speak to the DSL for advice and guidance, but **anyone can make a referral**.

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

Making Referrals to CSC

Child In Need (CIN) /Section 17 Referrals

Where a parent/carer/young person refuses to consent, you should make clear your ongoing plans and responsibilities in respect of support, monitoring etc and the possibility of a child protection referral at some point in future if things deteriorate or do not improve. (This is not about threats or saying that this is inevitable but about openness and transparency in dealings with parents).

Child Protection/Section 47 Referral

- Make a telephone call to Front Door Team and forward for consideration.
- You do not require the consent of a parent or child/young person to make a child protection referral; however, this should be obtained in most cases.
- A parent should, under most circumstances, be informed by the referrer that a child protection referral is to be made. The criteria for not informing parents are:
 - a) Because this would increase the risk of significant harm to a child(ren); or
 - b) Because, in the referrer’s professional opinion, to do so might impede an investigation that may need to be undertaken.
 - c) Because there would be an undue delay caused by seeking consent which would not serve the child’s best interests.

Fear of jeopardising a working relationship with parents because of a need to refer is not sufficient justification for not making a referral nor for not telling them that you need to refer. Lack of openness will do little to foster ongoing trust, particularly as the source of referrals will be disclosed to parents except in a limited number of circumstances. If you feel that your own or another adult’s immediate safety would be placed at risk by informing parents, then you should seek advice and/or make this clear on the EHAT and in any telephone contact with Front Door Team.

Front Door Team Responses to Referrals and Timescales

In response to a referral, Front Door Team may decide to:

- Provide advice to the referrer and/or child/family
- Refer on to another agency who can provide services
- Convene a Strategy Meeting (within five working days)
- Provide support services under Section 17
- Undertake an Initial Assessment (completed within ten working days)

- › Convene an Initial Child Protection Conference (within 15 working days of a Strategy Meeting)
- › Undertake a Core Assessment (completed within 35 working days)
- › Accommodate the child under Section 20 (with parental consent)
- › Make an application to court for an Order
- › Take no further action

Feedback from Front Door Team

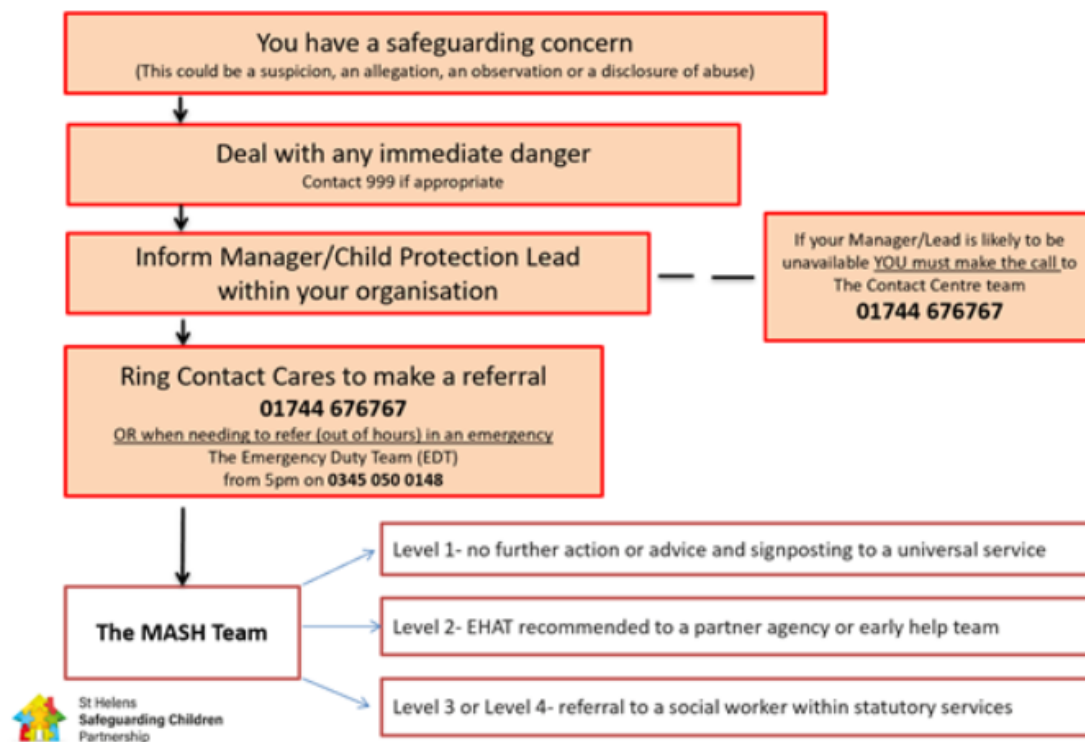
Front Door Team has 24 hours within which to make a decision about a course of action in response to a referral. A DCPP should expect to receive written confirmation about action following any referral within 7 days. If you do not receive any (same day) verbal feedback following an urgent child protection referral, and where this places a child or children in a vulnerable position, you should ask to speak to a Duty Social Worker, or the relevant Team Manager.

Risk Assessment 'Checklist'

- › Does/could the suspected harm meet the Safeguarding Children's Partnership definitions of abuse?
- › Have you referred to the St Helens Descriptions of need
<https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/p/procedures/st-helens-descriptions-of-need>
- › Are there cultural, linguistic or disability issues?
- › Am I wrongly attributing something to impairment?
- › Does the chronology indicate any possible patterns which could/do impact upon the level of risk?
- › Are any injuries or incidents acute, cumulative, episodic?
- › Did any injuries result from spontaneous action, neglect, or intent?
- › Explanations consistent with injuries/behaviour?
- › Severity and duration of any harm?
- › Effects upon the child's health/development?
- › Immediate/longer term effects?
- › Likelihood of recurrence?
- › Child's reaction?
- › Child's perception of the harm?
- › Child's needs, wishes and feelings?
- › Parent's/carer's attitudes/response to concerns?
- › How willing are they to cooperate?
- › What does the child mean to the family?
- › What role does the child play?
- › Possible effects of intervention?
- › Protective factors and strengths of/for child (i.e. resilience/vulnerability)
- › Familiar strengths and weaknesses?
- › When and how is the child at risk?
- › How imminent is any likely risk?
- › How grave are the possible consequences?

- How safe is this child?
- What are the risk assessment options?
- What are the risk management options?
- What is the interim plan?

St. Helens process for reporting concerns about children (Under 18)



If you suspect a child is being abused, please call The Contact Centre on **01744 676767**

Or in the case of an emergency outside normal office hours (after 5pm) you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0345 050 0148

