



Consilium
Academies



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

September 2026



Date of Approval

PENDING (24.09.26)

Approved by

Trust Board (& Executive Director of Education)

Date of next Review

Annual

Excellence and Equity with Integrity



Table of Contents

1. Our Safeguarding Culture.....	3
2. Safeguarding legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Early help / Family Help	4
5. Students with special educational needs and disabilities or health issues.....	5
6. Children who are absent from education	6
7. Mental Health.....	7
8. Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.....	7
9. Children questioning their gender.....	7
10. Sport.....	8
11. Toilets, changing rooms, accomodation.....	8
12. Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)	9
13. Serious violence	11
14. Children at Risk of Serious Violence and/or Child Criminal or Sexual Exploitation.....	11
15. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes	13
16. Children and the court system.....	13
17. Online safety	14
18. Opportunities to teach safeguarding.....	14
19. Mobile Phones.....	15
20. Reasonable Force	15
21. Domestic Abuse	15
22. Homelessness.....	16
23. Honour or faith-based abuse	16
24. Radicalisation and Extremism	17
25. Staff/student relationships.....	17
26. Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, contractors, or volunteers.....	17
27. Whistle Blowing.....	18
28. Safer Recruitment	18
29. Training	18
30. Child protection procedures-abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery	19
31. Confidentiality and sharing information	21
32. Special circumstances.....	22
33. Links with other policies	23
Appendices	23



1. Our 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 help, 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 students

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 help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge. 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 students or staff involved in child protection or safeguarding issues will receive appropriate support. Our safeguarding culture ensures that we treat all students with respect and involve them in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful, and safe behaviour among students, and we set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately. Identifying safeguarding and child protection concerns often begin with recognising changes in students' 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 (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- The Teacher Standards (*updated 2021*)
- 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 DDSLs are not available, the Principal/Head of School 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/Raising Standards 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 Principal/Head of School regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police.
- Investigations and being 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.
- Working with multi-agency partners to provide help, support and protection in universal services and community based early-help, through Family Help (including targeted early help and statutory services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989).
- 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.

It is important that all children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) will be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school may put in place to protect them, and
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

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 2026.
- 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 to discuss safeguarding issues and agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in the school.

4. Early help / Family Help

Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. All school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan or not)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is bereaved
- is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education/part-time timetable
- has experienced multiple suspensions/been repeatedly removed from the classroom, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism or exploited
- is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse



- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of faith and honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child
- do not have English as a first language
- live transient lifestyles or live far away from home or in temporary accommodation.

All staff will be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessments:

- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to Family Help support and services provided at:
 - targeted early help level (under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004), and
 - statutory services delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need, including how this applies for disabled children);
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm)
 - section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders), and
 - section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child);
- and clear procedures and processes for cases relating to:
 - the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children
 - children managed within the youth secure estate
 - disabled children.

4.1 Community-based Early Help assessment

If children do not require the support of statutory children's services, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will generally lead the liaison with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in carrying out this assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for Family Help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any such cases will be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse. Alternatively, qualified lead practitioners (i.e. not a social worker) who may lead assessments before statutory intervention can continue to lead work with families up to and including section 17.

5. Students with special educational needs and disabilities or health issues

We recognise that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- Children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children.
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse.
- The need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others.
- That these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care.
- These children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

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

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). School will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.



5.1 Safeguarding Children with medical conditions

An incident relating to the management of a child or young person's medical condition (including allergies) would not in and of itself warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners. A safeguarding referral would only be needed where an incident highlighted concern that the child or young person might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family unit because of their medical condition. This might occur where relevant information about a child or young person's medical condition is not provided to the school or where they are repeatedly sent without essential medication, thereby putting the individual at risk.

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 including involvement in county lines, mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks.

Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in the future. 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 child/family may benefit from universal services and community based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. Similarly, the attendance of children who are vulnerable or with known welfare and safeguarding concerns such as children who have a child protection plan, 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 enquiries 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.

6.1 Alternative Provision

School will 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 (i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff). This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

School will always know where a child is based during school hours. This includes having records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend.

The school will have a formal agreement with the alternative provision and parent/carers regarding when the child should attend and what procedures will be followed should the child not attend the placement. The school will regularly review the alternative provision placements that they make. Reviews will be frequent enough (at least half termly) to provide assurance that the child is regularly attending and the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. 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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>

[Alternative provision – DfE Statutory Guidance and Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – DfE Statutory Guidance](#)

7. Mental Health

All staff will be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which staff are well placed to recognise.

