

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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PARTNERSHIPS | OPPORTUNITY | INTEGRITY | EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | PEOPLE-CENTRED

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## 1. Our strong safeguarding culture

### 1.1 Why it is important

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and it is the duty of Consilium Academies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is our core safeguarding principle.

In adhering to this principle, we focus on providing a safe and welcoming environment for all our children regardless of age, ability, culture, race, language, religion, gender identity or sexual identity. All our children have equal rights to support and protection.

One of the cornerstones of our safeguarding culture is this policy and the procedures contained within it. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, local academy board members, trust board members, all of whom are trained upon its contents and on their safeguarding duties. The Trust Head of Safeguarding updates this policy at least annually to reflect changes to law and guidance and best practice.

### 1.2 What it means for our pupils

We work with local safeguarding partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support to the child.

Successful outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency partnership working across the whole system of help, support and protection including effective work from all agencies with parents, carers, and families.

All our staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Any pupils or staff involved in child protection or safeguarding issue will receive appropriate support.

Our strong safeguarding culture ensures that we treat all pupils with respect and involve them in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful, and safe behaviour among pupils, and we set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

Identifying safeguarding and child protection concerns often begin with recognising changes in pupils' behaviour and knowing that these changes may be signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.

All our staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

## 2. Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- The Teacher Standards 2012
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- PACE Code C 2019

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL for each school is listed in appendix 1. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding, including online safety.

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

Each school has a designated safeguarding e-mail address listed in appendix 1. This contact should be used outside of school hours.

When the DSL is absent, the DDSL/s (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)– also listed in appendix 1 – will act as cover. The DDSL/s are trained to the same level as the DSL and supports the DSL with safeguarding matters on a day-to-day basis. The ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the DSL.

If the DSL and DDSL/s are not available, the Headteacher will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

The DSL duties include:

- Ensuring child protection policies are known and understood and used appropriately by staff.
- Reporting to the Local Academy Board/School Improvement Board on all areas of safeguarding.
- Acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise for all staff on child protection and safeguarding matters.
- Liaising with the Headteacher regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police.
- Investigations and be aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult in relevant circumstances.
- Acting as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners; making staff aware of the local safeguarding partner arrangements.
- Making and managing referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies.
- Taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings.
- Liaising with the 'case manager' and the designated officer(s) at the local authority if allegations are made against staff.
- Transferring the child protection file to a child's new school.

### 3.2 The Local Academy Board-Safeguarding Link

The role of the local academy board safeguarding link is to provide support and challenge to the DSL and the leadership of the school on how they manage safeguarding so that the safety and wellbeing of the children can continuously improve. The role includes:

- Understanding the requirements of the Governance Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.
- Supporting and challenging the DSL on the standards of safeguarding at the school.
- Confirming that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across the school.
- Reporting to the board on safeguarding in the school.

The DSL and the local academy board safeguarding link meet on a regular basis to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in the school.

## 4. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children are at greater risk of abuse. This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination, and prejudice. To ensure that all our pupils receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

- Are vulnerable because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity and sexuality.
- Are vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying.
- Are at risk of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, or being drawn into extremism.
- Live in chaotic or unsupportive home situations.
- Live transient lifestyles or live far away from home or in temporary accommodation.
- Are affected by parental substance abuse, domestic violence, or parental mental health needs.
- Do not have English as a first language.

## 5. Students with special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

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

Our staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

## 6. Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, and children missing education can be an indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks. Local authority guidance and procedures will be followed for dealing with a child who is missing from education, particularly on repeated occasions or if a child suddenly stops attending. Where reasonably possible, school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each child. This goes beyond the legal minimum. School will also look to have additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. For those children and families who have chronic poor attendance or persistent absenteeism, or for children who are absent from education repeatedly, school will consider whether educational neglect is present and whether a referral to children's services is required, or whether the school should seek consent to begin an Early Help assessment to coordinate a multi-agency plan of support for the child and family.