What to do if you are not sure whether to make a contact or referral

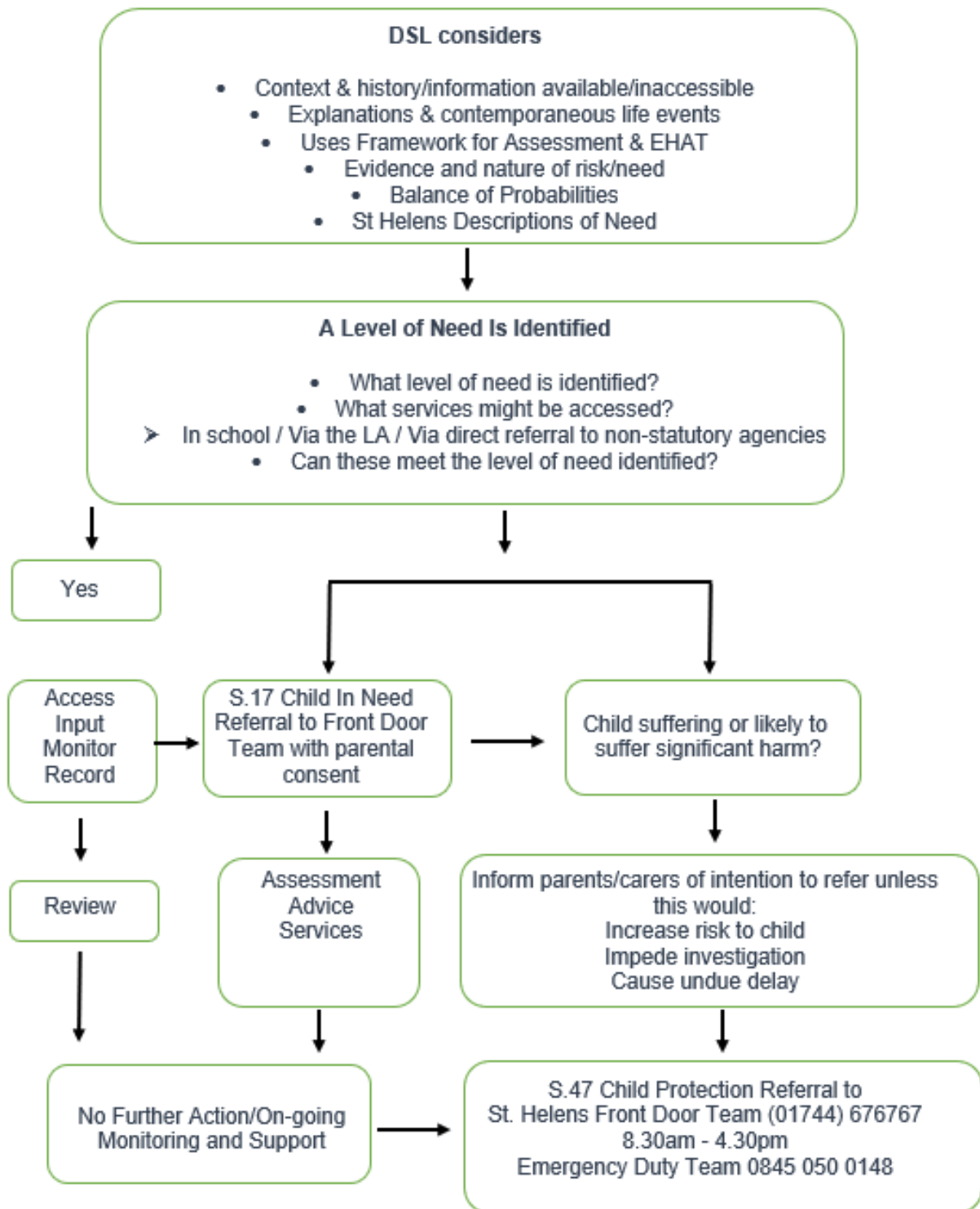
In addition, please see GOV.UK webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council:
<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

Willow Bank School Child Protection Flowchart

Staff member has concerns about a child's health, development, safety, or welfare.

Discuss with the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) as soon as possible.

All concerns should be reported and recorded on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System)



7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

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

- Report the concern on CPOMS (for the Safeguarding Team)
- 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 as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so

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

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE statutory guidance for schools and colleges) 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.

Any teacher who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a 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 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

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

Figure 1 on page 15 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

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

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

Early Help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. The DSL will keep the case under constant review, and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

It is very important that practitioners intervene as early as possible if a child or young person has additional needs and services can help in meeting these needs. Such action can help prevent problems becoming child protection concerns. In line with the Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families in St Helens [<https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/>] and the St Helens Descriptions of Need [<https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/p/procedures/st-helens-descriptions-of-need>], if required and appropriate, the DSL will complete an EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool) and be lead professional supporting the family and child at L2.

St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

Willow Bank School is committed to working in partnership with the St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection for all pupils. We follow the local safeguarding procedures and access guidance, resources, and training provided by the Partnership. Our safeguarding policies and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain in line with the latest updates and recommendations from the Partnership Board. Further information and resources can be found at www.sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk.

Safeguarding Curriculum

As part of our early help offer, we incorporate a comprehensive safeguarding curriculum to educate and empower our pupils. This includes:

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education): Covering topics such as emotional well-being, healthy relationships, and personal safety.

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education): Educating students on consent, respect, and healthy relationships to prevent abuse and exploitation.

Online Safety: Teaching pupils about the risks of the internet and how to stay safe online.

Preventative Work

- Our preventative work aims to address issues before they escalate. This includes:
- Workshops and Assemblies: Regular sessions on topics like bullying, mental health, and substance misuse.
- Parental Engagement: Providing resources and workshops to help parents support their children's well-being.
- Staff Training: Ensuring all staff are trained to recognise early signs of issues and know how to intervene effectively.

By integrating these elements into our early help offer, we aim to create a supportive environment that addresses the needs of our students and prevents problems from escalating to child protection concerns.

Escalation and Resolution

Occasionally situations arise when professionals in one agency feel that the actions, inactions or decisions of one agency do not adequately safeguard a child.

Disagreements may relate to

- The nature and level of a child's needs.
- The nature and severity of risk to a child; and/or
- The most appropriate way to reduce the risk to a child.

- The tasks that would be responsible to the roles of particular professionals; and/or
- The appropriate sharing of information.

All professionals have a duty to challenge the practice of other professionals if they are concerned that this is placing one or more children at risk of harm. At every stage of the process all decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, including the professional who raised the initial concern.

When the disagreement is resolved the agencies involved must agree a written statement of the outcome, including any consequent action to be taken.

If this process discloses gaps or weaknesses in the policies and procedures of St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership this must be brought to the attention of the chair of the Partnership.

Any professional who considers that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm must ensure that concerns are escalated in a timely manner on the same working day. In all other circumstances professionals should attempt to resolve disagreements within one working week.

See the School website for procedures for escalation and resolution. <http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk>

For further details on the St Helens Multi Agency Resolution procedure visit:

<https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/p/procedures/st-helens-multi-agency-resolution-policy>

7.5 If you have concerns about extremism

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.6 If you have a mental health concern

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

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

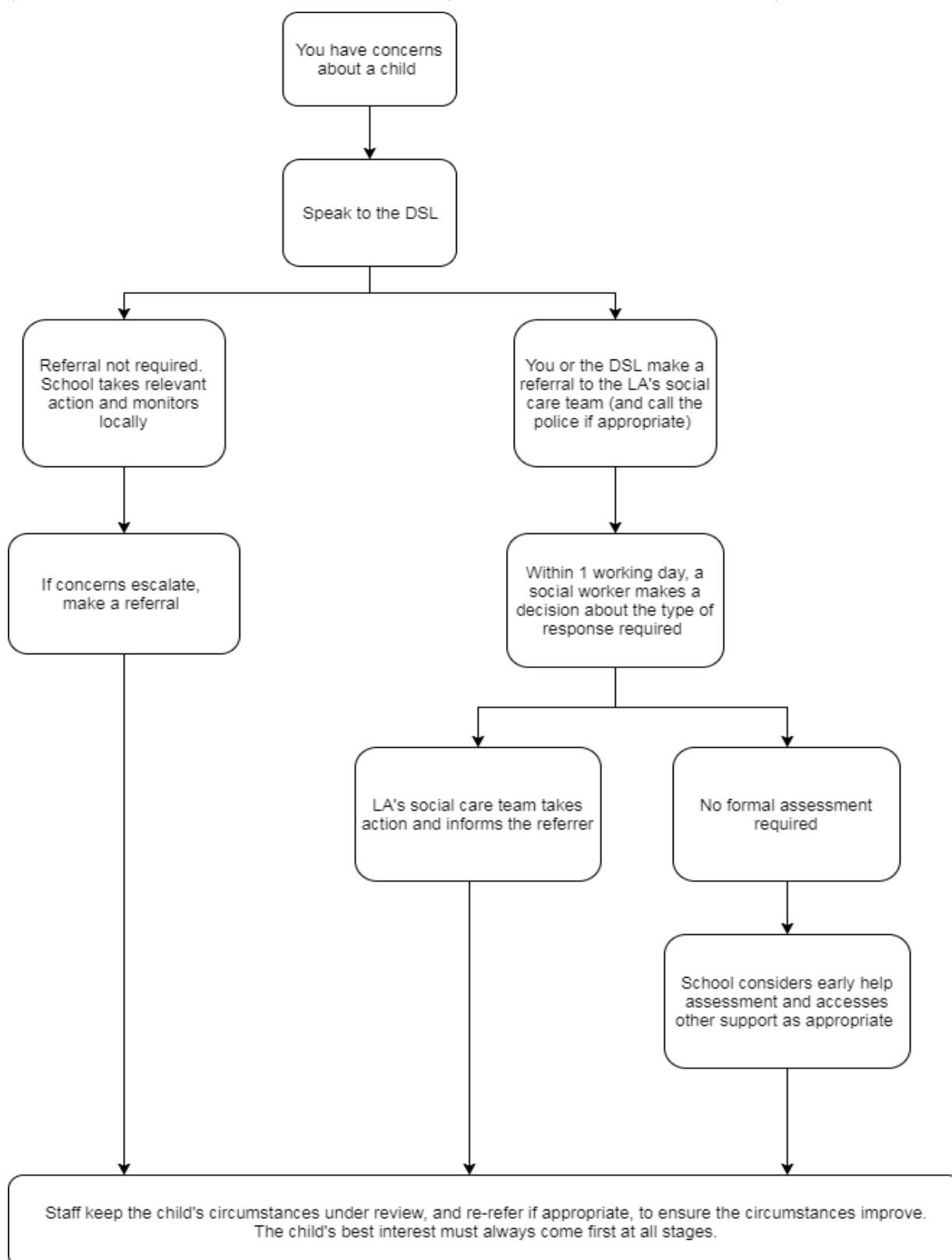
If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

For more information on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, visit the Department for Education guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 7.4 for what to do.)