These could include:

- significant changes in behaviour,
- ongoing difficulty sleeping,
- withdrawing from social situations,
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, by identifying these and other potential warning signs, staff can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention. School should ensure that any interventions they offer are evidenced as safe and effective and appropriate for the need and phase of education.

If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they will follow this child protection and safeguarding policy and speak to their designated safeguarding lead or deputy. If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or arrange for them to be taken to A&E immediately by a parent/carer or other suitable person. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

8. Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

The fact that a child or a young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, they can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. School will put appropriate sanctions in place when necessary. The risk to these children can be compounded where they lack a safe/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 with all students identifying at least one safe adult that they can report incidents or concerns.

9. Children questioning their gender

School will respond in a way to understand the thoughts and feelings of children who are questioning their gender when a child or parent has raised a request relating to social transition. School will be appropriately professionally curious about the full range of the child's experiences. School will remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying.



School should not initiate any action regarding social transition. KCSIE 2026 guidance applies where a child or their parent has requested that the school make changes or put support in place in order to facilitate the child presenting as the opposite biological sex (“social transition”). Members of staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the school and a child’s parents or carers have been involved as set out in the statutory guidance, KCSIE 2026. When considering any request for support with social transition, school should ensure that their decision-making process is documented and records are kept. School must comply with their distinct but interacting obligations under safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by their evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children.

School has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. School will consider how best to fulfil that duty towards a child who is questioning their gender, as well as their peers, ensuring that any agreed course of action takes account of the impact on all of those affected. This means that the first step when considering a child’s request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child (and other children) as well as considering any clinical evidence or advice and seeking any additional non-clinical professional advice where relevant (for example from the SENDCo), including involving the designated safeguarding lead; a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child’s wishes.

It is important that the views of the child’s parents or carers should carry great weight and be properly considered. However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the school will involve the designated safeguarding lead to determine what action is needed to safeguard the child, before the parents or carers are contacted or any decisions are taken.

In cases where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask school to make changes to how they are treated, there is no reason to break any confidence unless there is a related safeguarding risk. School will follow usual procedures where a conversation with a child raises concerns about the child’s wellbeing or safety, including involving parents or carers where appropriate.

As well as complying with their safeguarding obligations as above, school must also comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

School will ensure that children and their families are aware that while school will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, school must also be conscious of the rights of students and staff in relation to their religion or belief. We know that bullying has a detrimental impact on young people’s mental health and their ability to thrive at school. Bullying can affect a child’s attainment and wellbeing. We are clear that all forms of bullying, for whatever reason, are unacceptable.

School will be particularly conscious of the vulnerabilities of children who have fully socially transitioned from an early age and may be living in stealth (that is, school friends/staff may be unaware of their biological sex).

10. Sport

As children get older, some sports are typically taught and played in single-sex groups. The Equality Act 2010 contains an exception in relation to single-sex sport. It applies to participation in any sport or game, or activity of a competitive nature, where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or vice versa). This means that schools can separate children according to their biological sex in these circumstances without discriminating unlawfully against them on the basis of their sex.

Some sports may need to be played in single-sex groups from a certain age to ensure children’s safety, and where this is the case there must be no exceptions. In other cases, school may have adopted a policy of single-sex sports for reasons related to fairness. Where there are no safety concerns and a child makes a request relating to how they participate, school will need to consider the request in light of the advice on “considering requests for support with social transition”. This means that the school will need to take into account all the relevant factors, including whether supporting social transition is overall in the best interests of the child, as well as considering the impact on other children and the aim of creating safe and fair environments for children to participate in PE.

11. Toilets, changing rooms, accommodation

School must not allow children into toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. This includes where school is responding to a request to support any degree of social transition for children who are questioning their gender. Therefore, if a gender-questioning child does not want to use the toilet designated for their biological sex, school will consider whether they can provide an alternative toilet facility, for example self-contained individual toilets, without compromising the provision of single-sex facilities. These alternative arrangements should not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child, or of any other children. It is important that school keeps a clear record of these situations, ensure they are communicated appropriately, and review them regularly.