School will also scrutinise the attendance of off-site provision to ensure children are attending and are safe. When identifying that a child would benefit from attending off site provision, school will undertake an assessment to determine that the placement is in the best interests of the child and that the provision identified is suitable to meet the needs of the child. The school will retain responsibility for the safeguarding of any students that are placed in off-site provision. Appropriate quality assurance checks will be undertaken to ensure that it is a safe place for the child to attend. The school will obtain confirmation from the provider that the appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out in respect to individuals working at the establishment. The school will have a formal agreement with the alternative provision and parent/carer regarding when the student should attend and what procedures will be followed should the child not attend the placement. The school will ensure it seeks the views of the young people at off-site provision to ensure they feel happy and safe. When commissioning places at alternative provision, school will pay due regard to [Alternative provision – DfE Statutory Guidance and Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – DfE Statutory Guidance](#)

Similarly, the attendance of children who are vulnerable or with known welfare and safeguarding concerns such as children who have a child protection plan, a child in need, are cared for children and/or SEND will be rigorously monitored on a daily and weekly basis. When a child is deemed to be missing from education, school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. Once the enquires have been undertaken, school will follow the local protocol for Children Missing in Education (CME) and make a CME referral to the local authority.

Some parents will decide to remove their child from the roll of the school to educate them at home. For many children, this choice will be with the child's best education at the heart of their decision and will be a positive learning experience. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean that some children become less visible to services who are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their individual needs. Where a parent or carer has expressed their intention to remove their child from the school roll with a view to educating them at home, the school will work together with other key professionals and will, where possible, attempt to facilitate a meeting with the family to ensure that all parties have considered what is in the best interests of the child. This is particularly important for those children who have SEND, are vulnerable, and/or who have a social worker. The school will also link with the named officer for Elective Home Education (EHE) within the local authority.

## 7. Mental Health

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

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. School should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

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.

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

## 8. Children who are LGBTQ+

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. The risk to these children can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

Our staff endeavour to reduce the barriers and provide a safe space for those children to speak out or share their concerns with them.

## 9. Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse – children harming other children - is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys.' It is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls' victims, but allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls.

All staff should be clear about the school's policy and procedures for addressing child-on-child abuse and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

**Physical abuse** such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling.

**Bullying**, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.

**Sexual violence and harassment** such as rape and sexual assault or sexual comments and inappropriate sexual language, remarks, or jokes.

**Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

**Upskirting**, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge for the purposes of sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress, or alarm.

**Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)** including pressuring others to share sexual content.

**Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (also known as teenage relationship abuse)** - such as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

**Initiation/hazing** – used to induct newcomers into sports team or school groups by subjecting them to potentially humiliating or abusing trials with the aim of creating a bond.

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

All staff recognise that that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place but is not being reported.

### Minimising risk

We take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Promoting an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries.
- Using assemblies to outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Using RSE and PSHE to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, role play, current affairs, and other suitable activities.
- Ensuring that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

### Investigating allegations

All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately who will investigate and manage the allegation as follows:

**Gather information** - children and staff will be spoken with immediately to gather relevant information.

**Decide on action** - if it is believed that any child is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police. In other cases, we may follow our behaviour policy alongside this child protection and safeguarding policy.

**Inform parents** - we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to a child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

**Recorded** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored securely on the school's child protection and safeguarding systems (CPOMS-Child Protection Online Management System). The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of the action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Where allegations of a sexual nature are made, the school will follow the statutory guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Children can report allegations or concerns of child-on-child abuse to any staff member and that staff member will pass on the allegation to the DSL in accordance with this policy. To ensure children can report their concerns easily, the school has the SHARP reporting system in place for children to confidently report abuse.

Supporting those involved our staff reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Our staff will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor will victims be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online can introduce several complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across several social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation.

The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. The support we provide could include counselling and mentoring or some restorative justice work.

Support may also be required for the pupil that caused harm. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. The consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

## 10. Children at Risk of Serious Violence and/or Child Criminal or Sexual Exploitation

All staff should be aware of the indicators which may suggest a child is at risk from or is involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school.
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.
- A significant decline in performance.
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing.
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced abuse or neglect and having been involved in offending such as theft or robbery. Additional advice can be found in the Home Office's [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#) guidance.

Both child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victims needs or wants, and/or the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Staff will understand that whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including gender identification, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

All staff are aware of the indicators which may suggest a child is at risk from or experiencing child criminal, or sexual exploitation.

These may include:

- Appear with unexplained gifts, money, or new possessions.
- Associate with other children involved in exploitation.
- Suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol.
- Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
- Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

All staff are aware that children who are involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, therefore their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals. They may still have been exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. 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, often using intimidation, violence, and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Staff will also understand the fact that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

All staff are aware that child sexual exploitation is child sexual abuse. Exploitation of this nature can be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g., through the sharing of videos or images. It can also affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. 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 maybe 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, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant.