7.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher or volunteer

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

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

7.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils (for further information on Child-on-Child abuse please refer to appendix 6)

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

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

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

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

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

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

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being 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
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially by having:
 - A Safeguarding team with an open-door policy. All pupils are made aware of the team members and information is in each class.
 - Half termly Voice of the Child sessions
 - A Pupil Safeguarding Counsel
 - Information, advice, and guidance / Safeguarding notice board and/or key contacts cards
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand 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

7.9 Sexting

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

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

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents should be involved)

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

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

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

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

Informing parents

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

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Safeguarding Team, by dialling 101

Recording incidents

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

Curriculum coverage

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding sexting as part of our PSHE education. Teaching covers the following in relation to sexting:

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

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

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

This policy on sexting is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

For further government guidance visit:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/sexting-advice-professionals>

8. Notifying parents

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

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

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

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

9. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

As an SEMH provision, all of our pupils have an Education, Health and Care plan, meaning many of them can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

10. 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

11. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

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

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

As part of their role, teachers will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

12. Mobile phones and cameras

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 members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

13. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies

13.1 Complaints against staff

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

For further information please see our complaints procedure <http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk>

13.3 Whistleblowing

For whistle-blowing information, see our complaints policy and procedure. <http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk>

Further advice or guidance can be found on:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact the NSPCC helpline on [0808 800 5000](tel:0808 800 5000), email help@nspcc.org.uk or fill in an online form.

14. Record-keeping

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

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

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

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

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 promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. 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.

Further safeguarding record-keeping arrangements

- Records are electronic and are stored on the Safeguarding Zdrive: This drive is confidential and is password protected. Only the Safeguarding Team have access to this.
- All records are either held on the Safeguarding Matrix (a school system used for monitoring Safeguarding, Wellbeing, and all Pastoral issues) stored on the Safeguarding Zdrive, or, in pupil's personal Safeguarding files that are stored in a secure place (inaccessible to non-safeguarding team members)
- We ensure that accurate safeguarding records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file in a secure place, marked 'Strictly Confidential' and are passed securely should the child transfer to a new provision
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) state arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- See section 6. Information Sharing and Confidentiality, for further information on sharing information.

In addition:

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

15. Training

15.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners.

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

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

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

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

Safeguarding training will be completed a minimum of every 2 years.

15.2 The DSL and deputy

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

The DSL and deputy will undertake Signs of Safety training. Signs of Safety (SOS) is the leading collaborative approach to child protection which St Helens have adopted as the way of working with families.

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.

Safeguarding training will be completed a minimum of every 2 years.

15.3 Governors

All governors receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities. This is done during the induction phase and updated annually.

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

15.4 Recruitment – interview panels

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

15.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families

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

16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by Mr J. McKune / Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

17. Voice of the Child

At Willow Bank school we have a strong commitment to pupil voice, and value the views, wishes and experiences of all our pupils. Our aim is to ensure that pupils not only feel valued and listened to but also have an opportunity to contribute to making positive changes.

We endeavour to provide meaningful opportunities for all pupils to share their experiences, views, hopes, and to raise any worries or concerns they may have.

Not only do all pupils at Willow Bank school have regular opportunities for their voices to be heard, but we also strive to ensure that appropriate action is taken where necessary i.e. their voice is heard, acknowledged and responded to.

A minimum of every half term, all pupils are provided with an opportunity to complete a Voice of the Child form in a safe and trusting environment. This is achieved by completion of the 'three houses' tool. Pupils can complete this tool independently or be supported to complete it with a favoured member of staff or a member of the Safeguarding / Pastoral team. The 'three houses' tool allows pupils to identify a house of worries, a house of good things and a house of dreams.

Pupil voice is also captured by:

- Half termly Student Council meetings
- Half termly Student Safeguarding Council meetings
- PEP and Annual Review
- Termly Student Safeguarding Questionnaire
- Termly Quality of Education Questionnaire
- Student attendance questionnaire
- 'My Views' forms completed with pupils as and when required e.g. upon the request of CYPS
- An open-door policy where pupils are encouraged to speak out if they have any worries
- 1:1 mentor sessions
- Gaining the voice of the child prior to Safeguarding meetings e.g. FAM, CIN Meetings, Child Protection conferences etc.
- However, students express it – words, silence, behaviour, symbols, pictures, interactions, smiles, eye contact, body language, facial expression etc.

The above give our students the opportunity to be involved at all levels. Such as:

Individual: the extent to which the voice of the child is valued, listened to, heard, and acted upon as part of their journey through school.

Service: the extent to which students participate in or can influence the planning, design, delivery, monitoring and/or evaluation of school as a result of the expertise they have through their experiences.

Strategic: the extent to which participation is embedded into the aims and values of school as well as plans, strategies, policy, workforce, and performance management systems.

18. Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. For many young people, their relationships extend beyond their family such as within their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online. These relationships can unfortunately sometimes feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts and therefore can have little impact on a young person's experiences of extra-familial abuse. This abuse subsequently undermines the parent-child relationship, which is in itself, a protective factor for most children and young people.

It is therefore important that practitioners, including school staff, engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial (outside the family) contexts, and recognise that assessing and intervening with these areas are a crucial part of safeguarding practices and responsibilities. Contextual

safeguarding is therefore a continuation and expansion of child protection systems by recognising that children and young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

19. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child on child abuse
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance
- E-safety Policy
- Curriculum
- Teaching and Learning
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Drug
- First Aid
- Anti-bullying & harassment
- Positive Handling and Guidance
- Lone Worker

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

Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 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 or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

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

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

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

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. All safer recruitment processes follow the requirements of KCSIE, including checks recorded on the Single Central Record (SCR). The Single Central Record is maintained and monitored, with ongoing suitability checks for all staff. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- › Verify their identity
- › Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months
- › Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- › Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- › Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- › Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- › Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- › Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- › Ongoing suitability of staff is regularly reviewed, and any changes in circumstances are reported in line with our procedures.

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

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

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

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

- › We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or

- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e., they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

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

Contractors

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trainee/student teachers

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

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

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

Governors

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

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

All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor). This is done through the local authority.

Staff working in alternative provision settings

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

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

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

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

Pupils staying with host families

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

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

Appendix 3: allegations of abuse made against staff

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

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

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

Our school manages allegations against staff, including supply staff and volunteers, in accordance with KCSIE. Low-level concerns about adults are managed in line with the school's procedures, ensuring a culture of openness and transparency.

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

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, the Headteacher/Chair of Governors must consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will help to determine how the matter is to be investigated. The LADO is responsible for ensuring that allegations are managed in a proper way. To make a referral call the LADO Secretary on 01744 671809 or complete a LADO referral form. This can be found on <https://sthelenslscb.org.uk/lscb/lscb/workforce/useful-documents>

St Helens LADO email: StHelensLADO@sthelens.gov.uk

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

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

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

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

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

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

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the headteacher (or chair of governors) where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree, and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** regarding the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. Advice and support are also available through union representatives and School / Local Authority services.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children’s social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

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

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

Additional considerations for supply staff

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

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

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

Timescales

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

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

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

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. If they think that the individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if they think the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, they must make a referral to the DBS.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

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

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

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the headteacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

Confidentiality

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

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

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks, and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

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

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual.