11.1 Changing rooms and showers

School must not allow a child, aged 11 years or older at the start of the school year, to undress in front of a child of the opposite biological sex. When responding to a request to support any degree of social transition, a school must not allow a child access to changing rooms designated for the opposite sex.

If a gender-questioning child does not want to use the changing rooms and showers designated for their sex, school should consider whether they can provide an alternative changing or washing facility without compromising the provision of single-sex facilities. This could be a fully enclosed room – for use by one child at a time that can be secured from the inside – or by allowing access to facilities at an alternative time. These alternative arrangements should not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child or of any other children. It is important that school keeps a clear record of these situations, ensure they are communicated appropriately, and review them regularly.

11.2 Residential accommodation/overnight trips and visits

To comply with safeguarding duties, school must not allow a child to share overnight accommodation with a child of the opposite biological sex. Responding to a request to support any degree of social transition must not include allowing access to residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex.

In allocating sleeping arrangements such as dormitories, tents or shared rooms for school trips, school must have regard to the duties under the Equality Act, the safeguarding obligations, and other relevant regulations and standards.

If, however, a child does not want to share a room with another child of the same biological sex, alternative arrangements should be sought where possible. Alternative arrangements should not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of any child. It might include, for instance, finding a suitable separate room for the child.

12. Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

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’.

All staff will be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, all staff should know that child-on-child abuse is preventable. 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.

All staff should recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour may have a significant impact on a child’s welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety and will be considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

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

Physical abuse such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.

Serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon.

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

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and harassment which may include misogyny/misandry. Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education sets out how schools should respond to reports of this nature; staff will confirm that they have read and understood this section of the guidance.

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 is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks or to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.

Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nude and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI; pressuring others to share sexual content; regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. All such incidents require a safeguarding response.

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. The government's Freedom from Violence and Abuse strategy explicitly requires schools to tackle misogyny and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). VAWG is any form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence disproportionately perpetrated against women and girls.

Staff are aware and can recognise the escalatory nature of misogyny and the benefits of early identification to support the school's approach to minimising the risk of harmful sexual behaviours (HSB), sexual harassment and sexual violence. Staff will challenge behaviours, potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

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.

The decision may be made that the children involved do not require a referral to statutory services but may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. This level of support is for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Providing this level of support is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. This support can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Inform parents - we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the student 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 2026. This statutory guidance outlines how schools should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. The umbrella term 'harmful sexual behaviour' (HSB) is widely used in child protection and applies to behaviour occurring online, face-to-face, or both. HSB should always be considered within a child protection context.

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

13. Serious violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff will report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). The designated safeguarding lead will assess the risk to both the individual student and others in the school, considering wider information or concerns, and take appropriate action. Depending on the risk, they will put in place a safety and support plan, and where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict.

School plays a key role in protecting children from violence, safeguarding victims, as well as those who may be at risk of, or are involved in committing violence (who may also be victims themselves). Staff should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence. These risks are higher for children with disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending. School should also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school).

Early, evidence-based support for those considered at risk, as well as at critical points when concerns emerge, is vital. This includes access to safe and trusted adults, social and emotional skill support, and, where available, targeted interventions such as mentoring or therapeutic support.

14. 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, neglect or exploitation 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. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation in collaboration with the Home Office, has developed Shore Space, an online resource which works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour.

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. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. 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, this may constitute modern slavery.

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 others sharing videos or images of them on social media. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. CSE can 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. It can also affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. 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. As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing.

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. 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.



15. 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 a member of staff sees or is shown an image on a young person's phone in school, they will 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.
- Misuse by a student of a mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in our Behaviour Policy with our response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse. The response may include confiscation of the mobile phone. Students are aware that serious misuse may lead not only to the confiscation of their mobile phone, but may the matter being reported to the Police where we believe that a criminal offence may have been committed.

The UK Council for Internet Safety provides advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes (UKCIS, December 2020), which was updated March 2024. The school will have regard to this advice when managing these issues.

16. Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. School will actively support children navigating the legal and court systems. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will collaborate closely with the local authority and Cafcass to minimise trauma and ensure the child's voice remains central to the proceedings.

The DSL will ensure any sharing of records with police, social workers, or the courts is lawful, proportionate, and handled securely, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance. The DSL will work closely with the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) to implement structured plans that reduce the emotional and psychological impact of court appearances or interviews on the child.

Any absence related to court proceedings or legal meetings will be carefully recorded. School will document the reasons rigorously to balance safeguarding duties with statutory education attendance requirements. School will provide a stable, consistent school routine and access to designated pastoral care, making appropriate referrals if a child exhibits signs of anxiety or trauma related to the legal process.

17. 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) by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the school's DSL and IT support. They include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations, and a record kept of this check to ensure their effectiveness. 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 students.

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, for example, pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.*
- *Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example: peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.*
- *Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying, and*
- *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. The Department for Education has published Generative AI: product safety expectations to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely, and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education. Deepfakes (especially non-consensual intimate images) are legally classified under **image-based sexual abuse, harassment, and severe safeguarding risks**. Under legislation like the Data (Use and Access) Act and the Online Safety Act, the creation and sharing of such content are treated as criminal offenses.

On 29 April 2026 the Crime and Policing bill received Royal Assent to become the Crime and Policing Act 2026. It introduced a new statutory duty for individuals undertaking key roles with responsibility for children and young people in England to report sexual abuse when they are made aware of it, which includes sexual abuse that is facilitated by and/or takes place online (including non-contact abuse such as image sharing). It also included a new criminal offence of attempting to prevent someone reporting child sexual abuse. Therefore, all staff must report such concerns without delay to the DSL.

18. Opportunities to teach safeguarding

School plays a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or approach that prepares students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.

School will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE



delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such a programme should be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerabilities). This programme will tackle, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as:

- supporting children to develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships,
- healthy and respectful relationships,
- boundaries, consent (having the freedom and capacity to choose) and kindness in relationships,
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality,
- body confidence and self-esteem,
- how to recognise and report concerns about an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour,
- the concepts of, and laws relating to all forms of sexual harassment, and abuse, and how to access support,
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it, and
- understanding online harms such as sharing images, the prevalence of deepfakes, pornography and misogynistic influencers and when and where to seek help.

19. Mobile Phones

All schools should be mobile phone-free environments. Statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools is clear that the Department for Education expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. There are a number of ways in which schools can ensure that they are mobile phone-free, and it is for Principals/Head of School to decide how best to achieve this within their own contexts. Please refer to each Academy's localised behaviour policy for further information.

20. Reasonable Force

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time', the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

The decision on whether or not to use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances.

When using 'reasonable force' in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, schools should, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups and make reasonable adjustments.

21. Domestic Abuse

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

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. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent or care giver abuse. Teenage relationship abuse, depending on the age of the young people, may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

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.

21.1 Operation Encompass



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. In November 2025, a new statutory duty was placed on the police to notify a child's education setting, and where relevant, local authorities, if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This includes all children connected to a household where they have attended a domestic abuse incident; children who are physically present at the incident, children not physically present during the incident, and situations where a child might reside in another household temporarily or permanently.

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.

22. 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.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act places a new duty on local housing authorities in England to notify educational institutions, when a child is placed in temporary accommodation. This notification should be made when consent has been given from the parent, those with parental responsibility or care of the child, or the child themselves in cases of 16–17-year-olds living independently from their parents. The notification will enable school staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children at the earliest opportunity and support them to improve their outcomes.

23. Honour or faith-based abuse

Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in the context of preserving honour often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. 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. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

23.1 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.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by 'to discover than an act of FGM appears to have been carried out' is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL (or deputy) and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover than an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 and over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.



23.2 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 or 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.

24. 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.

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are first assessed by police and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. Whilst the referral is being assessed, should any further or new information come to light, this should also be passed to police. A representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

25. Staff/student relationships

Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students 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 students. Our staff code of conduct sets out our expectations of staff.

26. Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, contractors, or volunteers

If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply staff, trainee teacher, 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, trainee teachers, 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 2026. 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, trainee teacher, contractor, or volunteer), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, trainee teacher, contractor, or volunteer) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the Principal/Head of School. If the concerns/allegations are about the Principal/Head of School, speak to the Hub Director for that region.



27. 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.

28. 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 2026, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

In addition, the Trust complies with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 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 Principal/Head of School 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.

28.1 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.

29. Training

29.1 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 students. All staff will have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm.

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 2026 (Part One, Part Five and Annex A)
- 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.

29.2 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.

30. Child protection procedures-abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery

Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best interests** of the child. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. If staff have a concern, they will follow this policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes, including considering where doing so does not place the child at additional risk, whether the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should inform parents or carers to further support the child's wellbeing,
- undertaking a family help assessment or making a referral to statutory services, for example as the child could be in need, is in need or is suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

Our staff are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

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.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 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.

30.1 If you are concerned about a student's welfare

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

30.2 If a student discloses to you

If a student 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 student know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL,
- tell the student what will happen next,
- log the concern on CPOMS and pass to the DSL as soon as possible, reporting verbally to the DSL.

30.3 Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student 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.

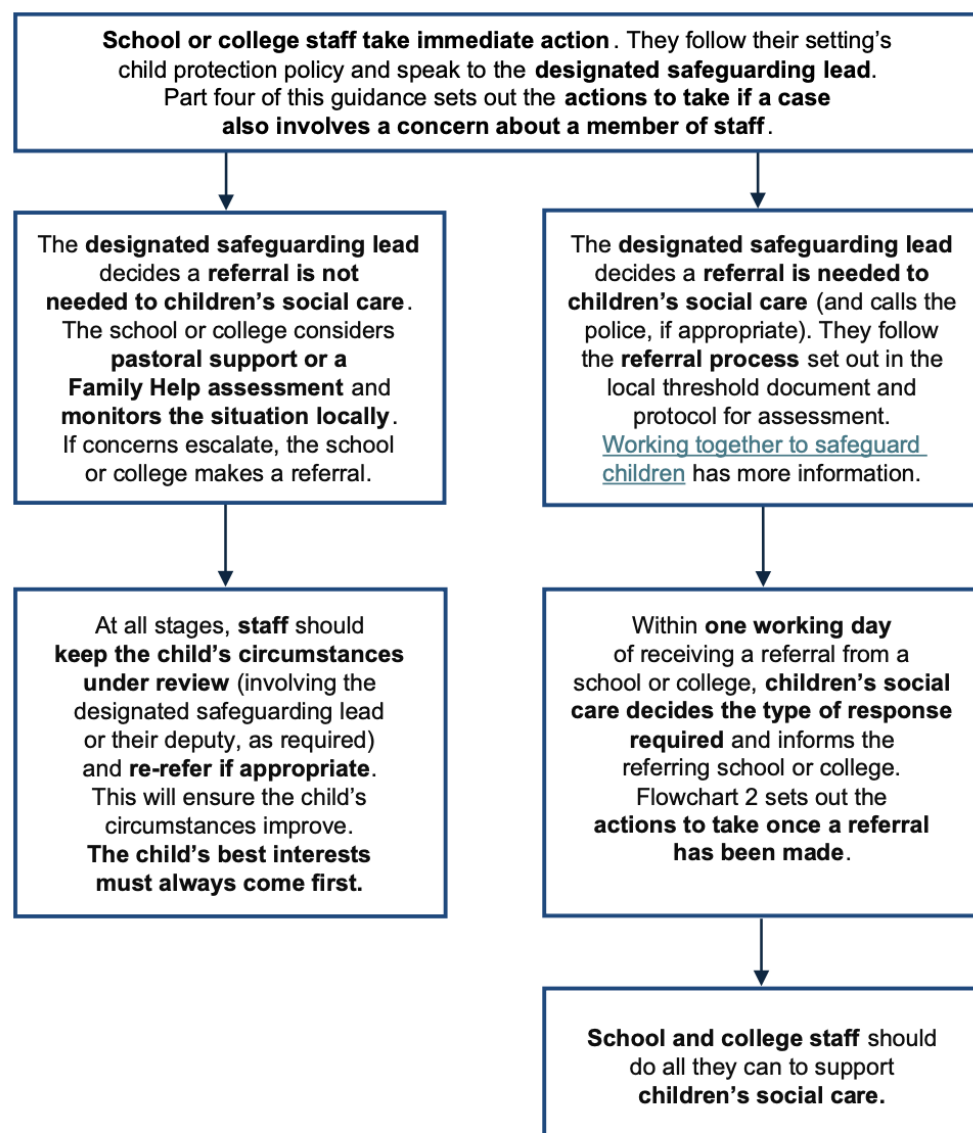
30.4 Referral to children's social care

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The student (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.