## County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store, and sell drugs and money, with offenders using coercion, intimidation, violence, and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors listed earlier in the section. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations, including schools and colleges. Indicators of county lines include those set out earlier in the section, with the main indicator being missing from home and/or school.

Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited include children who:

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

- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

## 11. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

Sharing photos, videos and live streams online is part of daily life for children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes means the sending or posting online of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums, or carried out offline between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop.

The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'. Other terms used in education include 'sexting' and 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- Children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer.
- Children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online.
- Images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g., by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame.

If you see or are shown an image on a young person's phone in school contact refer the incident immediately to the DSL/DDSL to investigate further.

### Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident, you must report it to the DSL immediately. You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a student 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 student to delete it.
- Ask the student(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 student(s) it involves, or 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 student(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

All incidents involving nude or semi-nude images will be managed as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will discuss it with the appropriate staff. If necessary, the DSL may also interview the children involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put a child at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, we will refer the matter to the police and/or children's social care.

The UK Council for Internet Safety updated its advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in December 2020 - UKCIS advice 2020. The school will have regard to this advice when managing these issues.

## 12. Online safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and appropriate online material. As well as educating children about online risks, we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to limit the risk of children being exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to harmful online interaction with other users and to ensure their own personal online behaviour does not put them at risk. These filtering and monitoring systems block harmful and inappropriate content, and we take care to ensure that they do not

unreasonably impact on teaching and learning. The systems are reviewed regularly (at least annually) to ensure their effectiveness, and staff have been identified and assigned suitable roles and responsibilities to manage these systems. We also have effective monitoring strategies in place to meet the safeguarding needs of our pupils.

We tell parents and carers what filtering and monitoring systems we use, so they can understand how we work to keep children safe. We will also inform parents and carers of what we are asking children to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school (if anyone), their child is going to be interacting with online.

The DfE highlights the risks of new technologies:

'An effective approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate the whole school community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- *Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation and extremism.*
- *Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users such as peer to peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children.*
- *Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.*
- *Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.*

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and sexual abuse. Technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

## 13. Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse.

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes people who have been or are married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another or each have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. This means children can also be victims of domestic abuse.

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic violence in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse and exposure to it can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development and ability to learn.

Where police have been called to a domestic violence incident where children are in the household and experienced that incident, the police will inform the DSL. This ensures that the school has up to date safeguarding information about the child. The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

All staff are aware of the impact of domestic violence can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL.

## 14. Homelessness

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

The DSL and DDSL/s 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.

## 15. Honour-based abuse

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

Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors and we take them into consideration when deciding what safeguarding action to take.

If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

### 15.1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. FGM is carried out on females of any age, from babies to teenagers to women.

Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, including concerns expressed by girls about going on a long holiday during the summer break. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of FGM or who has suffered from FGM, they should speak to the DSL. Teachers are also under legal duty to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18. In such circumstances, teachers will personally report the matter to the police as well as informing the DSL.

### 15.2 Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter a marriage. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure of abuse.

Forced marriage is illegal. It is also illegal to carry out conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Staff receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms; to be aware of risk indicators, which may include being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK. Forced marriage is not the same as arranged marriage, which is common in many cultures.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will inform the DSL/DDSL immediately.

## 16. Radicalisation and Extremism

Extremism is defined as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Whilst Islamic fundamentalism is the most widely publicised, extremism and radicalisation can occur in other cultures, religions, and beliefs, including the far right and white supremacy. Our staff are trained to identify those at risk of being radicalised or drawn into extremism.

If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they will speak to the DSL.

## 17. Staff/pupil relationships

Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity, and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. Our staff code of conduct sets out our expectations of staff.

## 18. Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors, or volunteers

If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply staff, contractor, or a volunteer, or relates to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children our set procedures must be followed. Our safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers' policy and procedure can be accessed on the Trust website and the full procedure for managing such allegations or concerns are set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe 2023. Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the relevant agencies.

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, contractor, or volunteer), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, contractor, 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 the School Improvement Board (SIB).

## 19. Whistle Blowing

Whistle-blowing allegations will be handled in conjunction with the Trust's whistle-blowing policy which can be found on the Trust website.