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

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious.

Learning lessons

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

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension

- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues

Child Protection Recording Protocol

Staff should report all safeguarding concerns on CPOMS.

Talking and listening to children

If a child wants to confide in you, you SHOULD

- › Be accessible and receptive
- › Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace
- › Take what is said seriously
- › Reassure children that they are right to tell
- › Tell the child that you must pass this information on
- › Make sure that the child is ok
- › Make a careful record of what was said

You should NEVER

- › Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse
- › Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children
- › Assume that someone else will take the necessary action
- › Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc.
- › Speculate or accuse anybody
- › Investigate, suggest, or probe for information
- › Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved
- › Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved
- › Forget to record what you have been told
- › Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the DSL)

Children with communication difficulties, or who use alternative/augmentative communication systems

- › While extra care may be needed to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are interpreted correctly, any suspicions should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children
- › Opinion and interpretation will be crucial (be prepared to be asked about the basis for it and to possibly have its validity questioned if the matter goes to court)

Recordings should (see The Allegations flowchart)

- › State who was present, time, date, and place
- › Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder
- › Be passed to the DCP or Head Teacher immediately (certainly within 24 hours)
- › Use the child's words wherever possible
- › Be factual/state exactly what was said
- › Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation

What information do you need to obtain?

- Schools have no investigative role in child protection (Police and Front Door Team will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses – leave this to them)
- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of who, what, where and when
- The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'might this be a child protection matter?'
- If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and pass on immediately to the DSL or deputy or consult directly with Front Door Team

If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't, OK?

- Never ask closed questions i.e., ones which children can answer yes or no to e.g. Did he touch you?
- Never make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc. e.g., Top or bottom, front or back?
- If we must, use only 'minimal prompts' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that'
- Timescales are very important: 'When was the last time this happened?' is an important question

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

- Is there a place in Willow Bank which is particularly suitable for listening to children e.g., not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc.
- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult, and personal
- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, if we know that a particular child tells lies'
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness, and objectivity
- Think about what support you could access if faced with this kind of situation in Willow Bank

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 Traveler 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.

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.

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.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late

- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

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 sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of 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 and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

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.

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
- 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.

Pan-Merseyside Protocol for CCE/CSE

The Pan-Merseyside Protocol for Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a set of guidelines designed to help professionals in the Merseyside area identify, prevent, and respond to cases of child exploitation. This protocol typically includes:

- Definitions and Indicators: Clear definitions of CCE and CSE, along with signs and indicators to help professionals identify potential cases.
- Referral Procedures: Steps for referring suspected cases of exploitation to appropriate authorities.
- Multi-Agency Collaboration: Guidelines on how different agencies, such as schools, social services, and police, should work together to safeguard children.
- Support Services: Information on available support services for victims and their families.
- Training and Awareness: Requirements for training staff to recognise and respond to signs of exploitation.

For the most accurate and up-to-date information, including access to the Pan-Merseyside Protocol for CCE/CSE, visit <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/p/guidance-learning/child-at-risk-of-exploitation>

Domestic abuse / Operation Encompass

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.

Older children may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships.

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 designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. The key contact for Operation Encompass is Mrs Duffy (Senior Mental Health Lead & Pastoral Coordinator) and the Safeguarding lead Jon McKune.

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

Operation Encompass is a partnership between police and schools and is an integral component in child safeguarding and child protection. Participation in Operation Encompass mandates a secure record-keeping trail, which may be electronic, or paper based. Within Operation Encompass all records are managed at Child Protection level with the highest level of security and confidentiality, and in full accordance with GDPR. These records are held by police and schools only. Operation Encompass does not hold the records and never has access to these records.

For further information see Domestic Abuse Act (2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021>

Homelessness

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

The DSL and deputy 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.

So-called '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.

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 7.3 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 examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

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

- The girl's family having a history of practicing FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practiced in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
 - Having 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 take into account 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 fmua@fco.gov.uk

- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

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 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](#) say 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.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Further information on the school's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures, including anti-radicalisation and anti-extremism policy.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

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

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

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

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

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out

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

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, the main concern of the staff will be for the safety of the child.

If parents/carers know that they will be late collecting a child they should let School staff know as soon as possible, indicating when they expect to arrive. Having this information can help to prevent a child becoming distressed.

If nobody arrives to collect a child and staff have not heard from the person due to collect, they will try to contact the alternative emergency contacts nominated by the parents.

If staff have been unable to contact a parent or nominated carer within 30 minutes, it will be necessary to contact St Helens Social Services to take advice and arrange for temporary care.