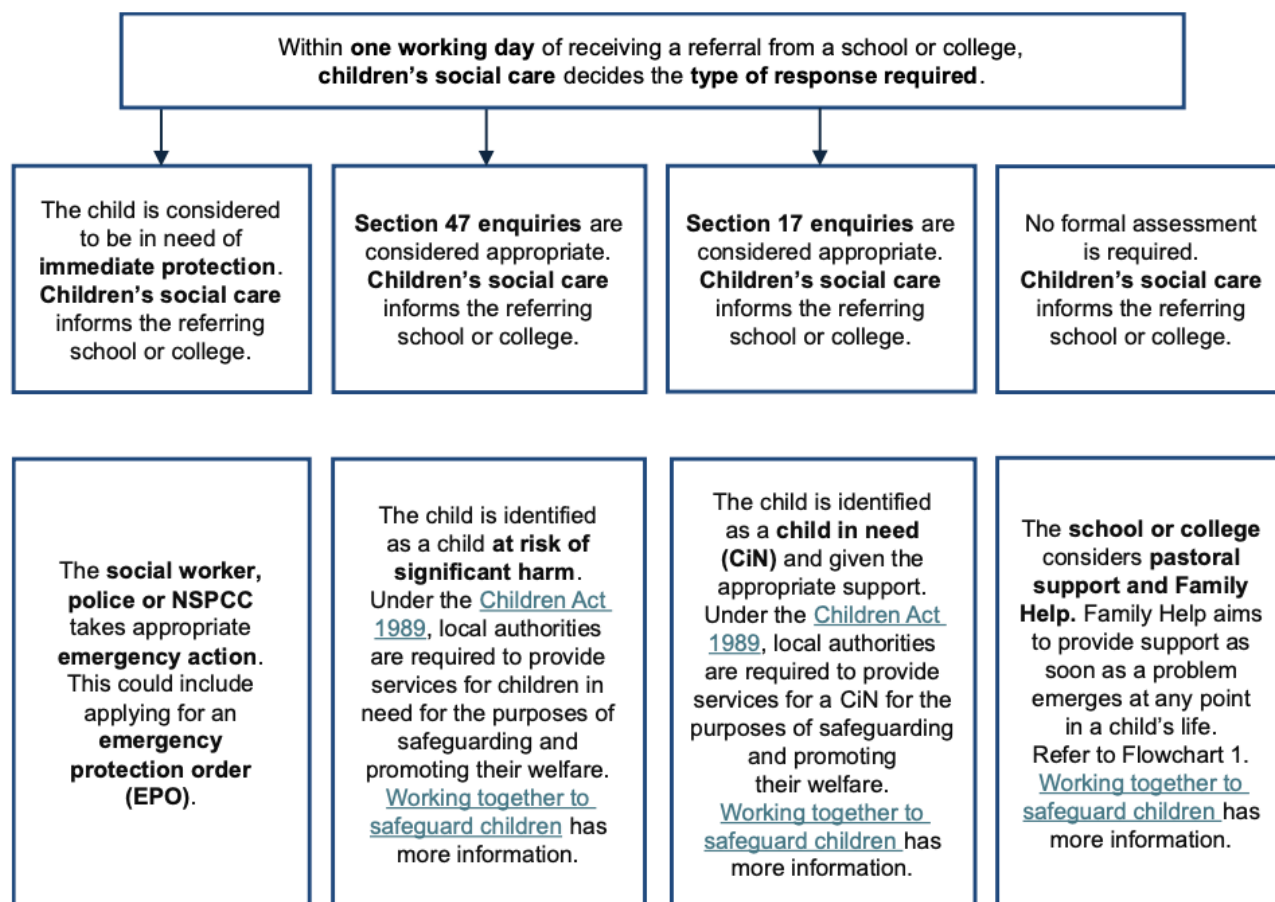
30.5 Reporting directly to child protection agencies

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 Principal/Head of School are not available, and a referral is required immediately.

Flowchart 1: actions taken by school when there are concerns about a child



Flowchart 2: actions taken once a referral has been made to children's social care



31. Confidentiality and sharing information

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

31.1 Sharing Information

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the student 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 General Data Protection Regulation (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. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see the child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving particularly where the information would support an assessment of risk to others in the school as well as the individual student. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse, or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and can have that support in place for when the child arrives or incidents that may indicate concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours.

Where information indicates a risk to others and/or the individual student, for example where a student has previously carried, threatened with, or used a knife or weapon, it is incumbent on the receiving school to assess risk, and accordingly, put in place a safety



and support plan for when the child arrives. It would be good practice for a conversation to take place between the designated safeguarding leads at both settings, where there are issues or concerns.

31.2 Storing Information

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Information Sharing Guidance for practitioners (DfE 2024). The Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

The DSL will ensure that the child protection files are kept up to date and that records will include:

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

31.3 Critical Incidents

Our definition of **critical** incidents incorporates cases where there is the potential for a Serious Case Review to be conducted following the incident and/or could attract media attention. Therefore, the Trust will require Hub Director, Director of Performance, Standards & Quality Assurance, Principals and DSLs to define an incident as **critical** and follow the appropriate steps.

32. Special circumstances

32.1-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, and all children in kinship care, 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.
- Work closely with the Virtual School Head (VSH). The VSH has responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.

32.2 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.

32.3 Young carers

School should be alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services.

32.4 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.

32.5 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 2025) 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.

33. 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
Principal	Gill Mills
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Colin Abraham
Deputy DSLs	Sian Duffy



Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Emma Bennett
Hub Director	Gemma Simon
Consilium Evolve	
ROLE	NAME
Head of School	Karyn Taylor
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Karyn Taylor
Deputy DSLs	Danielle Phillips & Roxanne Dawson
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Sue Hamilton
Hub Director	Allie Denholm
Ellesmere Park High School	
ROLE	NAME
Principal	Iain Ross
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Iain Ross
Deputy DSLs	Suzanne Calderwood
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Nicole Holt
Hub Director	Owen Inglis
Heworth Grange School	
ROLE	NAME
Acting Principal	Scott Danks
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Sharon Rennie
Deputy DSLs	Christine Onions, Catriona Froom, Erin Bushby & Claire Gibson

Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Gary Ramm
Hub Director	Gemma Simon
Moorside High School	
ROLE	NAME
Principal	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
Hub Director	Owen Inglis



Thornhill Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Principal	Liam Clark
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Laura Oliver
Deputy DSLs	Alexa Riddle & Cherry Crooks
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Denise Nicholson
Hub Director	Allie Denholm
Washington Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Principal	Vicky Carter
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lynne Parkin
Deputy DSLs	Andrea Evans, Jackie Mitchell & Alex Taylor
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Vanessa Winspear
Hub Director	Gemma Simon
Wyvern Academy	
ROLE	NAME
Principal	Nadia Robinson
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lauren Mitchell
Deputy DSLs	Peter Seed, Clare O'Keefe, Zoe Grant, James Wilkinson, Katie Peacock, Lesley Pilkington, Anna Reed & Alison Brownbridge.
Chair of Local Academy Board (LAB)	Tobias Livingstone
Hub Director	Allie Denholm

Key personnel for safeguarding

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONTACT EMAIL
Tara Welsh	Consilium Academies Trust	Safeguarding@consilium-at.com
Colin Abraham	Armthorpe Academy	Safeguarding.Armthorpe@consilium-at.com



Iain Ross	Ellesmere Park High School	Safeguarding.Ellesmere@consilium-at.com
Karyn Taylor	Consilium Evolve	Safeguarding.Evolve@consilium-at.com
Sharon Rennie	Heworth Grange School	Safeguarding.Heworth@consilium-at.com
Laura Drinkwater	Moorside High School	Safeguarding.Moorside@consilium-at.com
Laura Oliver	Thornhill Academy	Safeguarding.Thornhill@consilium-at.com
Lynne Parkin	Washington Academy	Safeguarding.Washington@consilium-at.com
Lauren Mitchell	Wyvern Academy	Safeguarding.Wyvern@consilium-at.com
Local safeguarding children's partnership information		
Wyvern Academy - (Darlington)		
LADO – Tel: 01325 405319		designatedofficer@darlington.gov.uk
Armthorpe Academy – (Doncaster)		
LADO – Tel: 01302 737332		LADO@doncaster.gov.uk
Heworth Academy – (Gateshead)		
LADO – Tel: 0191 4338031		LADO@gateshead.gov.uk
Ellesmere Park and Moorside - (Salford)		
LADO - Tel: 0161 603 4350		LADO@salford.gov.uk
Consilium Evolve, Thornhill and Washington - (Sunderland)		
LADO -		designatedofficer@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Appendix 2: Four categories of Abuse

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent them. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact of children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse. Abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap. 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.
- It may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as 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, hearing or experiencing 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 penetration with an object) 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. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. 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. There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

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.