## 20. Safer Recruitment

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 2023, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

In addition, the Trust complies with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and the requirements of the LSCPs by carrying out the required checks and verifying the identity of applicants, their qualifications and employment history.

All personnel who are employed by or undertake voluntary work in the school will be DBS checked, this includes LAB Members and Trustees. The Headteacher will have responsibility for ensuring the Single Central Record is rigorously maintained. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that where visitors on site are left unaccompanied with students, they have DBS clearance to do so. The school will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the academy have been appropriately checked. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by their training provider from whom written confirmation will be obtained. DBS checking will be rigorous, and records will be kept of references obtained in the appointment process detailing when they were obtained and who checked them.

The Single Central Record will be complete and kept securely in one place. There will be limited access to the register and the people who have access will be named and advised.

## 21. Site Security

Visitors are asked to sign in at reception and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be always escorted.

## 22. Training

### 22.1 All staff

Our staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and empowered to provide exceptional safeguarding to our pupils.

All volunteers and agency staff visiting the school are greeted with a basic awareness and safeguarding briefing. All new staff to the school also complete a program of induction that involves the annual safeguarding training. All new staff are also required to complete Prevent training; they are also provided with the following documents to read:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (Part 1, Part 5 and Annex B)
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice

Records will be kept of all staff training naming individuals and detailing what training they have received and when.

## 22.2 Trust Board and Local Academy Board Members

All Trust Board and Local Academy Board Members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that there is an effective whole Trust approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

Our local academy board safeguarding link and trustee for safeguarding receive additional training to empower them to support and challenge the DSL and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding across the Trust.

## 23. Child Protection Procedures

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out in Appendix Two. Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child.
- Log the concern on CPOMS and report your concern to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family.

### 23.1 If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

Staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. This may be because the pupil's behaviour has changed, their appearance has changed, or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

Staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened, which could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent our staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

### 23.2 If a pupil discloses to you

If a pupil tells a member of staff about a risk to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will:

- remain calm and not overreact,
- allow them to speak freely,
- not be afraid of silences,
- not ask investigative questions,
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort, 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me',
- let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL,

- tell the pupil what will happen next,
- log the concern on CPOMS and pass to the DSL as soon as possible, reporting verbally to the DSL.

### 23.3 Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are notified.

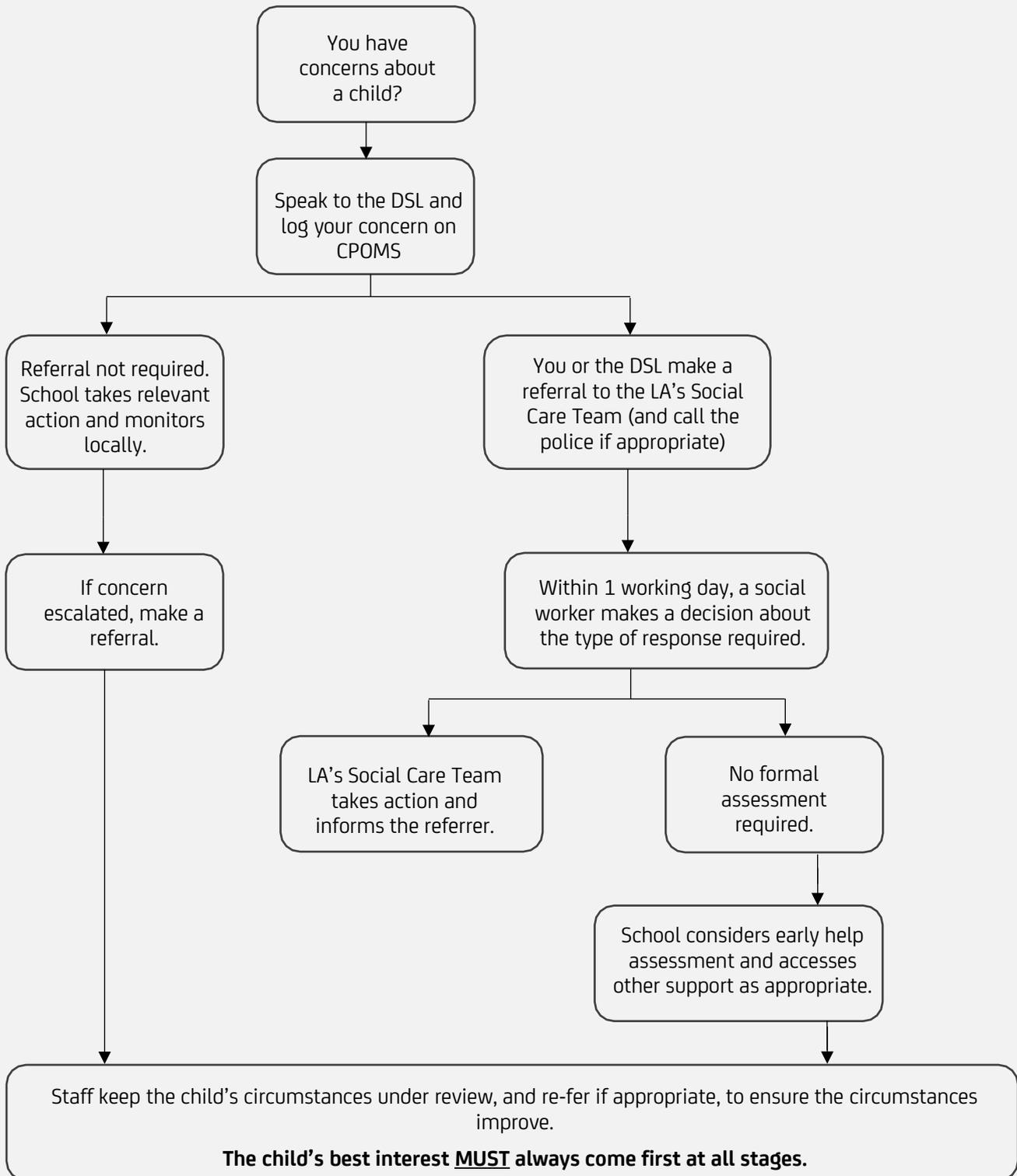
### 23.4 Referral to children's social care