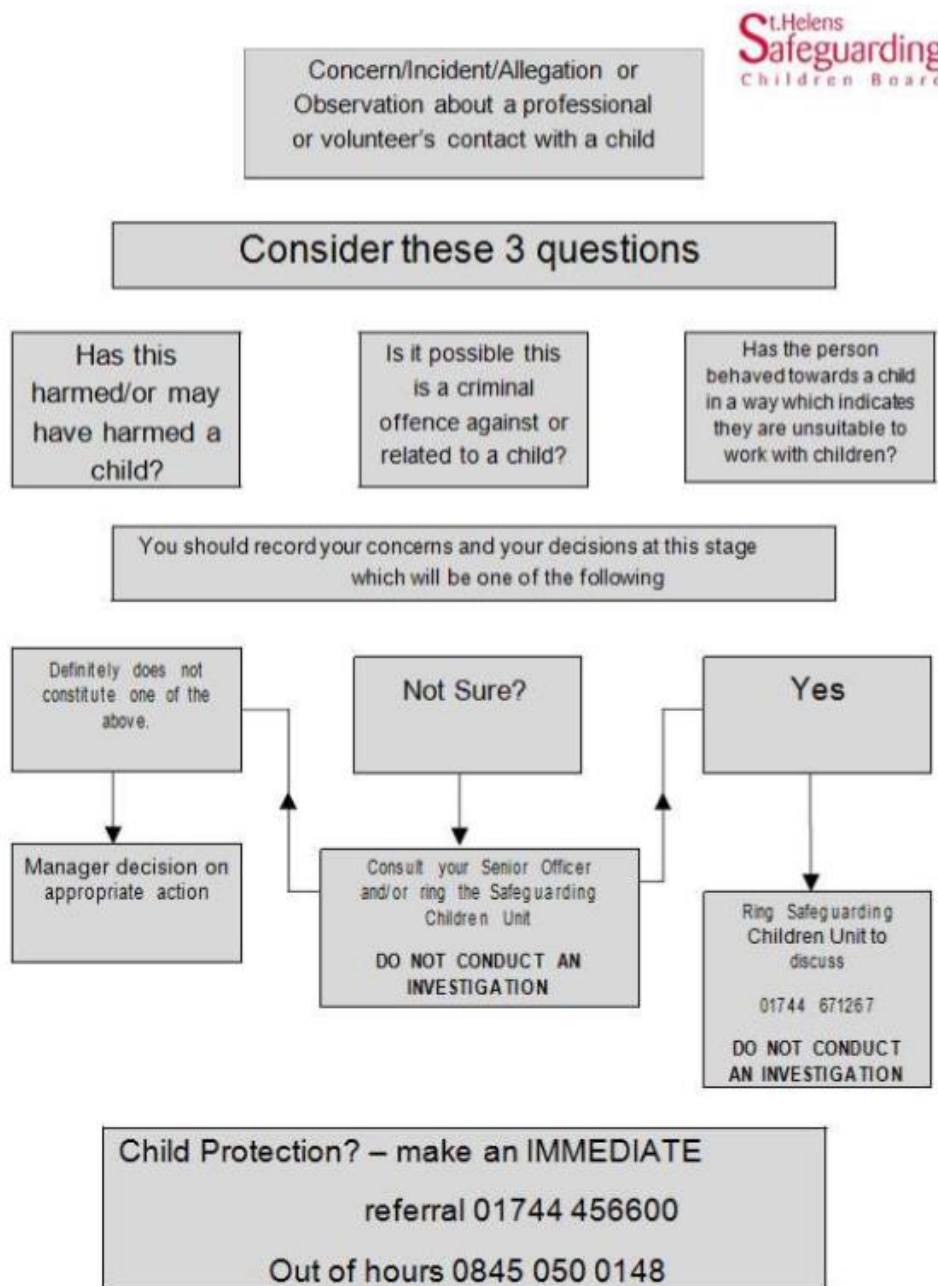
Missing pupils

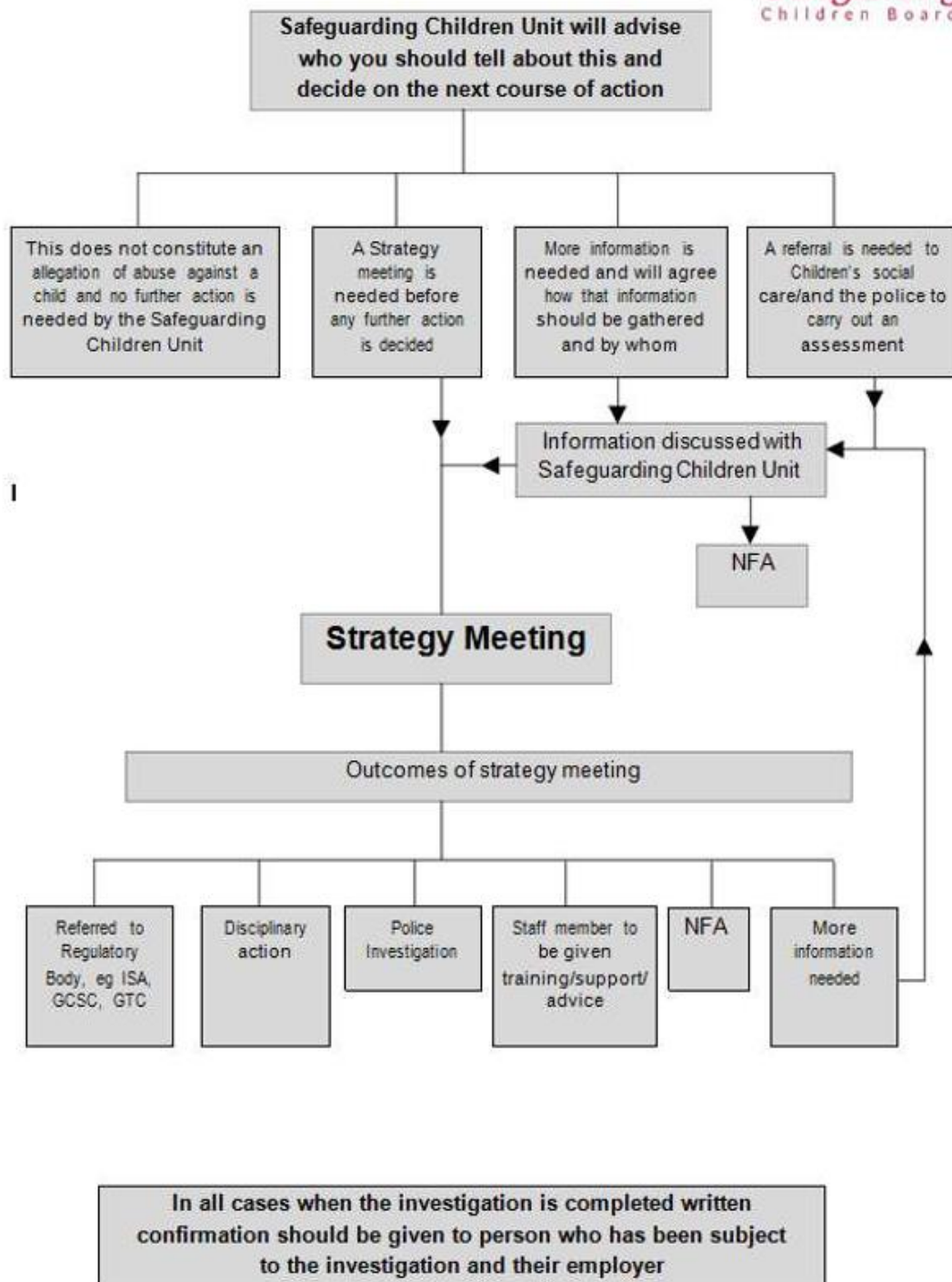
Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible.

In the event of a missing child, during a session, School staff will immediately search the premises for the child. This includes outside areas surrounding the building including the School field. If the child is not found during this search the DSL (or Deputy) will immediately call the police on 101, parents/carers and social worker (if required). The DSL (or Deputy) will nominate an adult to continue searching until the child is found or until further advice can be taken from the emergency services.

It will be the responsibility of all staff to ensure that other children are not alarmed or frightened as this can lead to panic. Staff should remain calm throughout.

Appendix 5: Local Authority Allegations Flow Chart





Appendix 6: Child Exploitation / County Lines, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage, Extremism and Radicalisation, Prevent, Child Missing Education, Child Trafficking, Private Fostering, Honour Based Violence, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and queer (or questioning) Child on child abuse, Fabricated Induced Illness, Breast ironing, children with a family member in prison, drug and alcohol misuse, gangs and youth violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG), mental health, modern slavery, online safety, young carers, Child-on-Child abuse, Cyber Bullying, Initiation / Hazing, Bullying, Sexting, Upskirting.

Child Exploitation / County lines

It is essential for all Staff/Carers to sign for and read the guidance for ‘**Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (2015) and Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance (September 2018)**’ The policies can also be found on Willow Bank Schools web-site under ‘[School Policies](http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk)’ <http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk>.

Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol

All agencies across Merseyside are fully committed to safeguarding children and young people from being sexually exploited or criminally exploited, whilst disrupting and prosecuting individuals who have exploited them. This Protocol provides a set of multi-agency principles for tackling Child Exploitation across Merseyside. An overarching term of Child Exploitation will be used throughout this Protocol to encompass both criminal and sexual exploitation of children in our area.

The Protocol details how through the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meetings (MACE) we can reduce the harm posed to children from Child Exploitation alongside safeguarding procedures.

Child Exploitation, whether sexual or criminal, is child abuse. Children who become involved face huge risks to their physical, emotional, and psychological health and well-being.

PAN Merseyside - Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol
<https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/>

County Lines

What is county lines exploitation?

County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations.

The UK Government defines county lines as: County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children

and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing, and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults, and local communities.

What is Child Criminal Exploitation?

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved and is defined as: Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears

consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

How does it affect young people and vulnerable adults?

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years.
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years.
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual.
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

One of the key factors found in most cases of county lines exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (e.g., carrying drugs in return for something). Where it is the victim who is offered, promised, or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs, or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection). It is important to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a young person or vulnerable adult does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a young person who engages in county lines activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Who is vulnerable to county lines exploitation?

The national picture on county lines continues to develop but there are recorded cases of:

- children as young as 12 years old being exploited or moved by gangs to courier drugs out of their local area; 15-16 years is the most common age range
- both males and females being exploited
- White British children being targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection, but a person of any ethnicity or nationality may be exploited
- the use of social media to make initial contact with children and young people
- class A drug users being targeted so that gangs can take over their homes (known as ‘cuckooing’).

We do know that county lines exploitation is widespread, with gangs from big cities including London, Manchester and Liverpool operating throughout England, Wales, and Scotland. Gangs are known to target vulnerable children and adults; some of the factors that heighten a person’s vulnerability include:

- having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- social isolation or social difficulties
- economic vulnerability
- homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- connections with other people involved in gangs
- having a physical or learning disability
- having mental health or substance misuse issues.
- being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- being excluded from mainstream education, in particular attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

Signs to look out for

A young person’s involvement in county lines activity often leaves signs. A person might exhibit some of these

signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a person's lifestyle should be discussed with them. Some potential indicators of county

- lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:
- persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area.
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- leaving home / care without explanation
- suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- parental concerns
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results / performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

It is Willow Bank Schools duty to use our local safeguarding process to ensure that all children are safeguarded effectively. Staff should follow procedure and inform the designated safeguarding lead in School. The designated safeguarding lead has the responsibility for informing the local authority's social services. A CE1 form / referral should be made in line with the Local Authorities safeguarding procedure. See appendix10.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This policy can also be found on Willow Bank Schools website under '[School Policies](http://www.WillowBank.st-helens.sch.uk)' <http://www.WillowBank.st-helens.sch.uk>.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK. It's also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this.

