



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

OUR APPROACH

Pioneer Secondary Academy (PSA) is committed to the vital contribution all teaching staff, support staff and trustees and local advisory board members make to safeguarding children.

We aim to ensure that safeguarding and child protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and actions that support the specific needs of the individual child are undertaken. The child's interests always come first. Through providing a caring, safe and stimulating environment and teaching RSHE, PD including Citizenship, British values, equality and social, moral, spiritual and cultural education we aim to foster an atmosphere of trust, respect and security in which all pupils can strive.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all staff within the Pioneer Secondary Academy (PSA).

Due to the all-encompassing nature of safeguarding, this policy is divided into several sections.

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This policy has been drawn up in line with “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025”. The school’s legal duty to safeguard vulnerable individuals is set out in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023 with updates in May and June 2025.
- The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill Dec 2024
- The Education Act 2002
- OFSTED’S Education Inspection Framework 2023 - due for publication in Autumn 2025
- Prevent Duty Guidance March 2024
- Mandatory reporting of FGM by a teacher to police – procedural information, updated Jan 2020.

A. DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families’ lives.

B. SAFEGUARDING SIGNS AND INFORMATION

1. Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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 on children of all forms of domestic abuse. 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.

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

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape;
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt;
- Bite marks;
- Round burn marks;
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks;
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given;
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred;
- Bald patches;
- Wounds and scars
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning;
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather;
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- Fear of medical help;
- Fear of changing for PE;
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance;
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers.

3. Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- It 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 not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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 from participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development;
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders;
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies;
- Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches;
- Self-harming, drug or solvent abuse;
- Fear of parents being contacted;
- Running away;
- Compulsive stealing;
- Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis. N.B.: Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as “traumatic mutism”) can indicate maltreatment.

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

- The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.
- They may also include 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. NB: Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

5. Neglect: 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food
- clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- or 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 (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Constant hunger;
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food;
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness;
- Frequently dirty or unkempt;
- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather;
- Poor school attendance or often late for school;
- Poor concentration;
- Affection or attention needing behaviour;

- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated; failure to organise medical appointments
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight;
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially;
- Activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.

6. Child-on-child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or online.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead.

It is essential that **all staff** understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

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

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

The school takes the child to child abuse very seriously. We educate our students and train our staff throughout the year to make sure that there is a culture of openness and that staff are vigilant. Our ‘It’s

not just banter' tagline means that students understand that child on child abuse is taken seriously and will be seriously dealt with.

There are arrangements (DSL accessibility, email, reporting form) in place to encourage pupils to report abuse (confidentially or anonymously). These are easily understood and accessible.

We minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse through:

- Staff vigilance
- Staff training
- Encouraging students to report abuse by giving them mechanisms to report abuse and open access to the DSLs
- Taking appropriate actions when abuse is reported
- Our comprehensive programmes of education (RSHE, Citizenship, Inclusion and Equality, SMSC – under the PD umbrella)
- The curriculum subjects
- Engagement of a range of external organisations and providers who support us in this work.

Allegations of child-on-child abuse are recorded, investigated and dealt with by senior staff and DSLs. DSLs and pastoral staff will, depending on the specifics of the allegations, make arrangements to support the victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse. This may involve a range of strategies from school-based support to support from external agencies. Parents will be usually informed and involved. We understand that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse – it happens here and may just not be reported.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and do not allow children to pass it off as banter nor just having a laugh. We promote the highest standards of behaviour which makes the school a safe place.

We ask the students of places/areas where they may not feel safe (in and out of school) and make sure that concerns in these areas are addressed (e.g. lighting, cameras, extra supervision, etc.). We have staff on duty before school, at break, lunch and after school to ensure the students are supervised at all times and cannot congregate in corridors or bathrooms. We have CCTV cameras in key locations around the premises.

There is an understanding that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but we understand that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable.

The different forms child on child abuse includes:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Our RSHE, Citizenship and wider PD curriculum addresses the different forms of abuse so that children understand the inappropriateness of these behaviours. We have incorporated the DfE's guidance on use of reasonable force by schools in our policy.

7. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others.

As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing.

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. 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. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)

8. Domestic Abuse - Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Statutory guidance on Domestic Abuse April 2023 can be found – [HERE](#).

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces the first ever statutory 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.

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

Types of Abuse:

- Intimate partner abuse
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Abuse by family members
- Child-to-parent abuse

Broadly, some of the impacts that domestic abuse can have on children can include:

- feeling anxious or depressed
- low self-esteem and difficulties with forming healthy relationships
- hypervigilance in reading body language or changes in mood and atmosphere
- having difficulty sleeping, nightmares
- physical symptoms such as stomach aches or bed wetting
- delayed development or deterioration in speech, language and communication
- reduction in school attainment, truancy, risk of exclusion from school
- increased application to activities outside the home, including academia or sports, as a distraction
- inconsistent regulation of emotions, including becoming distressed, upset or angry
- becoming aggressive or internalising their distress and becoming withdrawn
- managing their space within the home so they are not visible
- using alcohol or drugs, or self-harming

Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience its effects.

Operation Encompass - operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does

not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. More information about the scheme and how schools can become involved is available on the Operation Encompass website.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

National Domestic Abuse Helpline - Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives
- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- Home: Operation Encompass (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children).

9. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Whilst **all staff** should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, **discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers - 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 or students, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

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 school's designated safeguarding lead (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 that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#). Further information can be found in the [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#) and the [FGM resource pack](#).

10. Mental Health: All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education 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.

We offer support for mental health for all pupils. These measures include online resources, a programme of personal development and regular contact with their teachers and other staff within the school. Further support will be provided by Senior Leaders or the DSLs as needed and, where appropriate, specialist external support is provided through working with CAMHS, Anna Freud etc.

Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. [Rise Above](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

More information can be found in the [Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance](#). Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See [Every Mind Matters](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.

11. Serious violence: All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's [Serious Violence Strategy](#).

Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence.

Home Office funded Violence Reduction Units (VRU) operate in the 20 police force areas across England and Wales that have the highest volumes of serious violence, as measured by hospital admissions for injury with a sharp object. A list of these locations can be found [HERE](#).

12. County lines: County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their 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 that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Signs to look out for

A young person's involvement in county lines activity often leaves signs. A person might exhibit some of these signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a person's lifestyle should be discussed with them. Some potential indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets

- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.
- Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the [Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#)

13. Child abduction and community safety incidents: Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

14. Children and the court system: Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children [5-11-year olds](#) and [12-17 year olds](#).

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online [child arrangements information tool](#) with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

15. Children who are absent from education: Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

It is important the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Further information and support, includes:

- Guidance on school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: [Children Missing Education](#).
- further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: [Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges](#).

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools **must** provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: [Children Missing Education](#).

16. Children with family members in prison: Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

17. Cybercrime: Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyberdependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the

National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: [Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.](#)

18. Homelessness: Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#). The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation:

[here](#).

19. Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism: Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK](#)

20. Preventing radicalisation: Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a school's safeguarding approach.

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

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

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat **must** be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are [factors that may indicate concern](#).

It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) [making a Prevent referral](#).

The Prevent duty: All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in schools should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in colleges should familiar themselves with the [Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales](#). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

The school's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral. The Department has published further advice for schools on the [Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- [Prevent awareness e-learning](#) offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- [Prevent referrals e-learning](#) supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are **robust, informed** and with **good intention**.
- [Channel awareness e-learning](#) is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multiagency Channel panel.

[Educate Against Hate](#), is a government website designed to support school teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help school staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

The [ETF Online Learning environment](#) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, support staff and governors/Board members outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

London Grid for Learning have also produced useful resources on Prevent ([Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning \(lgfl.net\)](#)).

Channel: Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme, and have that support in place for when the child arrives. Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#) and [Channel training from the Home Office](#).

21. So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage):

So called 'honour'- 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. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers** that requires a different approach (see below).

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 in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

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 or students. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

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 school's designated safeguarding lead 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 that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

Further information can be found in the [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#) and the [FGM resource pack](#).

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (pages 75-80 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufcdo.gov.uk.

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

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care.

22. Online harms including misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories (see l, m, n and o below).

There is a wealth of information available to support schools. The following list is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:

a) Abuse

- [Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse – CSA Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse](#) has free evidence-based practice resources to help professionals working with children and young people to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of child sexual abuse.
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) – DfE advice
- [Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance](#) – Home Office (HO)
- [Faith based abuse: National Action Plan](#) – DfE advice
- [Forced marriage resource pack](#)
- [Disrespect NoBody campaign - GOV.UK](#) – Home Office website
- [Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy](#) – Home Office policy paper
- [Together we can stop child sexual abuse](#) – HM Government campaign

b) Bullying

- [Preventing bullying including cyberbullying](#) – DfE advice
- Children missing from education, home or care
- [Children missing education](#) – DfE statutory guidance
- [Child missing from home or care](#) – DfE statutory guidance
- [Children and adults missing strategy](#) – Home Office strategy

c) Children with family members in prison

- [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders](#) – Barnardo's in partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service

d) Child Exploitation

- [Trafficking: safeguarding children](#) – DfE and Home Office guidance
- [Care of unaccompanied and trafficked children](#) – DfE statutory guidance
- [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims](#) – HO statutory guidance
- [Child exploitation disruption toolkit](#) – HO statutory guidance
- [County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#) – The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council
- [Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm](#) – non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme, funded by the Department for Education and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice

e) Confidentiality

- [Gillick competency Fraser guidelines](#) – Guidelines to help with balancing children's rights along with safeguarding responsibilities.

f) Drugs

- [Drug strategy 2021](#) – Home Office strategy
 - [Information and advice on drugs](#) – Talk to Frank website
 - [Drug and Alcohol education – teacher guidance & evidence review](#) – PSHE Association
- g) (So-called) “Honour Based Abuse” including FGM and forced marriage
- [Female genital mutilation: information and resources](#) – Home Office guidance
 - [Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance](#) – DfE, Department for Health, and Home Office
 - [Forced marriage](#) – Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) resources
 - [Forced marriage](#) – Government multi-agency practice guidelines and multi-agency statutory guidance
 - [FGM resource pack](#) – HM Government guidance
- h) Health and Well-being
- [Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience](#) – Public Health England
 - [Supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions](#) – DfE statutory guidance
 - [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) – DfE advice
 - [Overview - Fabricated or induced illness](#) – NHS advice
- i) Homelessness
- [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#) – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities guidance
- j) Information Sharing
- [Government information sharing advice](#) – Guidance on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.
 - [Information Commissioner's Office: Data sharing information hub](#) – Information to help schools and colleges comply with UK data protection legislation including UK GDPR.
- k) Online safety-advice
- [Childnet](#) provides guidance for schools on cyberbullying
 - [Educateagainsthate](#) provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation
 - [London Grid for Learning](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college’s online safety arrangements
 - [NSPCC E-safety for schools](#) provides advice, templates, and tools on all aspects of a school or college’s online safety arrangements
 - [Safer recruitment consortium](#) “guidance for safe working practice”, which may help ensure staff behaviour policies are robust and effective
 - [Searching screening and confiscation](#) is departmental advice for schools on searching children and confiscating items such as mobile phones
 - [South West Grid for Learning](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college’s online safety arrangements
 - [Use of social media for online radicalisation](#) – A briefing note for schools on how social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq

- [Online Safety Audit Tool](#) from UK Council for Internet Safety to help mentors of trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers induct mentees and provide ongoing support, development and monitoring
- [Online safety guidance if you own or manage an online platform](#) – DCMS advice
- [A business guide for protecting children on your online platform](#) – DCMS advice
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provide tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online

l) Online safety - Remote education, virtual lessons and live streaming

- [Guidance Get help with remote education](#) resources and support for teachers and school leaders on educating pupils and students
- [Departmental guidance on safeguarding and remote education](#) including planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely
- [London Grid for Learning](#) guidance, including platform specific advice
- [National cyber security centre](#) guidance on choosing, configuring and deploying video conferencing
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) guidance on safe remote learning

m) Online safety - Support for children

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

n) Online safety - Parental support

- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Commonsensemedia](#) provides independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents
- [Government advice](#) about protecting children from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
- [Internet Matters](#) provide age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls, and practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [How Can I Help My Child?](#) Marie Collins Foundation – Sexual Abuse Online
- [Let's Talk About It](#) provides advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- [London Grid for Learning](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [Stopitnow](#) resource from [The Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#) can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)
- [National Crime Agency/CEOP Thinkuknow](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Parentzone](#) provides help for parents and carers on keeping their children safe online
- [Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents](#) – This is the Children's Commissioner's parental guide on talking to their children about online sexual harassment

o) Private fostering

- [Private fostering: local authorities](#) – DfE statutory guidance

p) Radicalisation

- [Prevent duty guidance](#) – Home Office guidance
- [Prevent duty: additional advice for schools and childcare providers](#) – DfE advice [Educate Against Hate website](#) – DfE and Home Office advice
- [Prevent for FE and Training](#) – Education and Training Foundation (ETF)
- [Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Resources](#) – Resources by London Grid for Learning
- [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting](#) – DfE guidance

q) Serious Violence

- [Serious violence strategy](#) – Home Office Strategy
- [Factors linked to serious violence and how these factors can be used to identify individuals for intervention](#) – Home Office
- [Youth Endowment Fund](#) – Home Office
- [Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges](#) – Home Office advice [Tackling violence against women and girls strategy](#) – Home Office strategy
- [Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims](#) – Home Office guidance

r) Sexual violence and sexual harassment - Specialist Organisations

- [Barnardo's](#) – UK charity caring for and supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people through their range of services.
- [Lucy Faithful Foundation](#) – UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with families affected by sexual abuse and also run the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline.
- [Marie Collins Foundation](#) – Charity that, amongst other things, works directly with children, young people, and families to enable their recovery following sexual abuse.
- [NSPCC](#) – Children's charity specialising in child protection with statutory powers enabling them to take action and safeguard children at risk of abuse.
- [Rape Crisis](#) – National charity and the umbrella body for their network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) – Provides advice and support to children, young people, parents, carers and schools about staying safe online.

s) Harmful sexual behaviour

- [Rape Crisis \(England & Wales\)](#) or [The Survivors Trust](#) for information, advice, and details of local specialist sexual violence organisations.
- [NICE guidance](#) contains information on, amongst other things: developing interventions; working with families and carers; and multi-agency working.
- [HSB toolkit](#) The Lucy Faithfull Foundation - designed for parents, carers, family members and professionals, to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe. It has links to useful information, resources, and support as well as practical tips to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and provide safe environments for families.
- [NSPCC Learning: Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour](#) and [NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework](#) – free and independent advice about HSB.

- [Contextual Safeguarding Network – Beyond Referrals \(Schools\)](#) provides a school self-assessment toolkit and guidance for addressing HSB in schools.
- [Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now](#) provides a guide for parents, carers and professionals to help everyone do their part in keeping children safe, they also run a free confidential helpline.

t) Support for Victims

- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) – Detailed information for anyone being bullied, along with advice for parents and schools. Signposts to various helplines and websites for further support.
- [Rape Crisis](#) – Provides and signpost to a range of services to support people who have experienced rape, child abuse or any kind of sexual violence.
- [The Survivors Trust](#) – UK-wide national umbrella agency with resources and support dedicated to survivors of rape, sexual violence and child sex abuse.
- [Victim Support](#) – Supporting children and young people who have been affected by crime. Also provides support to parents and professionals who work with children and young people – regardless of whether a crime has been reported or how long ago it was.
- [Child line](#) provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.

u) Toolkits

- [ask AVA](#) - The Ask AVA prevention platform has been created to support education practitioners across the UK to develop and deliver a comprehensive programme to stop
- Violence Against Women and Girls.
- [NSPCC](#) – Online Self-assessment tool to ensure organisations are doing everything they can to safeguard children.
- [NSPCC](#) – Resources which help adults respond to children disclosing abuse.
- The NSPCC also provides free and independent advice about HSB: [NSPCC – Harmful sexual behaviour framework](#)
- [Safeguarding Unit, Farrer and Co. and Carlene Firmin, MBE, University of Bedfordshire](#) - Peer-on Peer Abuse toolkit provides practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse.
- [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#) – self-assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB.
- [Child net – STAR SEND Toolkit](#) equips, enables and empowers educators with the knowledge to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- [Child net – Just a joke?](#) Provides lesson plans, activities, a quiz and teaching guide designed to explore problematic online sexual behaviour with 9–12-year-olds.
- [Child net – Step Up. Speak Up](#) a practical campaign toolkit that addresses the issue of online sexual harassment amongst young people aged 13-17 years old.
- [NSPCC – Harmful sexual behaviour framework](#) an evidence-informed framework for children and young people displaying HSB.
- Farrer & Co: [Addressing child on child abuse: a resource for schools and colleges](#). This resource provides practical guidance for schools and colleges on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse.

v) Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

- [London Grid for Learning-collection of advice](#) – Various information and resources dealing with the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

- [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) – Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

C. KEY PRINCIPLES

These are the key principles of safeguarding at each school:

- Always see the child first.
- Never do nothing - Be vigilant and proactive.
- Build relationships.
- Do the simple things better.
- Outcomes of your work matter - not inputs.
- Do with, not to, others - Work in partnership.

Every child is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. The schools operate with public money: this should be spent wisely, targeting resources on the evidenced needs of children at school. Assurance and audit are important aspects of this. Governance is corporate and decisions are collective, but individual Trustees can and should take the lead on specific aspects of school life such as safeguarding. The Board of Trustees Safeguarding Lead for Sikh Academies Trust is Kay Charles. The Local Advisory Board member for Safeguarding at PSA is Jatinder Matharu. When issues arise, the Headteacher will address them internally where possible and escalate them when this is necessary.

D. KEY PROCESSES

All staff are trained using the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and expected to read and sign acknowledgement of it as well as complete a short survey on the knowledge acquired through their reading and face to face CPD. Staff are also given a range of policies to read, adhere to, and sign acknowledgement of them annually. The staff bulletin highlights an aspect of safeguarding and reinforces key messages.

Staff briefings are used to ensure staff are kept up to date. Further staff training and CPD is delivered on Inset Days. Training is available online via the National College and can be accessed at any time. Staff have lots of opportunities to develop themselves on all the training available to them. We respond to the latest safeguarding issues, both locally and nationally. Staff are regularly surveyed and quizzed on their safeguarding understanding and further training is arranged as required.

E. EXPECTATIONS

All staff and visitors will:

- Be familiar with this safeguarding and child protection policies, including related policies such as e- safety policy;
- Be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers, etc.
- Actively implement individual plans e.g., support plans, Child in Need plans.
- Be alert to signs and indicators of possible safeguarding concerns.
- Record concerns and work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child in line with this guidance - you must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and provide a written account as soon as possible.

All staff complete Level 2 Training courses with an accredited provider. DSLs are all trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding.

F. THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

The Designated Safeguarding Leads will lead regular case monitoring reviews of vulnerable children.

These reviews must be evidenced by minutes and recorded in case files.

Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Trustees have appointed a senior member of staff, from the school's leadership team to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead is supported by a senior support staff member.

Ms Ellen Day – DSL

Ms Sam Summerell - DDSL

The designated safeguarding lead

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

The designated safeguarding lead should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively.

Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is expected to be available in person. Designated safeguarding leads arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Day to day activities

When the school has concerns about a child, the Designated Safeguarding Leads will decide what steps should be taken and should inform the Headteacher.

Child Protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Safeguarding Leads feel their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and / or family. A written record will be made of what information has been shared, with whom, and when.

Child Protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. Individual files will be kept for each child. Files will be kept for at least the period during which the child is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation and guidance.

Access to these records by staff other than by the Designated Safeguarding Leads will be restricted, and a written record will be kept of who has had access to them and when.

Parents will be aware of information held on their children and kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff. General communications with parents will be in line with any home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility.

We do not disclose to a parent any information held on a child if this would put the child at risk of significant harm. We deal with the named contacts on the school records. We usually have two named contacts so that we can access the family quickly should the need arise.

If a pupil/student moves from our school, Child Protection records will be forwarded on to the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records (within 5 days) from 1st September 2025. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary, especially on transfer from primary to secondary schools. We will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date.

“Special/Recorded Delivery” or secure online services will be used to send pupil records. For audit purposes a note of all pupil records transferred or received should be kept in either paper or electronic format. This will include the child’s name, date of birth, where and to whom the records have been sent and the date sent and/or received.

If a pupil/student is permanently excluded and moves to a Pupil Referral Unit, Child Protection records will be forwarded on to the relevant organisation.

Where a vulnerable young person is moving to a Further Education establishment, consideration will be given to the student’s wishes.

The DSL is familiar with their responsibilities with respect to internet safety and in particular filtering and monitoring and the following KCSIE 2025 changes:

1. Page 38 Para 135 - Updated to clarify misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories are safeguarding harms.
2. Page 40 Para 142 - Link added to the plan technology for your school service, which schools can use to assess themselves against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.
3. Page 41 Para 143 - Link added to DfE guidance on the use of generative AI in education (2025) at end of filtering and monitoring (FM) section to support schools and colleges.

For details of the DSLs role, please refer to Role of DSL KCSIE 2025.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. NPCC - [When to call the police](#) should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaise with the headteacher to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college and senior mental health leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.
- work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school. This includes:
 - ensuring that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
 - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date.

Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should 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.

They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice set out in Parts one and two of the KCSIE 2025 guidance.

Where children leave the school (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Receiving schools should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named person with oversight for SEND in colleges, are aware as required. Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. 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 and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Raising awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- ensure the school or college's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements, and

- help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school and college leadership staff.

Training, knowledge and skills

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training is updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) also undertake Prevent awareness training. Training provides designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements.
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and
- 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.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Providing support to staff

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes, and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.

Understanding the views of children

It is important that all children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) should 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 or college 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.

Holding and sharing information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of KCSIE 2025, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

G. THE TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is the accountable body for ensuring safeguarding is effective at each school. The Trustees are both supportive and challenging in the scrutiny of safeguarding. They will ensure that:

- The schools have a culture of vigilance and that staff understand their responsibilities to be always vigilant and report any safeguarding concerns straight away.
- The schools have a safeguarding policy and a child protection policy.
- The school operates "safer recruitment" procedures and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and relevant volunteers.
- At least one senior member of the school's leadership team acts as a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead attends appropriate refresher training every two years.
- The Headteacher and all other staff who work with children undertake training on an annual basis.
- Temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for Child Protection and their responsibilities.

- The school reviews the effectiveness of safeguarding, learns lessons and remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay.
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff/volunteers.
- The Trustees review its policies/procedures annually.
- The Nominated Trustee for Child Protection is Kay Charles. The Local Advisory Board member for Safeguarding at PSA is Jatinder Matharu. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils/students.
- The Nominated Trustee will liaise with the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Leads to produce a termly reports for Trustees.
- Safeguarding Audits are carried out and trustee visits have a safeguarding focus.
- External reviews of safeguarding is carried out and any developmental points are actioned immediately.
- A member of the Trustees, Kay Charles is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partners of agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

H. SAFER RECRUITMENT

The school pays full regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

- Safer recruitment practice includes online checks, scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job.
- It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Headteacher and senior staff have been trained in safer recruitment.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils.
- Online searches are carried out and the prospective candidates are made aware.

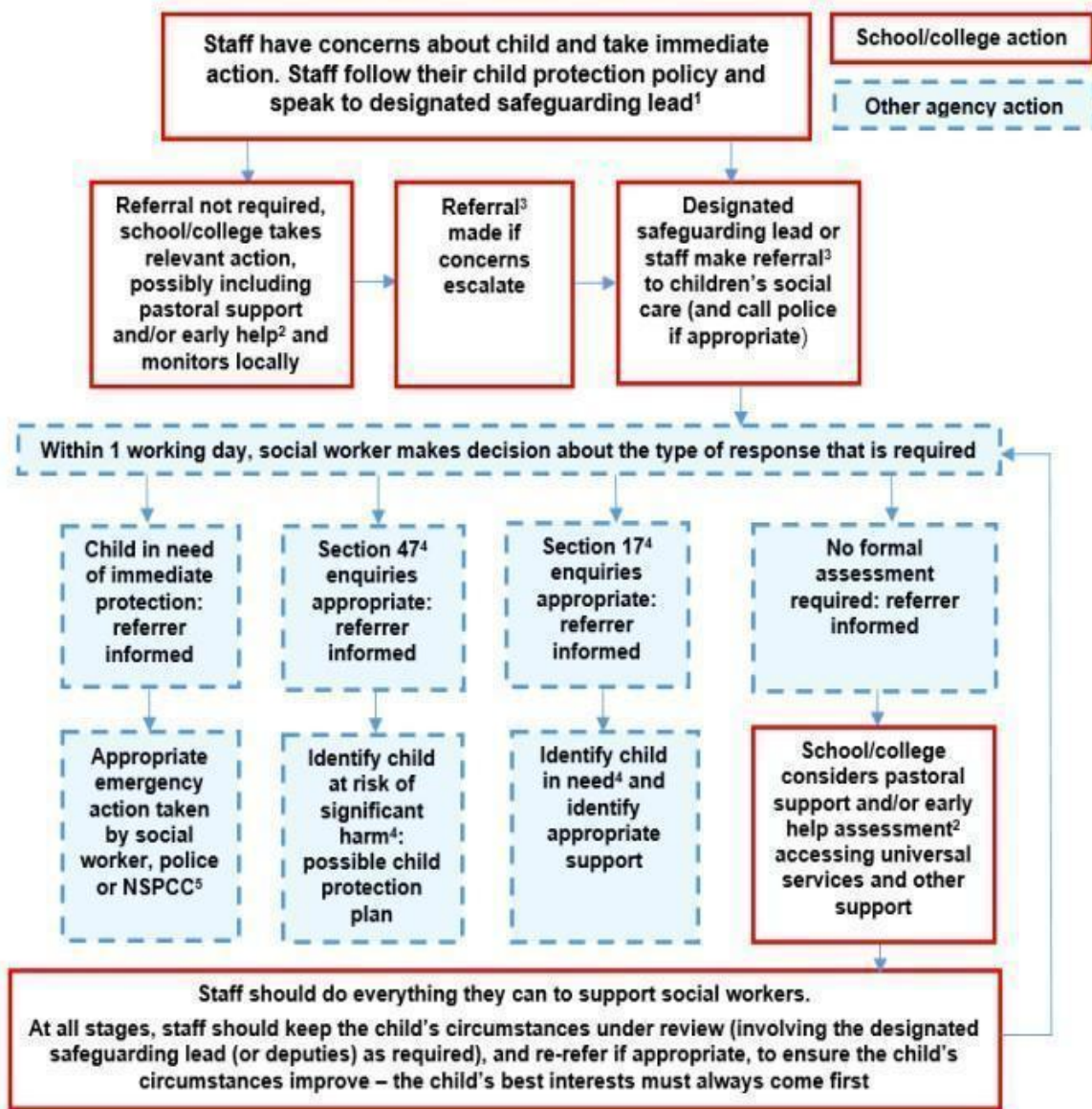
For details, please refer to Safer Recruitment KCSiE 2025.

I. OUR ROLE IN PREVENTING ABUSE

- Our PD provision has been carefully mapped out to cover the statutory curriculum that we must cover in RSHE and Citizenship. These aspects are taught and assessed and give students a thorough understanding of how to safeguard themselves and to thrive. We make sure that we cover the Careers requirements paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.
- In the other aspects of PD we provide opportunities for students to develop a whole range of skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their well - being and help them become resilient learners.
- Currently relevant safeguarding issues are addressed through the relevant PD, for example peer on peer abuse, online safety, filtering and monitoring, consent, child on child abuse, self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, and relationship education, e-safety and bullying.
- Issues are also addressed through other areas of the curriculum, for example, English, History, Drama, Art and other aspects of the school's work, e.g. through year assemblies, spiritual assemblies and form time.

- All our policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, handling, and positive behaviour are taught coherently and systematically to ensure a whole school approach.
- Our Safeguarding Policy cannot be separated from the Sikh ethos of the school, which ensures that pupils are treated fairly and with respect and dignity, they are taught to treat each other with respect, kindness and feel safe and have a voice. Students are listened to and encouraged and given every opportunity to report concerns.

Actions where there are concerns about a child



J. INVOLVING PARENTS OR CARERS

- Our preference is to discuss any Child Protection concerns with parents / carers before approaching other agencies, and we will endeavour to seek parents' consent before making a referral to another agency. However, there will be occasions when the school will contact another agency before informing parents/carers because it considers that in the best interests of the child or that contacting parents may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.
- Appropriate staff will approach parents / carers after consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

- Parents / carers will be informed about our safeguarding policy through the school's website and parental meetings.

K. SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

We follow locally agreed inter-agency procedures that are put in place by Buckinghamshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

- We have a responsibility to identify concerns early, provide help for children and families and prevent concerns from escalating.
- DSLs meet regularly and undergo the appropriate level of training. DSL training is up to date.
- We work closely with our safeguarding partners.
- We work in partnership with our safeguarding partners and other agencies in the best interests of the children.
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads normally make referrals. Where the child already has a safeguarding social worker, the request for service goes immediately to the social worker involved, or in their absence, to their team manager.
- We co-operate with any Child Protection enquiries conducted by children's social care: The school ensures representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings.
- We provide reports as required for these meetings. If the school is unable to attend, a written report will be sent.
- Where a pupil/student is subject to a Child Protection plan or a multi-agency risk assessment conference meeting, the school contributes to the preparation, implementation and review of the plan as appropriate.

L. OUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- We will offer appropriate support to individual children who have experienced abuse or who have abused others.
- An individual support plan will be devised, implemented and reviewed regularly for these children. This plan will detail areas of support, who will be involved, and the child's wishes and feelings. A written outline of the individual support plan will be kept in the child's Child Protection record.
- We will ensure that those who have suffered abuse are fully protected.
- We will ensure the school works in partnership with parents / carers and other agencies as appropriate.

M. CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

- While all children have a right to be safe, some children may be more vulnerable to abuse. We will pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable children.

N. STAFF GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE BY A CHILD

When a child tells a member of staff about abuse, what must he/she do?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you.

- Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why. You must not promise confidentiality.
- Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use T.E.D questions i.e. tell me.... explain to me.... describe to me...
- Listen and remember - Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.
- NB: It is not the education staff's role to seek or investigate disclosures. The role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk in a suitable place (staff must never have discussions about safeguarding in corridors, playgrounds, public spaces with each other or in front of other children).
- Staff must not deal with any disclosures by themselves. They must report these to the Designated Safeguarding Leads urgently.
- The Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Leads must report clear indications or disclosure of abuse to children's social care without delay.
- Children making a disclosure may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak.
- Listening to and supporting a child/young person who has been abused can be traumatic for the adults involved. Support for you will be available from your Line Manager, Designated Safeguarding Leads or Headteacher.

O. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF, TRUSTEES, GOVERNORS OR VISITORS

Please see the detailed policy.

P. PSA CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2025-26

Please see attached.

Q. EVALUATING OUR SAFEGUARDING PROCESSES

We carry out annually a complete safeguarding audit which evaluates the safeguarding and child protection work we do (by September each year). The evaluation is scrutinised by the Trustees and Local Advisory Board members. In 2024-25, Ofsted found safeguarding to be effective.

Frequent feedback is collected from staff (e.g., via surveys, quizzes, meetings, and action is taken to inform and update staff via the school bulletin. Further updates and training are available or provided as necessary.

R. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Attendance Policy (2025-26)
- Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) - (2025-26)
- Child Protection Policy ((2025-26)
- Complaints Procedure (2025-26)
- Drugs Policy (2025-26)
- First Aid Policy (2025-26)
- Health & Safety Policy (2025-26)
- Online Safety Policy (2025-26)
- Relationship, Sex and Health Education Policy (2025-26)
- Safer Recruitment KCSIE (2025-26)
- Supporting Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School (2025-26)
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (2025-26)
- Trips Policy (2025-26)
- Use of reasonable force policy (2025-26)

SECTION II – SUMMARY OF KCSIE 2025 PART ONE: SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION FOR ALL STAFF

KCSIE 2025 PART ONE: KCSIE 2025 Part one: Summary of Safeguarding information for all staff

What school staff should know and do

1. A CHILD CENTRED AND COORDINATED APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING

1. Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

3. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

2. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL STAFF

1. School and college staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

2. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

3. All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. 4 Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

4. Any staff member who has any concerns about a child's welfare should follow the processes set out in paragraphs 49-55. Staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.

5. Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as local authority children's social care. 9. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

6. The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

3. WHAT SCHOOL STAFF NEED TO KNOW

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

- child protection policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
- behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct) should amongst other things, include low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
- safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods
- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copy of Part one KCSIE 2025 is provided to all staff.

- All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training provided is regularly updated. PSA has purchased online packages from the National College and staff are encouraged to complete as many as they wish in addition to the training provided by the school.
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- All staff are made aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.
- All staff are made aware of the process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- All staff should know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.
- All staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and local authority children's social care.
- All staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect.

- All staff should be 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. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.
- It is important that staff are able to build trusted relationships with children which facilitate communication.

4. WHAT STAFF SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR

i. Early help

All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- 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 so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

ii. Abuse, neglect and exploitation

- All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the 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.
- All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.
- 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), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.
- All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.
- In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

iii. Indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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 on children of all forms of domestic abuse. 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.

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

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- It 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 not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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 from participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

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

- They may also include 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. NB: Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect: 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

Safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as:

- drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
- unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- radicalisation
- and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Child-on-child abuse

- **All staff** should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or online.
- **All staff** should be clear as to the school or policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe
- a child may be at risk from it.
- **All staff** should understand that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead.

- It is essential that **all staff** understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

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

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and 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 victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

CSE and CCE 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.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others.

As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

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. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Whilst **all staff** should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher **must** report this to the police.

Mental Health

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

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

Education 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. Schools can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Serious violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Additional information and support

Departmental advice [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners](#) provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. Examples of potential indicators of abuse and neglect are highlighted throughout that advice and will be particularly helpful for school and college staff. The NSPCC website also provides useful additional information on abuse and neglect and what to look out for.

5. WHAT SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD DO IF THEY HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

- 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**. [See the flow chart below setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.](#)
- If staff have a concern, they should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).
- Options will include: managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes or undertaking an early help assessment or making a referral to statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.
- The DSL should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. In these

circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead as soon as is practically possible.

- Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan).
- DPA and UK GDPR **do not** prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

a) Early help assessment

If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should 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.

b) Statutory children's social care assessments and services

- **Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.**
– Referrals should follow the local referral process.
- Local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that schools provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.
- The online tool [Report Child Abuse to Your Local Council](#) directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact details.

c) Children in need

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

d) Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

e) What will the local authority do?

Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the referrer and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides details of the assessment process
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides details of the assessment process, and further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.
- The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.
- If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as required).
- If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

6. RECORD KEEPING

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. **It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.**

Records should include:

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

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

7. WHY IS ALL OF THIS IMPORTANT?

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- poor record keeping
- failing to listen to the views of the child
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- sharing information too slowly, and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

8. WHAT SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD DO IF THEY HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN OR AN ALLEGATION ABOUT ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER

If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation of harming or posing a risk of harm to children, is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) then:

- this should be referred to the headteacher
- where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors,
- in the event of concerns/allegations about the headteacher, or a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher, this should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs). Buckinghamshire LADO telephone number: 01296 382070, email: securelado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

If staff have a safeguarding concern or allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that **does not** meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the school low-level concerns policy.

9. WHAT SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD DO IF THEY HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES WITHIN THE SCHOOL

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team.
- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer other whistleblowing channels are open to them:
- general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Advice on Whistleblowing](#)
- the [NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline](#) is available
- Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends.
- The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk

Actions where there are concerns about a child