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

### 23.5 Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff will follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the DSL, the DDSL/s or the Headteacher are not available, and a referral is required immediately.

**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):



## 26. Confidentiality and sharing information

Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the relevant people.

### 26.1 Sharing Information

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share child protection information. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent, and will record the reason for deciding to do so.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate, and accurate.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, and whether the decision is taken to share.

The UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see the child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

### 26.2 Storing Information

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Information Sharing Guidance for practitioners (DfE 2018).

## 27. Special Circumstances

### 27.1-Cared for Children (Looked after Children)

The most common reason for children becoming cared for is because of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep cared for children and previously cared for children safe. We ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's cared for 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.
- Each school has a designated member of staff who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of cared for children and previously cared for children in line with statutory guidance.

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

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

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

### 27.2 Students with a social worker

Students 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 student has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the student'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.

### 27.3 Work experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard students undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise students on work experience which are in accordance with statutory guidance.

### 27.4 Private fostering

The Children Act 1989, 2004 and Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 set out that private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer.

There is a mandatory duty to report to the local authority if they believe a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. (This does not include close family relatives e.g., grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or auntie). This means making a referral to children's services. Further guidance is available in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023) and in [Children Act 1989 private fostering](#). When a child is privately fostered a social worker must carry out an assessment to ensure the placement is appropriate and consider any support needed.

## 28 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance
- Online safety
- Equality
- Sex and relationship education
- First aid
- Privacy notices
- Whistle blowing

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Important Academy Contacts

Armthorpe Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Dave Bisley
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Colin Abraham
Deputy DSLs	Amy Moulton/Bethany Donkin/Sian Duffy
Interim Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Lesley Keeling
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Allie Denholm

Buile Hill Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Acting Headteacher	Farihah Alam
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Tracey Offord-Powell
Deputy DSLs	Melanie Howard Angy Bellers
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Gareth Thompson
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Chris Davis

Ellesmere Park High School	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Iain Ross
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Michael Bird
Deputy DSLs	Suzanne Calderwood
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Ben Peck
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Allie Denholm

Consilium Evolve	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Rob Bell
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Craig Davies
Deputy DSLs	Karyn Taylor/Roxanne Dawson
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Kate Hewson

Heworth Grange School	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Jason Holt
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Claire Gibson
Deputy DSLs	Christine Onions/Sharon Rennie/Alan Haddon
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Yvonne Baker
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Steve Ruddy

Moorside High School	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Helen Ryles-Dean

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Laura Drinkwater
Deputy DSLs	Lorraine Redmond/Gareth Webb/Mike Thompson
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Jonathan Sly
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Allie Denholm

Thornhill Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Sue Hamilton
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Leigh Coates
Deputy DSLs	Nichola Luke/Liam Clarke/Lorna Gray
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Denise Nicholson
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Steve Ruddy

Washington Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Vicky Carter
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lynne Parkin
Deputy DSLs	Andrea Evans/Jackie Mitchell/Alex Taylor
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Vanessa Winspear
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Chris Davis

Wyvern Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Headteacher	Scott Parker
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lauren Mitchell
Deputy DSLs	Becky Henson/Zoe Grant
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Tom Scott
Chair of School Improvement Board (SIB)	Chris Davis

### Key personnel for safeguarding

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONTACT EMAIL
Tara Welsh	Consilium Academies Trust	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding@consilium-at.com</a>

Colin Abraham	Armthorpe Academy	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Armthorpe@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Armthorpe@consilium-at.com</a>
Tracey Offord	Buile Hill Academy	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Buile@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Buile@consilium-at.com</a>
Michael Bird	Ellesmere Park High School	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Ellesmere@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Ellesmere@consilium-at.com</a>
Craig Davies	Consilium Evolve	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Evolve@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Evolve@consilium-at.com</a>
Claire Gibson	Heworth Grange School	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Heworth@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Heworth@consilium-at.com</a>
Laura Drinkwater	Moorside High School	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Moorside@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Moorside@consilium-at.com</a>
Leigh Coates	Thornhill Academy	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Thornhill@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Thornhill@consilium-at.com</a>
Lynne Parkin	Washington Academy	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Washington@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Washington@consilium-at.com</a>
Lauren Mitchell	Wyvern Academy	<a href="mailto:Safeguarding.Wyvern@consilium-at.com">Safeguarding.Wyvern@consilium-at.com</a>
<b>Local safeguarding children's partnership information</b>		
Wyvern Academy- (Darlington)		
LADO – Marian Garland	Tel: 01325 406451	<a href="mailto:marian.garland@darlington.gov.uk">marian.garland@darlington.gov.uk</a>
Armthorpe Academy – (Doncaster)		
LADO – Milovan Orlandich	Tel: 01302 737332	<a href="mailto:LADO@doncaster.gov.uk">LADO@doncaster.gov.uk</a>
Heworth Academy – (Gateshead)		
LADO – Michelle Farry	Tel: 0191 4338031	<a href="mailto:LADO@gateshead.gov.uk">LADO@gateshead.gov.uk</a>
Buile Hill, Ellesmere Park and Moorside- (Salford)		
LADO -Liz Peppiatt	Tel: 0161 603 4350	<a href="mailto:LADO@salford.gov.uk">LADO@salford.gov.uk</a>
Washington and Thornhill Academy (Sunderland)		
LADO - Danielle Rose	Tel: 0191 561 3901	Email: <a href="mailto:designatedofficer@togetherforchildren.org.uk">designatedofficer@togetherforchildren.org.uk</a>

## Appendix 2: Four categories 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. It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

### Physical abuse

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

### Indicators of physical abuse

The following may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, bites, fractures or other injuries.
- Show signs of pain or discomfort.
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather.
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming.
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given.
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning.
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance.
- Violence and aggression towards others including bullying.
- Isolation from peers

## Emotional abuse

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.

## Indicators of emotional abuse

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- The child consistently describes themselves in negative ways.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Delayed physical, mental, or emotional development.
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies.
- Self-harm.
- Drug or solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Appetite disorders-anorexia nervosa, bulimia.
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

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

The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and **all** staff will be aware of it and of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

## Indicators of sexual abuse:

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge.
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation.
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming.
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness, or scratching.
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Refusal to communicate.
- Depression or withdrawal.
- Isolation from peer group.
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa or bulimia.
- Self-harm.
- Substance abuse.
- Acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

## Neglect

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

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

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

The following may be indicators of neglect:

- Constant hunger or stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food.
- Frequent tiredness.
- Frequently dirty or unkempt.
- Poor attendance or often late.
- Poor concentration.
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated.
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones or to develop intellectually or socially.
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings.
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.