The maximum sentence for carrying out FGM or helping it to take place is 14 years in prison.

FGM is any procedure that's designed to alter or injure a girl's (or woman's) genital organs for non-medical reasons. It's sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting'. It's mostly carried out on young girls.

FGM procedures can cause:

- severe bleeding
- infections
- problems with giving birth later in life - including the death of the baby

If you know someone at risk

Contact the [NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk) anonymously if you're worried that a girl or young woman is at risk of FGM or is a victim of FGM.

FGM Helpline

Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 028 3550

[Find out about call charges](#)

If you know someone in immediate danger

[Contact the police](#) if you think that a girl or young woman is in immediate danger of FGM.

You should also contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if she's already been taken abroad.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Telephone: 020 7008 1500

From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 1500

[Find out about call charges](#)

Other help:

You can search for [help and advice in your area](#) if you're worried that someone is in danger of FGM or if you're a victim of FGM.

You can also contact:

- the Safeguarding Children Partnership at [your local council](#)
- [Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development \(FORWARD\)](#)
- [NHS specialist clinics](#) for FGM
- [Daughters of Eve](#)
- [FORWARD](#)

Forced Marriage

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison

Disobeying a Forced Marriage Protection Order can result in a sentence of up to 5 years in prison

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse, and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence, and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor. [Information for people directly affected by forced marriage](#) is also available.

Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which was set up in January 2005 to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach, and casework. It operates both inside the UK, where support is provided to any individual, and overseas, where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals.

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from simple safety advice, through to aiding a victim to prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases), and, in extreme circumstances, to rescues of victims held against their will overseas.

Contact

- Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151
- Email: fmufco.gov.uk
- Email for outreach work: fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk
- Facebook: [Forced Marriage page](#)
- Twitter: [@FMUnit](#)
- Media enquiries: +44 (0) 20 7008 3100

Legislation on Forced Marriage

[The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#) makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)
- Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order is also a criminal offence
- The civil remedy of obtaining a Forced Marriage Protection Order through the family courts will

continue to exist alongside the new criminal offence, so victims can choose how they wish to be assisted

- Details of the new law can be found on the [Legislation website](#)

Extremism and Radicalisation

A separate policy on Extremism and Radicalisation can be found on Willow Bank Schools website under '[School Policies](#)' <http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk>.

Building resilience of young people and the promotion of fundamental British values is at the heart of preventing radicalisation. Willow Bank provides safe places in which children can discuss controversial issues and be given the knowledge and confidence to challenge extremist beliefs and ideologies.

School has a care of duty:

- Clarifying what the prevent duty means
- Outlining what they can do to help protect children from the risk of radicalisation
- Making clear what they do to demonstrate compliance with the duty
- Inform pupils about other sources of information, advice, and support

The government has also published advice below for schools on how social media is being used by extremist groups to encourage young people to travel to Syria and Iraq. It makes clear that every teacher should be aware of the risks posed by the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups and be vigilant of the signs of radicalisation.

The Department for Education has set up a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) and an email address (counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk) to enable people to raise concerns directly with the department.

Prevent

Our definition of radical or extreme ideology is 'a set of ideas which could justify vilification or violence against individuals, groups or self.'

Willow Bank School recognises its duty to protect our children from any form of indoctrination linked to radical or extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of self or others. Steps taken by the school to promote this duty include:

- Promoting tolerance, diversity and a respect for other cultures in line with our school aims and motto
- Promoting British Values and an understanding of democracy and the rule of law to prepare pupils to make a positive contribution to British society in the future
- Promoting a respect for the views and ideas of others and an understanding of the right to have an opinion that does not impact negatively on the rights of others
- Working closely with the assembly leaders to plan themes linked to developing responsible citizens
- Training staff to be vigilant for identifying signs of extremist view and behaviours and to report anything which may suggest a child or parent is expressing opinions which may cause concern
- Ensuring pupils are aware of how to use the Internet and social media appropriately and responsibly as part of our work on E-Safety. This includes addressing the dangers of downloading and sharing inappropriate material
- Vetting all visitors carefully and taking appropriate action if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to influence members of our school community

Children Missing from Education:

All children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude & special educational needs.

Definition of Children Missing Education (CME)

“Any child of statutory school age (5-16) who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, home education), and has been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (agreed as 4 weeks)”

Willow Bank School follow procedures in accordance with the latest St Helens People’s Services Department Children Missing Education Policy and Procedures and also follow the ‘Responsibilities of Schools Flowchart’ and ‘Responsibilities of Schools Guidance’. Our school follows the latest KCSIE guidance for identifying, reporting, and supporting children missing education, including those at risk of harm.

Child trafficking

Child trafficking is child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. They are often subject to multiple forms of exploitation.

Children are trafficked for:

- child sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs, bag theft

Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Where Willow Bank School is made aware of a child suspected of or actually being trafficked/exploited we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

Private Fostering

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent.
- A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility.
- A close relative.
- A Local Authority.

for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at Willow Bank School to inform the Local Authority when we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

Honour Based Violence

‘Murder or violence in the name of so-called honour’ are murders/violence in which, predominantly females, are killed/harmed for actual or perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame. They are sometimes called ‘honour killings/violence’. There is, however, no honour in murder/violence.

The honour code means that women must follow rules that are set at the discretion of male relatives, and which are interpreted according to what each male family member considers acceptable. Breaking the rules

is seen as destroying the good name of the family and is deserving of punishment at the discretion of male relatives.

Honour is an unwritten code of conduct that involves loss of face on someone's part if offended against, especially in groups where loyalty is considered paramount.

Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, HBV may exist.

Signs:

- withdrawal of student from school by those with parental responsibility
- pupil/student being prevented from attending higher education
- truancy or persistent absences
- request for extended leave or student not returning from an overseas visit
- surveillance by siblings/cousins/extended family members at school
- decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality, poor exam results. – in particular for previously motivated pupil/student.
- decline in physical presentation or demeanour

LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and queer (or questioning))

As a school, we believe that respect for ourselves and others is a fundamental right and responsibility of/for all. We will always challenge inappropriate language or behaviour and never ignore 'banter'. It is the duty of all staff to ensure that every member of the school community feels valued, irrespective of their sexual/gender orientation, race or religion. Diversity is celebrated and valued at Willow Bank School.

Fabricated Induced Illness (FII)

The fabrication or induction of illness in children is a relatively rare form of child abuse. Where concerns exist about fabricated or induced illness, it requires professionals to work together, evaluating all the available evidence, in order to reach an understanding of the reasons for the child's signs and symptoms of illness. The management of these cases requires a careful medical evaluation which considers a range of possible diagnoses. At all times professionals need to keep an open mind to ensure that they have not missed a vital piece of information.

For full details and guidance visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-in-whom-illness-is-fabricated-or-induced>

Child-on-Child Abuse

For full information and guidance see the Willow Bank school Child on child abuse policy <http://www.WillowBank.st-helens.sch.uk>

"All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse)"

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE statutory guidance for schools and colleges) p.10.

Child on child abuse features physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse of a child/young person by their peers. Child on child abuse is often located within the neighbourhoods, schools, peer groups and families associated with the young people who are affected.

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers; these are described below and are followed by sections giving advice and support on action to be taken in relation to both the victim and the child displaying the harmful behaviour.

It should be noted that there can be considerable overlap between these different types of child-on-child abuse.

This section directly links to the Government Guidance '**Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges**' (2018) and '**Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents and safeguarding young people**'.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may include biting, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be reasons why a child physically harms another, and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour (including whether it happened accidentally) before considering the action or sanction to be taken. Any physical incidents will be taken extremely seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with Willow Bank School's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy.

Prejudice Behaviour

The term 'prejudice related bullying' refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, (physical, emotional or both) which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded, or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society. In particular, prejudices are to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, gender identity and sexual identity. Any form of prejudice behaviour will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour and sexual abuse

Harmful sexualised behaviour (HSB) from children or young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. HSB may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse including rape.

Although all children and young people have the potential to be at risk of any form of sexual harassment or assault, we recognise that some groups may be more at risk than others. For example, girls are often more at risk of being sexually harassed than boys.

Not all sexual behaviour displayed by children or young people is harmful. Showing some sexualised behaviours can be healthy and a normal part of child and adolescent development. The NSPCC guidance on healthy and harmful sexual behaviour can be found on <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour>

Decisions on whether sexualised behaviour is potentially harmful should be made with reference to the NSPCC framework, knowledge and understanding from specialist training, and advice from the St. Helens

Safeguarding Children Partnership. Professionals should also consult and utilise the St Helens Policy, Procedures, and Practice Guidance for Children and Young People (aged under 18) who display Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

Additionally, professionals should use the **ERASE toolkit**, a multi-agency harmful sexual behaviour assessment tool, to help assess whether the behaviour is HSB. This toolkit provides a structured approach to identifying and evaluating potentially harmful sexual behaviours, ensuring that appropriate interventions are put in place.

By combining these resources and tools, professionals can make informed decisions and provide the necessary support to children and young people exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour.

Due to the concerning and sensitive nature around suspected Harmful Sexual Behaviour from a child or young person, as well as the need to keep the victim safe, advice will be sought from external agencies including Children's Social Care. School will also work with families where appropriate, and directly with both the child displaying the harmful behaviour and the victim (separately) to ensure that all children are kept safe and the harmful behaviour ceases. If the harmful behaviour continues, it may be necessary to take further action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim. This is in line with Willow Bank School's Behaviour Policy.

Here at Willow Bank School, we understand that any incidents of sexual assault, harassment or rape may be hard for a child or young person to disclose to an adult. There are many barriers that may stop a child or young person from wanting to share what has happened to them. We also understand that some disclosures we receive may be relating to historic incident. Regardless of when or where the incident took place, we will ensure that:

- All disclosures or concerns are taken seriously
- All incidents are thoroughly investigated
- We listen to the voice of the child or young person and let that inform and shape how we support them
- We understand that some children may not tell us what has happened to them, and it is our job to understand behaviour and other forms of communication or indicators.
- We teach about healthy relationships, rights, and abuse within our safeguarding curriculum to help protect and empower pupils
- We challenge inappropriate language, gender stereotypes or attitudes.

Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Willow Bank School recognises that incidents involving the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes among pupils can be complex and require a sensitive, proportionate response. All concerns or disclosures relating to the sharing of such images will be handled in accordance with the most recent national and local guidance, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved.

Staff will not view or share any imagery unless absolutely necessary and always in line with safeguarding protocols. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, considering the context and risk.

Additionally, professionals should use the ERASE toolkit, a multi-agency harmful sexual behaviour assessment tool, to help assess whether the behaviour constitutes harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). This toolkit provides a structured approach to identifying and evaluating potentially harmful sexual behaviours, ensuring that appropriate interventions are put in place and that pupils receive the support they need.

For further guidance, staff are encouraged to consult the St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership Board resources and the latest national guidance on responding to incidents of this nature. Further information and resources can be found at www.sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk.

Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying includes the use of phones and computers/electronic devices to harass, threaten or intimidate someone and it can include instant messaging; email; chat rooms; voice notes or social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. It may constitute a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Outside of the immediate support children or young people may require in these instances, they school may have no choice but to involve the police to investigate certain situations. Many incidents may occur outside of school hours; however, we understand that any situations around cyber-bullying will have an impact on the child's wellbeing at school, especially if the perpetrator(s) also attends. Willow Bank School works hard to provide a PSHE, SMSC and safeguarding curriculum that encompasses online safety and helps our pupils deal with any concerns they may have.

In cases of sexting, government guidelines will be consulted and implemented. The website is as follows:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf

Initiation / Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony that is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation because they all experienced it as a part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment. Although it is not subjective to males, it should be noted that boys may be more at risk of such forms of abuse.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing is a harmful cultural practice where hot objects are used to flatten a girl's chest to delay breast development. This practice is illegal in the UK and considered a form of physical abuse. Staff should be aware

of the signs, such as pain, scarring, or unusual behaviour regarding their bodies, and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Children with a Family Member in Prison

Children with a family member in prison can face emotional and social challenges, including stigma and isolation. It's important to provide a supportive environment and maintain confidentiality. Staff should be aware of the impact on the child's well-being and education and offer appropriate pastoral care and support.

Drug and Alcohol Misuse

Drug and alcohol misuse can affect children directly or indirectly through their family's behaviour. Staff should be vigilant for signs of misuse, such as changes in behaviour or physical symptoms, and should follow the school's procedures for reporting concerns to the DSL. Educational programs about the dangers of substance abuse should be integrated into the curriculum.

Gangs and Youth Violence

Gangs and youth violence involve the coercion of young people into criminal activities and violence. Staff should be aware of signs like changes in behaviour, unexplained injuries, or association with known gang members. It's essential to educate students about the risks and offer support to those affected. Concerns should be reported to the DSL.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) encompasses a range of harmful practices, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and female genital mutilation (FGM). Staff should be trained to recognize signs of VAWG, offer a safe space for disclosures, and report concerns to the DSL. Preventative education and awareness programs should be part of the school's curriculum.

Mental Health

Mental health is a crucial aspect of safeguarding. Staff should be trained to recognize signs of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, or self-harm. The school should promote a supportive environment, offer access to counselling services, and have clear procedures for referring students to external mental health services if necessary.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery involves the exploitation of individuals through forced labour, domestic servitude, or human trafficking. Staff should be aware of the signs, such as physical abuse, poor living conditions, or lack of personal freedom. Any suspicions should be reported to the DSL immediately. The school should educate students about their rights and the dangers of exploitation.

Online Safety

Online safety is essential to protect students from cyberbullying, exploitation, and exposure to inappropriate content. The school should have clear policies on acceptable internet use, educate students on safe online behaviour, and monitor online activity. Any concerns about online safety should be reported to the DSL.

Young Carers

Young carers are children who provide care for a family member with an illness, disability, or substance misuse issue. These responsibilities can affect their education and well-being. Staff should identify young carers and offer support, such as flexible homework deadlines or access to counselling. The school should work with external agencies to provide additional support where needed.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and must include:

- Imbalance of power – young people who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity, to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition – bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g., size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Sexting

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. DSL will follow the UKCCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges 2016 guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.24

[39 KG NCA Sexting in Schools WEB 1 .PDF](#)

Up skirting

Up skirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Responses

All disclosures, claims or allegations of peer-on peer/child-on-child abuse will be investigated immediately and as thoroughly as possible. It will be important to gain accounts from all those involved, including the victim, the child displaying the behaviour and any witnesses. Previous records of incidents will be looked at to determine whether there are any patterns of behaviour and the persistency of the issue. Once the evidence has been collated, a judgement and outcome will be decided based on the information and evidence gathered. The response will be dependent upon the nature and severity of the incident. However, Willow Bank School has set responses to manage and support both the victim and the perpetrator.

For the young person who has been harmed:

The appropriate support required depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one-to-one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends, in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PSHE that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently, subsequently developing children's understanding of these topics.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst they are in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour:

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in a harmful manner. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one-to-one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Support from identified services may be necessary through Early Help and the young person may require additional support from family members. Dependent upon the outcome of the investigation, a decision will be made as to whether the child requires therapeutic support, a behaviour sanction, or a combination of both.

If there is any form of ongoing criminal investigation it may be that the young person cannot be educated onsite until the investigation has concluded. In such circumstances, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site. Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured proportionately by all of those

agencies involved including the young person and their parents/carers. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

After care:

It is important that following the incident, the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g., self-harm). Regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

Minimising the risk

As with all forms of abuse, preventative measure should be taken to avoid any child-on-child abuse occurring. This includes the following:

- Ensuring that safeguarding is taught as part of the curriculum across all key stages and year groups
- That any lower-level incidents of bullying etc. are dealt with immediately and effectively in order to ensure they do not escalate
- That children who have vulnerability indicators of either being a victim or a perpetrator are identified early and subsequently supported.
- That vulnerability indicators are clearly identified and recognised, such as mental health, drug, and alcohol misuse, learning difficulties and disabilities, and previous abuse suffered.
- By recognising 'the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse and that evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk of sexual violence and harassment (KCSIE).
- That all staff have relevant up to date training on child on child abuse a part of their annual safeguarding training.
- That school is a safe and caring environment where children and young people feel confident to express their concerns at the earliest stages.

Record keeping

It is important that school staff keep accurate and comprehensive records of any bullying or child on child abuse incidents that take place. This is important for the following reasons:

- To hold evidence of incidents so their frequency, nature and severity can be assessed to determine the appropriate action
- To spot trends and to see whether there are particular issues that seem to be more prevalent within the school and therefore need specific intervention
- To providing supporting documentation for any investigation including criminal investigations
- To ensure compliance with child protection procedures
- To provide evidence of outcome of any incidents to ensure they have been dealt with effectively

- To ensure effective monitoring procedures.
- All incidents are reported to governing body

Child on child abuse can be and is as damaging as any form of abuse. All incidents will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with in the same approach as other allegations of abuse. Child on child abuse should never be tolerated under any circumstance and should not be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up'. All children have the right to feel safe with their peers and should be protected accordingly. Any incidents of bullying will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Appendix 7: CE1

Pan-Merseyside Protocol for CCE/CSE

The Pan-Merseyside Protocol for Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a set of guidelines designed to help professionals in the Merseyside area identify, prevent, and respond to cases of child exploitation. This protocol typically includes:

- Definitions and Indicators: Clear definitions of CCE and CSE, along with signs and indicators to help professionals identify potential cases.
- Referral Procedures: Steps for referring suspected cases of exploitation to appropriate authorities.
- Multi-Agency Collaboration: Guidelines on how different agencies, such as schools, social services, and police, should work together to safeguard children.
- Support Services: Information on available support services for victims and their families.
- Training and Awareness: Requirements for training staff to recognise and respond to signs of exploitation.

For the most accurate and up-to-date information, including access to the Pan-Merseyside Protocol for CCE/CSE, visit <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/p/guidance-learning/child-at-risk-of-exploitation>

The Child Protection Policy and Safe Recruitment and Vetting Policy

Copies of the Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedure and Safe Recruitment and Vetting Policies can be located Headteachers Office. The policies can also be located on Willow Bank Schools website:

<http://www.Willow Bank.st-helens.sch.uk>

Appendix 8: Safeguarding Vulnerable Pupils Strategy: Corona Virus.

The Coronavirus threat is reaching the point where schools around the country are preparing for possible closure to try and halt the spread of the disease.

In the event that Willow Bank School has to close we will follow the below action plan to ensure that Safeguarding our pupils continues to be our priority.

1. All Parents/ Carers to be given the contact details for the safeguarding team lead and deputy as a key contact if they have any concerns.
2. All Parents / Carers to be sent a list of key contact numbers i.e. CYPS, YPDAAT, YJS, Safer Communities, Barnardo's, CAMHS and other support services for children and families to access.
3. The Safeguarding team will continue to use and communicate via phone and by use of the 'Safeguarding Matrix'.

4. The Safeguarding Matrix will be updated daily by all members of the Safeguarding team.
5. For all Safeguarding meetings i.e. ICPC, Core group, CIN, FAM, CLA, MARMM etc. contact will be made to the lead professional to share information and an up-to-date report will be submitted. A member of the Safeguarding Team will attend the meeting via phone (Note: Meetings may be cancelled by services and rescheduled once the treat is minimised)
6. School will contact each family daily to ask if they require any support. (Note: Attendance Officer/Lead to carry out First Response type phone calls. Y mark to be given to pupils)
7. School will contact the required agencies that work with our pupils twice per week to information share. Agencies include CYPS (Social workers), School Nurse, YJS worker, YPDAAT Worker, Safer Communities, Merseyside Police, Barnardo's, Early Help etc. (Note: A full list of agencies working with our pupils/families can be found on the Zdrive under 'List of Pupils on Safeguarding Register')
8. Members of the Safeguarding team will hold a minimum of one weekly Safeguarding meeting via one or more of the following systems: Email, Phone, Safeguarding Matrix or web cam.
9. Pupils on Alternative Education: Attendance to be monitored by Alternative Education and be overseen by Safeguarding Lead. Safeguarding Lead to coordinate any support needed.
10. DSL / Attendance Officer to complete, and send via email, the Coronavirus attendance register at 10:30am and 12 noon to the Local Authority every working day. Email: safeguardingunit@sthelens.gov.uk
11. DSL / Attendance Officer to complete and submit the Educational Setting Status (Self-reporting online form / webform) to the Department for Education by 12 noon every working day. Website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/educational-setting-status>

Appendix 9: Useful Contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mr Jonathan McKune	Jon.mckune@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745
Deputy DSL	Mrs Joanne Duffy Mrs Rachel Savage	Joanneduffy1@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745 Rachel.savage@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745
Chair of Governors	Mrs. Maggie Neale	gov.Maggie.Neale@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745
Lead for L2 / Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT)	Mr Jonathan McKune	Jon.mckune@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745
Health & Safety	Mrs Rachel Savage	Rachel.savage@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745
SENCO	Ms. Evette Bainbridge	Evette.Bewley@sthelens.org.uk 01744 678 745
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Local Authority Designated Officer	sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk 01744 671809 01744 671265

ROLE/ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
St. Helens Children's Social Care Contact Centre	01744 676600
Front Door Team	01744 676767
St. Helens Social Care Emergency Duty Team	0845 050 0148
St. Helens Safeguarding Children Unit	01744 671267
Merseyside Police	101

ROLE/ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Merseyside Police	999

Appendix 10: Supervision for Safeguarding Staff

Supervision is an activity that brings skilled supervisors and practitioners together in order to reflect upon their practice. There are various models or approaches to supervision and mentoring; one-to-one, group, or peer supervision.

Supervision is an accountable, two-way process, which supports, motivates and enables the development of good practice for individuals. As a result, this improves the quality of service provided by Willow Bank School. Supervision is a vital part of individual performance management.

Purpose

- To celebrate and identify achievements
- To support individuals' emotional wellbeing and consider their work/life balance
- To offer support following serious, significant or stressful events and/or issues
- To review workloads, if needed
- To create a place where a member of staff can be challenged supportively and constructively within mutually agreed and accepted boundaries
- To discuss and identify issues relating to the workplace and workplace practices
- To provide a place to offload
- Oversight and reflective practice

Supervision at Willow Bank School is carried out by the named Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection (DSL). Supervision for the DSL will be carried out by the Headteacher or the Safeguarding Governor. Supervision will be undertaken with designated staff responsible for or working with identified vulnerable children and/or their families. It includes all staff working with children who are subject to a child protection or child in need plan, children with social care involvement, children looked after (CLA) and children subject to an Early Help Assessment. This will promote and support reflective practice and management oversight.

Supervision is recorded / evidenced by completion of the Supervision for Safeguarding Staff document (appendix 11) and is completed termly as a minimum.

Additional support is achieved by a variety of methods such as:

- Information, advice and guidance from Pastoral and Primary Networks groups.
- Information, advice and guidance from the Partnership Co-ordinator
- Information, advice and guidance from the Safeguarding Children in Education Coordinator
- The Willow Bank Safeguarding Team weekly meetings (reflective practice)
- Support from professional equivalent associates
- Performance management (oversight through appraisal)

Support will also be available for ALL staff at any time the need may arise; this could be informal and incidental supervision. Referrals to Occupational Health for further counselling and support can be made upon request.

Appendix 11: Supervision for Safeguarding Staff Template

Supervision for Safeguarding Staff		Date:
Professionals present	Case(s) to be discussed in meeting	Any other areas of concern to be discussed in meeting

In your current role ...		
What is working well?	What are you worried about?	What needs to happen?

How are needs being met regarding:	
• Workload • Training • Mental health • Emotional wellbeing • Key relationships	

Agreed plan of action/next steps:		
Who	What	When

Name of signature of Supervisee:
Name of signature of Supervisor:
Date of next meeting: