

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Warwickshire



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<p>N.B.</p> <p>1) This policy is fully tailored to the procedures followed in each Warwickshire CAT school. Further information on contextual safeguarding approaches for specific settings, in addition to those contained in this policy, is available as a separate appendix (Appendix 1) and can be found on individual schools' websites or by request from the school.</p> <p>2) Full contact details for all schools' designated safeguarding members of staff can be found at the end of this policy in Appendix 4.</p>	

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1. Policy Statement and Principles

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) works alongside the Safeguarding Governor and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) to ensure that the procedures cited in this policy are followed by all members of the school community, including visitors to the school.

The DDSLs are all fully trained in safeguarding procedures to the same level as the DSL. They support the DSL in responding to safeguarding concerns, including making initial referrals to Children's Services, attending a range of safeguarding meetings and supporting vulnerable pupils in school hours. Just like the DSL, their safeguarding responsibilities are clearly outlined in their job descriptions.

Other documents which relate to safeguarding are listed in section 42 of this policy.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for leadership & management and also impact the judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners.

This policy is available on the school website, via a link to the Community Academy Trust website and all staff and volunteers are required to read it and confirm in writing that they have read and understood it before commencing work in school.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

Child Protection Statement

Our staff, governors and Trust recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all children, including those having protected characteristics under the *Equalities Act, 2010* are respected, valued, feel secure, are encouraged and given opportunities to talk with trusted adults who listen to them. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that all children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, contractors and governors and are consistent with statutory guidance and the locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership.

Policy Principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, UK residence status, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection and to have their welfare promoted.
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn.
- This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and parents/carers to share this commitment.
- All pupils are encouraged to talk to any member of staff if they are worried or in distress. All adults at the school are therefore expected to build trusted relationships with children, to take all welfare concerns seriously and to act always in the best interests of children, while remembering 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.

- Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff members are uniquely placed to notice changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when in distress or at risk. It is vital that all school staff are alert to the signs of abuse, maintain a professional curiosity about children, are approachable and trusted by pupils, listen actively to them and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will act on identified concerns and will provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community or in school.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. That includes incidents of child-on-child abuse.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately. **Anybody can make a referral.** If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press the DSL for re-consideration.
- If a member of staff remains concerned about a child, they can discuss their concerns with the Headteacher, another DSL, the Trust's Strategic Safeguarding Lead, Jo Howell, or they can contact the Front Door Education Lead for additional advice as necessary.¹
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review. Representatives of the whole school community of pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and governors will be involved in reviewing, shaping and developing the school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements and policy.

Policy Aims:

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities;
- To ensure consistent good practice through training, auditing and development;
- To inform pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders (e.g. partner agencies) about our arrangements for safeguarding children;
- To demonstrate the school's commitment regarding safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners;
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's mental or physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes supply teachers.

Child/children includes everyone under the age of 18.

¹ See Section 31 for further contact information

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Harassment is determined legally as behaviour from one person towards at least one other which is intended to cause alarm or distress. Sexual harassment is meant, in the context of this policy, as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether occurring online or offline.

Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. Health includes both physical and mental health. Development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development.

Significant Harm is a term used in law that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. **Assessing significance** is done by comparing the child's health or development to what could be reasonably expected of a similar child. However, there is no absolute consideration in assessing significant harm.

Victim is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that schools recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Schools should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

'Alleged perpetrator(s)' and where appropriate **'perpetrator(s)'**. These are widely used and recognised terms and the most appropriate to aid effective drafting of guidance. However, schools should think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

2. Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

Academies, free schools, independent schools, alternative providers of education - Section 157 of the *Education Act 2002* and the *Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, (Amendment) 2021*, require proprietors of independent schools (including academies) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

The *Teachers' Standards 2012* state that teachers, including headteachers, must have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions; and uphold public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)* covers the legislative requirements and expectations of individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for the three local safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area, any part of which falls within the local authority (LA); and the chief officer of Police for a Police area, any part of which falls within the LA area) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. The guidance confirms that it applies, in its entirety, to all schools.

The statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education, (KCSiE) (DfE 2023)* is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and

promote the welfare of children. Unless otherwise stated, ‘school’ in this guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units. ‘College’ means further education colleges and sixth form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, and providers of post 16 education as set out in the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021: 16-19 Academies, Special Post 16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.

KCSiE 2023 highlights that it essential that everybody working in a school understands their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff and volunteers who work directly with children must read Part One and Annex B of *KCSiE 2023*. A copy of this document is available from the DSL and can be found on the school website. Any staff member who does not work directly with children must read at least Annex A of *KCSiE 2023*. The DSL will make a judgment about which staff are required to read and understand Annex A in place of Part One and Annex B.

As required by *KCSiE 2023*, staff will be assisted in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the sections of *KCSiE* they are required to read, by questions and answers during training, quizzes, briefing papers and regular follow up.

What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015 - Advice for practitioners is non-statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. A copy of this advice is available from the DSL or via [Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - Gov.uk](#).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All schools are required to appoint an appropriate member of the Strategic Leadership Team as Designated Safeguarding Lead to co-ordinate child protection arrangements and to ensure that there are appropriate cover arrangements. Information regarding key personnel can be found in Appendix 4.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- is a senior member of staff from the school’s leadership team and therefore has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff;
- takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place, in the school. This responsibility will not be delegated although the activities of the DSL may be delegated to appropriately trained deputies. The role and responsibility are explicit in the post holder’s job description;
- is appropriately trained², receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals and regularly (at least annually) updates their knowledge and skills to keep up with any developments relevant to their role;
- acts as a source of advice, support and expertise to the school community;
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings;
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational and mental health needs, children who are looked after or were previously looked after, children who have a social worker, and young carers, overseeing the provision of effective pastoral support for all of these children and promoting their educational outcomes by sharing information about their welfare, circumstances and needs with teachers and other staff as appropriate;
- works closely with pastoral support staff; the SENCo; the designated teacher for children who are looked after or were previously looked after; staff with designated responsibility for

² Including being trained in Prevent and online safety

promoting children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing; the ICT lead and any ICT support staff; and school nurses in relation to safeguarding matters (including online and digital safety) and deciding whether to make referrals to relevant partner agencies;

- has a working knowledge of locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and procedures put in place by *Warwickshire Safeguarding*;
- has an understanding of the Early Help process to ensure effective support, assessment and understanding of children’s additional needs in order to inform appropriate provision of early help and intervention;
- keeps detailed, accurate written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged, but kept separate from, the pupil’s general file;
- refers cases of suspected abuse to Children’s Social Care or the Police as appropriate and, where a crime may have been committed, refers cases to the Police;
- refers cases using the prescribed proforma to Children’s Social Care and the Prevent policing team for a joint assessment where there is a concern that a child is at risk of radicalisation; and to the Channel panel if subsequently advised to do so;
- ensures that staff do everything they can to support social workers and contribute to assessments of children when Children’s Social Care become involved;
- notifies Children’s Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent without explanation at intervals as defined in the Plan;
- ensures that, when a pupil under the age of 18 years leaves the school, all child protection records and files are transferred to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. If the child is the subject of an open case to Children’s Social Care, the pupil’s social worker will also be informed;
- considers whether to share any information about a child leaving the school with the receiving education provider in advance so that the receiving setting is appropriately informed in order to support the child as effectively as possible and plan for her/his arrival;
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences, strategy meetings and multi-agency exploitation meetings;
- co-ordinates the school’s contribution to child protection plans as part of core groups, attending and actively participating in core group meetings;
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including *Warwickshire Safeguarding (WS)*;
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understand the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, the *Staff Code of Conduct (Staff Behaviour Policy)*, the *Online Safety Policy*, the *Behaviour Policy*, the school’s safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, the role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies) and Part One and Annex B of *KCSiE, 2023*, for staff who work directly with children or Annex A for staff who do not work directly with children. As best practice all staff who work directly with children will be encouraged to read Part Five of *KCSiE 2023*;
- ensures that all staff understand that if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act upon them immediately, either by speaking to the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) or, in exceptional circumstances, taking responsibility to make a referral to Children’s Social Care;
- ensures that all staff make a full record of any safeguarding concerns, either via a ‘Green form’ or via an electronic recording system;
- ensures that all staff know how to make a referral as in sections 29-31 of this policy;
- has a working knowledge of relevant national guidance in respect of all specific safeguarding issues highlighted in paragraphs 31-48 and Annex B of *KCSiE 2023*, ensuring that all staff receive regular updated safeguarding training, including online safety training;
- understands the unique risks associated with online safety and ensures that staff are trained to have the requisite knowledge and up to date capability to keep children safe whilst they are online. This includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring;
- understands the relevance of data protection legislation and regulations, especially the *Data Protection Act 2018* and *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)* in respect of safeguarding children;
- ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly

- reviewed and updated at least annually, working with the whole school community of pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and governors and/or proprietors regarding this;
- liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher (where the DSL role is not carried out by the headteacher) as appropriate;
 - ensures that all members of the Strategic Leadership Team read *KCSiE 2023*, as specified on page 4 of that guidance;
 - informs the headteacher of any serious safeguarding enquiries, especially under section 47 of the *Children Act 1989* and any Police investigations (where the DSL role is not carried out by the headteacher). This includes ensuring that the headteacher and all relevant staff are aware of the requirement for children to be accompanied by an appropriate adult should they need to be interviewed by the Police³.
 - keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training;
 - makes the child protection and safeguarding policy available publicly, via a link on the school's website;
 - ensures additional school specific safeguarding processes and contextual information is also available as an appendix to this policy on the website;
 - ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made;
 - ensures that the school holds more than one emergency contact number for every pupil;
 - ensures that the headteacher is aware of the responsibility under *Working Together 2023* to refer all allegations that a child has been harmed by, or that children may be at risk of harm from, a member of staff or volunteer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day prior to any internal investigation; and to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as appropriate.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Deputy DSLs are appropriately trained to the same standard as the DSL, including in Prevent and online safety, and support the DSL with safeguarding matters as appropriate. In the absence of the DSL, Deputy DSLs carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. The role and responsibility are explicit in all role holders' job descriptions. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all functions of the DSL as above.

The School Standards Committee (SSC):

- has a strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements. It must comply with its duties under legislation and as defined in *KCSiE 2023* and must have regard to that guidance, ensuring policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law including the *Human Rights Act 1998* and the *Equality Act 2010* (including the *Public Sector Equality Duty*) at all times;
- facilitates a whole school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development and that ultimately, all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of children at their heart;
- ensures that systems which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils are in place for them to report abuse confidently, knowing that their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback;
- appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the Strategic Leadership Team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training;
- ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description (and also the job descriptions of all Deputy DSLs) and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job descriptions of every member of staff and volunteer;

³ For more information, see [PACE Code C 2019 \(accessible\) - www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pace-code-c-2019)

- ensures that the school has policies and procedures in place in order to safeguard and promote children’s welfare. Those policies include an effective child protection policy; a behaviour policy which includes measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); a staff code of conduct and appropriate safeguarding arrangements to respond to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions; and that all of those policies are consistent with local and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school’s website or by other means;
- ensures that the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* reflects the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse, describes procedures in accordance with government guidance and refers to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the safeguarding partners;
- ensures the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* is reviewed at least annually and updated if needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt and is available publicly either via a link on the school website;
- develops an induction strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with copies of or access to Part One of *KCSiE* (or Annex A, if appropriate), this *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, the *Behaviour Policy*, the *Staff Code of Conduct*, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education and the role and identity of the DSL and Deputy DSLs as part of their induction before they start work at the school;
- ensures that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL or a Deputy DSL will generally be expected to be available in person but in exceptional circumstances, availability will be via telephone or other communication media;
- ensures that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available at least via telephone or other communication media during any out of hours/out of term school activities and that staff are aware that in the unlikely event of the DSL and all DDSLs not being available, they should speak with a member of SLT or take advice from local Children’s Social Care if they are concerned about a child’s safety;
- ensures that child protection files are maintained as set out in Annex C of *KCSiE, 2023*;
- ensures that the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers, including allegations made against the headteacher and allegations against other children;
- follows safer recruitment procedures in accordance with Part 3 of *KCSiE*;
- Ensures that the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against, and ‘low-level concerns’ about, the conduct of staff and volunteers, encompassing any breach of the *Staff Code of Conduct*, including allegations made against, and low-level concerns about, the conduct of the headteacher
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, temporary staff and volunteers receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety training which details the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring), and updates as required (at least annually) to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with any requirements of Warwickshire Safeguarding. The training strategy will also ensure that the DSL receives refresher training and regular updates as defined under the DSL’s duties above;
- appoints a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after by the LA and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales and ensures that the designated teacher has appropriate training;
- ensures that the DSL has contact details for and liaises with the Virtual Headteacher in the local authority as part of promoting the education of children who are looked after, were previously looked after and/or have a social worker;
- ensures that the school contributes to inter-agency working and plans;

- ensures that the school provides effective pastoral care and participates in the Early Help Pathway process for pupils with additional needs in order to provide a co-ordinated offer of early help;
- ensures that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including child-on-child abuse, grooming, online safety, how to identify risk, how to get help when they need it and other topics as specified in paragraphs 128-136 of and that children with particular needs such as those who are known to be vulnerable, those who have experienced abuse or neglect and those with SEND are provided with an appropriately customised safeguarding curriculum;
- as part of ensuring staff undergo regular updated safeguarding training and children are taught about safeguarding via the curriculum, ensures that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning;
- ensures that all governors and trustees receive mandatory safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be updated regularly;
- nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the LA and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher;
- identifies a named governor to take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements. That governor will maintain regular contact with the DSL and will ensure that the SSC receives regular reports about safeguarding activity at the school;
- ensures that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and allegations management procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the LA, local safeguarding partnership and national guidance.

The school will submit a response to Warwickshire Safeguarding's annual schools' safeguarding audit. This will highlight how the SSC's duties have been carried out. An action plan will be drawn up and any weaknesses will be rectified in accordance with that plan.

The Headteacher:

- ensures that the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff;
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and Deputy DSL(s) to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings;
- supports the designated teacher for looked after children to promote the educational achievement of any pupils who are looked after by the LA and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales;
- ensures that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after and previously looked after children and children with a social worker safe;
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with whistleblowing procedures;
- ensures that the culture of the school supports the provision of effective pastoral care and early help;
- ensures that staff do everything they can to support social workers when Children's Social Care become involved;
- ensures that pupils are taught about safeguarding including child-on-child abuse, grooming, online safety, how to identify risk, how to get help when they need it and other topics as specified in paragraphs 129-134 of *KCSiE 2023*, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and that children with particular needs, such as those who are known to be vulnerable, those who have experienced abuse or neglect and those with SEND are provided with an appropriately customised safeguarding curriculum;

- refers all allegations that a child has been harmed by, or that children may be at risk of harm from, a member of staff or volunteer, to the LADO within one working day prior to any internal investigation;
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk of harm to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as advised by the LADO;
- appoints a case officer who will be a member of the Strategic Leadership Team to investigate allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers and/or act as a point of contact for the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation is made;
- responds to all ‘low-level concerns’ about the conduct of staff and volunteers, encompassing any breach of the *Staff Code of Conduct*, in a timely and proportionate manner, taking advice from the LADO and the school’s HR provider, as appropriate.

4. Good Practice Guidelines and Staff Code of Conduct

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils, we identify standards of good practice and set out our expectations of staff in the *Staff Code of Conduct*, which all members of staff and volunteers are required to read and sign before starting work in the school. In summary, our expectations of staff include:

- treating all pupils with respect;
- setting a good example by conducting themselves appropriately;
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them;
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils;
- being a good listener;
- being alert to changes in pupils’ behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- recognising that challenging behaviour and mental health difficulties may be indicators of abuse;
- reading and understanding the school’s *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, *Staff Code of Conduct* and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, criminal and sexual exploitation, extremism, online safety and information-sharing;
- asking the pupil’s permission before initiating legitimate physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid;
- applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with school procedures and Warwickshire Safeguarding guidance;
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language;
- not participating in, tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not inevitable parts of growing up;
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature) which constitute sexual harassment, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts;
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse;
- referring all concerns about a pupil’s safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children’s Social Care;
- following the school’s rules with regard to communication and relationships with pupils, including via social media;
- referring all allegations against members of staff, volunteers or other adults that work with children and any concerns about staff conduct which breaches of the *Staff Code of Conduct* directly to the headteacher; and
- referring any similar allegations against or concerns about the headteacher directly to the Chair of the SSC.

5. Abuse of Position of Trust

A breach of trust occurs when the boundaries of the relationship between a professional and a child or young person is broken due to inappropriate behaviour by the professional, which involves an abuse of power.

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

6. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability, including prejudice and discrimination; isolation; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability, mental and physical health needs and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who:

- have a disability, special educational needs or certain mental health needs
- do not have English as a first language

and to those who are:

- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- looked after by the LA or otherwise living away from home or were previously looked after
- in receipt of support and services from a social worker
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviours
- living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- missing education
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children and parents/carers with communication needs.

7. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or Mental Health Needs

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who have mental health needs are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect and can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect experienced by this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's special needs, disability or mental health issues without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being more prone than other children to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying), possibly without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties for children in overcoming those barriers.

Our school provides extra pastoral support and attention for these children along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place so that any potential concerns can be noticed by and/or shared with staff.

Staff are trained to manage these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded and are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. However, staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but they will record and report any concerns about a child's mental health to the DSL as with any other safeguarding concern.

Our school has a Strategic Mental Health Lead who is a senior member of staff. The Mental Health Lead ensures that we have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems. As part of Community Academies Trust, we adhere to the Trust-wide guarantee of universal, targeted and specialised mental health provision minimum offers, details of which can be viewed on our website. Contact details of our Strategic Mental Health Lead can be found in Appendix 4.

8. Early Help and Use of the *Pathway to Change* Process

KCSiE 2023 highlights that school staff are uniquely placed to identify concerns about children early, help them, promote their welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

The school recognises that providing timely early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. *KCSiE 2023* emphasises that all staff should be aware of the early help process and understand their role in it. All school staff are therefore trained and required to notice any concerns about children which may help to identify that they would benefit from early help and to record those concerns using the school's agreed recording system (see section 23 below); staff must share their concerns with the DSL (or a Deputy DSL), who are most likely to have a complete picture and be the most appropriate people to decide how best to respond to any concerns.

The school is committed to working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies to:

- identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from early help;
- **act without delay by signposting to the Family Support Line or Family Information Service for earlier identified needs;**
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help when that is appropriate, using the Early Help *Pathway to Change* process; and
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing an action plan which will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.

Whilst recognising that any child may need early help at any time, the school will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions with specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not the child has a statutory education health and care plan);
- **has a mental health need**
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- **is at risk of being radicalised;**
- is in a family whose circumstances present challenges for the child, such as drug/ alcohol abuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of 'honour-based' abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect and/or
- is particularly vulnerable in any of the ways identified in section 6 above.

Early help might be best provided by simple pastoral support and may be something the school is able to address with parents/carers or the child her/himself so that the child's needs are met quickly and easily. Early help can only be provided with the express consent of parents/ carers. The school will keep a record of any such help, detailing clear targets, progress made and actions for all parties, including parents/carers, using the [WCC Early Help Pathway to Change form](#) as appropriate.

In some circumstances, it may become necessary to take some time with parents/carers to understand a child's needs and circumstances in a more structured way. Children and families may also need support from a range of local agencies beyond the school. Where the school has identified that a structured assessment would benefit a child in order to determine how best to meet their needs and support their family, or where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, Police), with parental consent, the school will use the *Early Help Pathway* process to identify what help the child and family require.

The *Early Help Pathway* process is a restorative approach. The school is committed to working in partnership with families to address children's needs positively and proactively. By means of a co-ordinated assessment undertaken by families and practitioners working with them, the Pathway to Change process is designed to help identify what support a family requires in order

to prevent the child's needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the *Children Act 1989*.⁴

The DSL (or Deputy DSL) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an *Early Help Pathway* process but other staff may be required to work directly with pupils and their families and to support other agencies and practitioners in the process, in some cases acting as the lead professional.

The DSL may delegate the initiation of the *Early Help Pathway to Change* process to an appropriate trained member of the school staff. The DSL is responsible and accountable for overseeing and managing early help but the process including acting as lead professional can be undertaken by for example your teaching assistants, SENCO, teaching staff, pastoral staff, seen to be appropriate for your setting.

As specified in *KCSiE 2023*, the DSL will keep the needs and circumstances of children receiving early help under constant review. If the child's situation does not improve or is getting worse and/or the child's parents and/or the child do not consent to early help, the school will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child are likely to escalate. If so, the school may wish to consult with Targeted Support Officers or Early Help services or contact the Front Door Education Lead to discuss whether a referral to Children's Social Care is appropriate.

N.B. It is important to highlight that the *Early Help Pathway to Change* process can only be effective if it is undertaken with the agreement and participation of the child's parents/carers in addition to all the practitioners who are working with them. Young people in secondary schools may consent to early help, possibly including an *Early Help Pathway* process in their own right, subject to *Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG 2018)*. The school will seek advice from a Targeted Support Officer or the Front Door Education Lead in those circumstances.

9. Attendance

We recognise that full attendance at school is important to the well-being of all our pupils and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely and we address poor or irregular attendance without delay working in partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) when patterns of absence give rise to concern. Our *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the SSC. This policy details how the school monitors absences, both authorised and unauthorised and intervenes accordingly.

10. Children Absent from or Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are legally entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability and any special educational needs they may have.

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, radicalisation or mental health issues. It is important the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education

⁴ If the family only require information or advice, that can be accessed via the LA's Family Information Service on 01926 742274. Helpful support may also be available from the Early Help Family Support Line on 01926 412412.

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 Children's Social Care and need a social worker (such as a child in need or one who has a child protection plan or is a child in care), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The school operates in accordance with *Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance*.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. All staff are informed as part of their induction about the procedure for reporting and taking action when children do not arrive for school and/or do not attend regularly. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action, including notifying the LA, particularly where children go missing repeatedly and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. The school will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means school needs at least two up to date emergency contact numbers to enable the school to make sure help is available in a situation where children are at home unsupervised because parents/carers are unwell or there is a serious incident on the way to school. Parents are therefore asked to update the school as soon as possible if their nominated emergency contact numbers change.

The school follows the DfE legal requirements in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination. Where a child is absent from education and their whereabouts is **known**, it is the school's responsibility to follow their attendance procedures. Where a child is missing from education and their whereabouts is **unknown**, a referral must be made the Children Missing Education Team.

Where a pupil has ten consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council's Children Missing Education team on 01926 736323 or via email to cme@warwickshire.gov.uk. The Children Missing Education Referral Form can also be accessed via www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenmissingeducation.

*Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts. Parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes;
- Letters home (preferably by recorded delivery);
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered;
- Home visits where safe to do so;
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts;
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the pupil/family;
- Consideration of information about children in social media.

All contact and outcomes will be recorded on the pupil's file.

The school is required by law to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. The school will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place are referred to the LA. When a pupil leaves the school, the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date will be recorded.

The school will inform the LA of any plan to take a child off roll when they leave school to be home educated; move away from the school's location; remain medically unfit beyond

compulsory school age; are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or are permanently excluded. Schools are required to inform the LA when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register at **non-standard transition points** irrespective of the reason. The LA may also require the school to provide information about pupils who are going to be removed from the register at standard transition points.

The school will also notify the LA within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The LA may also require the school to provide information about pupils added to the register at a standard transition point.

It is essential for the school to comply with this duty so that the LA can, as part of its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Upon receipt of a CME referral from the school, the LA and the school will work together to attempt to track the child, for at least a further ten school days, using access to additional contacts/services, e.g. the Front Door, Health services, Housing services. If this also fails to establish the pupil's whereabouts, the school will be informed by email and may then, but not before, remove the pupil from roll and place the child's name on the School-to-School database, entering XXXXXXXX in the box for destination. This will place the pupil on the list of Children Missing from Education and the details will be entered onto the DfE's national database.

Deletions from roll agreed with the LA will normally be backdated to the first day of absence.

If the LA is able to contact the pupil and her/his parents, arrangements will be made with the school and family for a return to education, including a re-integration programme where necessary. If the pupil has registered at another school, the school will delete the child's name from our roll and transfer the child's educational records to the new school in the normal way. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

Pupils leaving the school for known destinations outside the maintained sector in England and Wales will be updated to the School-to-School database using MMMMMMMM in the destination box. This includes private/independent schools, schools in other countries (including Scotland and Northern Ireland) and pupils moving into Elective Home Education.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from the school with a view to educating them at home, the school will notify the Elective Home Education Team immediately on ehe@warwickshire.gov.uk or on 01926 736323 and will work with the LA and other key professionals to arrange a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this will be before a final decision has been made to ensure the child's parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable and/or has a social worker.

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;
- General information and advice for schools can be found in the Government's *Missing Children and Adults Strategy*.

11. Children who run away or go missing from home or care

The school recognises that children who run away or go missing (particularly repeatedly) and are thus absent from their normal residence are potentially vulnerable to abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It could also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

The statutory guidance, [*Children who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care*](#) (DfE 2014) requires that every child or young person who runs away or goes missing must be offered a Return Home Interview (RHI) within a period of 72 hours of their return.

RHIs are intended to ascertain the factors that triggered the young person's absence. Those factors may include difficulties at home, in school and in the community. The short timescale of 72 hours is imposed to ensure that the RHI remains relevant to the young person and enables any required action to be initiated at the earliest opportunity.

RHIs are undertaken by practitioners who are independent, in order to facilitate a discussion with the young person that is as open as possible. As soon as the LA receives notification that a young person has gone missing from home or care, a letter will be sent to parents/carers seeking their consent to an RHI with their son/daughter. Direct contact will then be made with parents/carers and the young person to make arrangements for the interview.

In order to fulfil the timescale of within 72 hours, it is essential that all opportunities to interview young people including times during the school day are utilised.

When necessary and in conjunction with the LA, the school will facilitate Return Home Interviews, both in terms of releasing the young person from their normal timetable to participate in an interview and in providing an appropriate and safe space on the school site for the interview to take place.

The school will check with the LA whether or not parents/carers have given their consent to the interview. However, young people aged 16 and 17 years old are generally considered to be able to consent and withhold consent to their own information being shared and therefore to participate in an RHI or not. With reference to the Gillick competency Guidelines, younger children may also be deemed able to consent.

If the LA has not received consent from parents/carers and the young person is not assessed as being capable of giving or withholding informed consent, the school will contact the parent/carer and seek to secure their consent.

Parents/carers may also choose to accompany their son/daughter in interviews and the school will facilitate that as appropriate.

12. Helping children to understand & recognise risk, identify available support & report abuse

KCSiE, 2023 requires the SSC and Community Academies Trust to “ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including online”. The school recognises that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all pupils and that a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some children with SEND might be needed as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

The SSC and the Trust are also required to ensure that systems are in place which are “well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.”

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our age-appropriate personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme; online safety curriculum; sex and relationships lessons and through all aspects of school life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter (including risks from other children both in and out of school), recognise when they are at risk and, with the support of staff, work out how to get help when they need it and how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety.

Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are taught and reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online, grooming (both online and face to face) and tackling bullying, including online bullying procedures. The school continually promotes an ethos of self-respect, mutual respect and empathy; and pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

Discussions with children about risk will include talking to them about the risks and issues associated with young people sending, receiving and/or disseminating indecent images of themselves and other young people, which is widely referred to as ‘sexting’.⁵

It is recognised that a young person may choose to share indecent images and/or videos with another young person in the context of a romantic relationship and that she or he may do so without any intention to cause harm or distress to anybody. Although technically an offence, such consensual sharing of material of that nature is referred to as ‘experimental’ and it is usually not necessary or appropriate to criminalise young people in those circumstances.

However, there are clear risks associated with such behaviour. Staff are trained to be vigilant and to notice and record any concerns about young people sending and receiving indecent images, which includes listening to what young people say to each other and to staff, as they do with any other safeguarding concern.

When concerns are identified, staff will always speak to children and will inform parents about their concerns unless there is good reason to believe that doing so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm. The DSL will also need to consider the Fraser guidelines in making a judgement about whether or not to respect a young person’s request not to inform his/her parents/carers.⁶

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

⁵ Further information can be found in ‘Sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos’ in section 14 below

⁶ Children under the age of 13 are unable to consent to sexual activity. Any imagery containing sexual activity involving under 13 year olds will therefore be referred to the Police.

LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education/Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

In our school we ensure there is a safe space available for LGBT pupils where they can access a trusted adult with whom they can be open and/or share their concerns. Their contact details are shared directly with children to encourage them to reach out for support and guidance.

13. Support for pupils, families and staff involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously;
- nominating a link person (*usually the DSL*) who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact;
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest;
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety;
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies;
- storing records securely;
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support;
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures;
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

14. Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a pupil or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the headteacher, other members of the Strategic Leadership Team and governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is included in the safeguarding information provided for parents and pupils.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the school's child protection procedures.

15. Staff reporting concerns about a colleague or other adult who works with children (Whistleblowing)

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague - including visiting practitioners, temporary staff, governors, Trustees and volunteers - towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed

in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood a situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The school's **Whistleblowing Policy** enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence, and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Staff are trained and expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by adults who work with children in school - including what may seem to be minor contraventions of the school's *Code of Conduct* - to the headteacher to facilitate proactive and early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture which protects children and reduces the risk of serious abuse in school.

There is no single way in which staff are required to report concerns of this nature. The most important thing is that the concern is brought to the attention of the Headteacher or nominated governor.

However, *KCSiE 2023* states that all concerns, including 'low-level concerns' should be recorded in writing, to include the details of the concern, the context in which they arose and the action taken. It also states that the name of the individual sharing the concern should be noted but that if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

The recommended format for all staff in school to record any such poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues or other adults who work with children is the proforma '*Logging A Concern about the behaviour of an adult who works with children*', also known as the '*Yellow form*'. **All such forms should be passed directly to the Headteacher.** Alternatively, staff are free to approach the Headteacher directly to discuss their concerns.

Concerns or complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of the School Standards Committee, whose contact details are available in Appendix 4 of this policy and are displayed on the staff notice board for any member of staff to use in such an instance. The '*Yellow form*' should also be used for this purpose, as above.

Staff may also report concerns about suspected abuse or neglect directly to Children's Social Care or the Police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action to safeguard children.

Staff can also contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who is responsible for the co-ordination of responses to allegations against people who work with children.⁷

The NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advice Line is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 between 8.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. Monday to Friday or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Information is also available on the NSPCC website at : [What you can do/Report abuse/whistleblowing advice](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/whistleblowing-advice).

Staff are also encouraged to feel confident to self-refer to the headteacher where they have found themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others; or, on reflection, they recognise that their behaviour might be deemed to have contravened the *Staff Code of Conduct* and/or to have fallen below expected professional standards.

⁷ LADO contact details are in Section 18 of this policy.

16. Managing allegations against staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors)

Schools have their own procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns or allegations against those working in, or on behalf of schools, in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes members of staff, supply, teachers, volunteers and contractors.

This part of the section has two sub-sections covering the two levels of allegation/concern:

- 1) Allegations that may meet the harm threshold;
- 2) Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold - referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low-level concerns'.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors), set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part 4 of *KCSiE 2023* and in paragraph 1.14 of the WS inter-agency safeguarding procedures entitled '*Allegations against staff or volunteers*'.⁸

As required by *KCSiE 2023*, all allegations in respect of an individual who works, permanently or temporarily, or volunteers at the school, that fulfil any of the following harm test criteria, will be reported to the LADO within one working day:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children and/or;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The LADO's contact number is 01926 745376. Referrals to the LADO should be submitted on a Position of Trust Referral Form and sent to lado@warwickshire.gov.uk.

All allegations against former staff members or volunteers that meet the above criteria will also be referred to the LADO in the first instance. On occasions, the LADO may not be able to advise about and/or coordinate the response to historical allegations because the current whereabouts of the former member of staff or volunteer are unknown and/or it is unknown whether the individual is currently employed or volunteering in a role involving work with children. In any such circumstances and following advice from the LADO, the matter will be reported to the Police.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. However, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that allegations are investigated fairly, quickly and consistently and that all parties are protected. In the event of suspension, the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

In accordance with *KCSiE 2023*, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality

⁸ westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/statutory-child-protection-procedures/allegations-against-staff-or-volunteers

and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

NB It is the Headteacher's responsibility to contact and refer to the LADO when necessary. The only exceptions are when the allegation is against the Headteacher, in which instance the Chair of Governors will undertake that responsibility, or where a member of staff is concerned that appropriate action has not been taken by the Headteacher and/or nominated governor in relation to an allegation against someone who works at the school or feels anxious about reporting to those individuals, in which instance the member of staff should contact the LADO directly in order to safeguard children.

In the event of a member of permanent or temporary staff, volunteer or contractor being dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or they would have been had they not resigned, the school will fulfil its legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Failure to refer when the criteria are met is a criminal offence.

Furthermore, where a permanent or temporary teacher is dismissed or the school ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, the school must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency).

Low level concerns

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the school *Code of Conduct*, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the harm threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- Humiliating pupils.

Upon receipt of an allegation or concern about a member of staff's conduct that is in breach of the *Staff Code of Conduct* but may not meet the harm test as defined above and in *KCSiE 2023*, the Headteacher will have a decision to make about an appropriate and proportionate response in order to maintain the school as a safe environment for pupils to learn and staff to work in.

In the event that the headteacher is not certain whether or not the allegation/concern meets the harm test, they will always contact the LADO for advice.

Once established that the allegation or concern does not meet the harm test, actions are likely to include one or more of the following:

- Seeking advice from the school's HR advisor about whether or not the allegation/ concern warrants action, including the possibility of an internal investigation subject to the school's disciplinary or capability procedures. That will include establishing whether or not it is necessary and proportionate to suspend the member of staff in the first instance in order to maintain the integrity of any investigation;
- If the allegation/concern does not warrant formal action or investigation, speaking to the

- member of staff and any other individuals as necessary to clarify the nature of the issues;
- Providing the member of staff with informal management advice. A written record of that advice will be made, shared with the member of staff and placed on their personnel file subject to HR advice and the school's record retention policy;
- Consideration of the need to amend school policies, procedures and staff training; and/or briefing all staff to remind them of relevant aspects of school policies with particular reference to the Staff Code of Conduct.

Written records of all low-level concerns and the response to them will be retained securely in accordance with the requirements of *KCSiE 2023* and in compliance with the *Data Protection Act 2018*.

Low-level concerns about external staff including supply staff, other third-party providers and contractors **will** be notified to their employers so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified; but the school will take responsibility for undertaking any investigation of concerns that arise within the school or in the conduct of offsite school business.

17. Staff Training

It is important that all staff receive appropriate child protection and safeguarding training, including online training, both at induction and through regular refreshers, to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation and to know what to do if they have a concern. Further ongoing updates via briefings, emails, bulletins and staff meetings should be provided throughout the year to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

New staff, governors who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive a safeguarding induction which will include:

- the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, including Early Help support;
- signs and indicators of abuse and neglect;
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child;
- online safety, including filtering and monitoring expectations and responsibilities;
- child-on-child abuse;
- extra-familial harms including criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines, serious violence, domestic abuse within intimate teenage relationships and radicalisation;
- reporting and recording arrangements;
- the Whistleblowing Policy, including allegations against, and low-level concerns about, the conduct of staff and visiting professionals;
- the *Staff Code of Conduct*;
- the identity and role of the DSL and all Deputy DSLs;
- the school's *Behaviour Policy*;
- the school's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.

NB - All of the above will be explained **before** a new member of staff, governor or volunteer has direct contact with children in school. The school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, *Behaviour Policy* and *Staff Code of Conduct* will be sent with the letter confirming an appointment with a written requirement that the individual reads the three policies in advance of starting work at the school. The individual will be given an opportunity to clarify any issues on their first day at work and then asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood all three policies and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, including the headteacher (unless the headteacher is the DSL), volunteers and governors will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection

training and thematic updates, including online safety, as required and at least annually, to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with statutory guidance, this policy and any requirements of the local safeguarding partnership.

The DSL and all Deputy DSLs will attend training for newly appointed DSLs, followed by refresher training every two years, to provide them with the knowledge and skills to carry out the role. The DSL and all Deputy DSLs will also undertake Prevent Awareness training. Training will provide the DSL/DDSs with a good understanding of the DSL role, in accordance with Annex C of *KCSiE 2023* and will include the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly Children's Social Care.

In addition, the DSL/DDSs will update their knowledge and skills at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and will be supported to access inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

All governors and trustees will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. That training will be updated regularly and at least annually.

In addition, the headteacher (and other school leaders, as appropriate) and at least one governor (usually the chair) will attend safer recruitment training and the school will ensure that there are at least two school leaders and/or governors that have attended safer recruitment training within the past three years.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's **Visitors Information**, which outlines the school's safeguarding procedures and which ideally should be read before leaving Reception and certainly before any contact with students.

18. Safer Recruitment and Employment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to only employ 'suitable' staff and allow only 'suitable' volunteers to work with children by complying with the requirements of *KCSiE 2023* together with the school's and WS's [Safer Recruitment procedures](#).

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history;
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children;
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications;
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include:
 - an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those, including unsupervised volunteers, engaged in Regulated Activity;
 - an enhanced DBS check without a barred list check for all volunteers not involved in Regulated Activity but who have the opportunity of regular contact with children;
 - an enhanced DBS check for all governors (not including associate members), which will only include a barred list check for governors involved in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK;
- be interviewed by a panel of at least two school leaders/governors, if shortlisted.

Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be

engaged in Regulated Activity. A fuller explanation of Regulated Activity can be found in Part 3 and Annex E of *KCSiE, 2023*.

The school will also:

- ensure that every job description and person specification for roles in school includes a description of the role holder's responsibility for safeguarding;
- send a criminal record self-disclosure proforma to all shortlisted candidates, who will be asked to submit the completed self-disclosure for the attention of the interview panel before the date of interview;
- consider carrying out an online search in respect of all shortlisted candidates in order to identify any information about incidents or issues of concern that is publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the candidate at interview;⁹
- explore any convictions, cautions or other relevant issues disclosed by the candidate and issues arising from online searches with the candidate at interview;
- ask at least one value-based question at interview for every role in school about the candidate's attitude to safeguarding and motivation for working with children;
- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities;
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates;
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK;
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State;
- check that an applicant for a management position or a governor post is not the subject of a section 128 direction made by the secretary of state prohibiting or restricting her/him from taking part in the management of an independent school, academy or free school.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff and volunteers will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy*, other issues as in section 19 of this policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff are required to sign to confirm they have received, read and understood a copy of the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy*.

All relevant staff (teachers, teaching assistants, other classroom-based staff, lunchtime supervisors and members of the Strategic Leadership Team, and all those who work in before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from providing childcare legislation.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies and third-party organisations that they have satisfactorily undertaken all appropriate safeguarding checks in respect of individuals they provide to work in the school that the school would have undertaken if they were employing the individual directly and that those individuals are suitable to work with children.

Where any agency or third-party organisation providing a member of staff to work in the school, has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate which has disclosed any matter or information, the school must obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency.

⁹ Any online searches will be in line with Trust policy and in all cases, recruitment materials will make an explicit statement about the Trust policy in relation to online searches so that all applicants are fully informed. Online searches will only seek to identify information that is publicly available and will not include proactive searches of candidates' social media accounts.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained, confirming their suitability to work with children.

The school maintains a Single Central Record of recruitment checks undertaken and ensures that the record is maintained in accordance with section 3 of *KCSiE, 2023* and guidance issued by Warwickshire County Council.

Volunteers

Volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in Regulated Activity.

Supervised volunteers

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in Regulated Activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors and their staff upon arrival at the school and requests DBS checks where appropriate. As required by statutory guidance, where contractors and/or their staff are engaged in Regulated Activity, barred list checks are also requested. Contractors and any of their staff who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in Regulated Activity.

19. Site Security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given an identity badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety arrangements to ensure children in school are kept safe. The headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

20. Behaviour

Our *Behaviour Policy* is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the School Standards Committee. It is shared with all staff before they start working with children, as part of their induction. The policy is transparent to staff, parents and pupils.

KCSiE 2023 highlights that there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

The school operates in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's *Guidance on the Use of Force and Physical Intervention*, which highlights that staff should deploy every possible

strategy to prevent the need for physical intervention. Those strategies would include de-escalation whenever there is a threat of violence or aggression towards an individual or property; communicating calmly with children; using non-threatening verbal and body language; helping children to recognise their own ‘triggers’ and ‘early warning signs’ and distracting or helping children to see a positive way out of a difficult situation.

However, the school supports staff to intervene physically and to use reasonable force when all of those strategies are unsuccessful in calming a situation and a risk of physical harm to other children, adults or the child him/herself, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the school remains. Staff should always be able to demonstrate that any such intervention is reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances, is used for the shortest possible period of time, deploys the minimum force that is necessary and is never used as a sanction.

If staff are required to use reasonable force in response to risks presented by any child with SEND, mental health issues or with medical conditions, they will take the additional vulnerabilities of those children into account. In accordance with its duties under the *Equality Act 2010* in relation to making reasonable adjustments and its *Public Sector Equality Duty*, the school will also seek to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force with those children by planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance by drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children and agreeing them with parents/carers.

Searching, screening, confiscation and the role of the ‘Appropriate Adult’

In accordance with DfE guidance [Searching, Screening and Confiscation - Advice for schools, \(DfE July 2022\)](#), school staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees but the member of staff should ensure the people understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed.

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher also has a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have one or more of the following prohibited items in their possession: knives or weapons; alcohol; illegal drugs; stolen items; tobacco and cigarette papers; fireworks; pornographic images; indecent images of children; any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).

The headteacher and authorised staff can also search for any item identified in the *Behaviour Policy* as prohibited and an item which may be searched for.

When searching or authorising other staff to search a pupil, the headteacher will consider the age and needs of pupils being searched. This includes the individual needs or learning difficulties of pupils with SEN and making reasonable adjustments that may be required where a pupil has a disability.

School staff can confiscate any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also confiscate any item they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

In the event that a member of staff suspects that a confiscated device contains indecent images of children, they will pass the device to the DSL and will not examine the device themselves. The DSL will take advice from the Police and/or the Front Door before examining the device - see ‘Viewing the Imagery’ above.

Where the headteacher or an authorised member of staff considers it necessary to search a pupil, they will ensure that the search is undertaken in accordance with the DfE advice for schools, as above. Key principles include:

- The headteacher will oversee the school's practice to ensure that a culture of safe, proportionate and appropriate searching is maintained, which safeguards the welfare of all pupils and staff, with support from the DSL/DDSL;
- The headteacher will ensure that a sufficient number of staff are appropriately trained in how to search a pupil who is not co-operating lawfully and safely, so that those trained staff can support and advise other members of staff if that situation arises;
- The DSL will be informed of any searching incidents where the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item as listed above;
- Staff are also expected to involve the DSL/DDSL without delay if they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk. If the DSL identifies that a child is at risk of harm, they will make a referral to Children's Social Care immediately;
- The DSL/DDSL will also consider the circumstances of the pupil who has been searched to assess the incident against potential wider safeguarding concerns;
- A member of staff conducting a search must be of the same sex as the pupil being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search. The only exception is that a member of staff can search a pupil of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present only:
 - If the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
 - If, in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.
- When a member of staff conducts a search without a witness, they are expected to report that to Headteacher or DSL immediately and ensure a record of the search is kept;
- A member of staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desk or lockers;
- The member of staff conducting the search must not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. 'Outer clothing' means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, as well as hats, shoes, boots or scarves;
- A strip search is a search involving the removal of more than outer clothing. Strip searches on school premises can only be carried out by police officers under the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Code A* and in accordance with *PACE 1984 (PACE) Code C*;
- While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are Police matters, school staff retain a duty of care to the pupil(s) involved and are expected to advocate for pupil well-being at all times;
- Before calling the Police into school, the headteacher or DSL will assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the pupil's mental and physical wellbeing against the risk of not recovering the suspected item; and will consider whether introducing the potential for a strip search through Police involvement is absolutely necessary, always ensuring that other appropriate, less invasive approaches have been exhausted;
- Once the Police are on school premises, the decision on whether to conduct a strip search lies solely with them, and the role of the school is to advocate for the safety and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved;
- Unless there is an immediate risk of harm and where reasonably possible, the headteacher or DSL will inform a parent of the pupil suspected of concealing an item in advance of the search, even if the parent is not acting as the appropriate adult. Parents will always be informed by the headteacher or DSL once a strip search has taken place;
- Except in cases of urgency where there is risk of serious harm to the pupil or others, whenever a strip search involves exposure of intimate body parts there will be at least two people present other than the pupil, one of whom will be the appropriate adult;
- If the pupil's parent would like to be the appropriate adult, the school will facilitate this where possible. The headteacher or DSL will ensure that Police officers carrying out the search are of the same sex as the pupil being searched. An appropriate adult not of the same sex as the pupil being searched may be present if specifically requested by the pupil;

- Otherwise, no-one of a different sex to the pupil being searched is permitted to be present, and the search will not be carried out in a location where the pupil could be seen by anyone else;
- Except in urgent cases as above, a search of a pupil will take place without an appropriate adult only if the pupil explicitly states in the presence of an appropriate adult that they do not want an appropriate adult to be present during the search and the appropriate adult agrees. A record will be made of the pupil's decision and signed by the appropriate adult;
- *PACE Code C* states that a strip search may take place only if it is considered necessary to remove an item related to a criminal offence and the Police Officer reasonably considers the pupil might have concealed such an item. Strip searches should not be routinely carried out if there is no reason to consider that such items are concealed;
- The role of the appropriate adult is to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of children in Police custody. This adult must not be a Police Officer or otherwise associated with the Police. Examples of an appropriate adult include, but are not limited to, a parent, relative, social worker, teacher or, if the person is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation;
- Pupils will be given appropriate support, irrespective of whether the suspected item is found. If an item is found, this may be a Police matter but will always be accompanied by a safeguarding process handled by the school which gives attention to the pupil's wellbeing and involves the DSL/DDSL;
- Safeguarding should also be at the centre of support following a strip search in which the item is not found, both in the sense of supporting the pupil to deal with the experience of being searched, and regarding wider issues that may have informed the decision to conduct a strip search in the first place;
- Whether or not any items have been found as a result of any search, the headteacher and DSL will consider whether the reasons for the search, the search itself, or the outcome of the search give cause to suspect that the pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer harm, and/or whether any specific support is needed. Where this may be the case, the DSL (or a deputy) will follow this policy in considering the need to make a referral to an external agency or offer early help;
- Parents will always be informed of any search for a prohibited item that has taken place, and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable. The headteacher or DSL will inform the parents of what, if anything, has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any sanctions applied;
- Any complaints about searching or confiscation will be addressed through the school's complaints procedure.

21. Record Keeping

The school will maintain safeguarding (including early help) and child protection records in accordance with Warwickshire's guidance document [Safeguarding Children - Information and Record Keeping - September 2019](#)

The school will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children's Social Care immediately;
- keep records in a meticulous chronological order, either on paper or electronically;
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- ensure all safeguarding records are transferred - separately from the child's main pupil file - to the receiving school, college or other education establishment when a pupil moves. The DSL will do this as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and will ensure that confirmation of receipt of the records is obtained;
- the DSL will also consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with a child's

receiving school/setting in advance of the child leaving so that the receiving school/setting is able to support the child as effectively as possible and plan for her/his arrival;

- ensure that incoming safeguarding records are brought to the attention of the DSL, Deputy DSLs and other key staff such as the SENCO when a child transfers in from another school/setting.

Safeguarding and child protection records will be maintained independently from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Such records will only be accessible to the DSL, the Deputy DSLs and school leaders who need to be aware.

Staff will record any safeguarding or child protection observations or concerns about a child either by using an electronic filing system such as CPOMS or by using the local safeguarding partnership proforma *Logging A Concern About A Child's Safety and Welfare* (Form C) also known as the 'Green form'. The same format will be used by staff to record and report any observations or concerns that suggest a child might benefit from an early help assessment. Staff are trained and expected to make a full record of all conversations with pupils relating to safeguarding concerns, whether or not the child makes a disclosure. Temporary or visiting professionals and volunteers will report concerns to a member of staff who will then ensure that the information is passed to the DSL and that the incident is recorded using the school's recording and reporting procedure.

Such records will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations describing the child's behaviour, appearance, statements/remarks made to staff or other children and observations of interactions between the child, other children, members of staff and/or parents/carers that give rise to concern. Where possible and without interpretation, the exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer will be recorded. The contextual location will also be recorded. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record.

Records of safeguarding/child protection observations or concerns can be completed electronically or as a paper version but it is most important that **one consistent system for the recording of concerns is readily accessible to every member of staff, irrespective of role and that all records are passed to the DSL or Deputy DSL.**

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that the record of all concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions provides unequivocal clarity about the nature of concerns and the action taken by the school in response, to safeguard the child when the file is read retrospectively. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been managed by the school or in the event of needing to share the record with partner agencies - for example, in support of a referral to Children's Services or in a Child Protection Conference - or, if the record is required as evidence in any court proceedings.

Child protection records form a part of a child's pupil records, which parents ordinarily have a right to see. Any pupil or parent wishing to access the pupil's Child Protection records will need to submit a subject access request in writing to the school for consideration. Access to the record will then be arranged but records may be redacted in line with the requirements of the *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR), if releasing information would place the child, or any other person, at risk of significant harm.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and *GDPR* do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies without the consent of parents, where that information may help to protect a child.

22. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school will manage and share confidential information about children in line with [Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#), HMG - 2018.

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil, family and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the GDPR places duties on the school and individual staff to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. However, neither the DPA nor the GDPR prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. KCSiE 2023 states clearly that “Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children”.

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from the DSL, another SLT member or outside agency as required e.g. the CAT Director of Safeguarding or the Front Door Education Lead.

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about pupils with colleagues in order to ensure that children’s general needs are met in school. However, staff should report all child protection and safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Headteacher or, in the case of concerns about the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information, disseminating it on a ‘need-to-know’ basis.

KCSiE 2023 emphasises that the DSL or a Deputy DSL should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns but in exceptional circumstances where neither the DSL nor any appointed Deputy DSL are available, that should not delay appropriate action being taken and staff should speak to a member of SLT or take advice from Children’s Social Care if they are concerned about a child.

The *GDPR* and the *Data Protection Act 2018* do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the DSL and the Data Protection Officer.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and where:

- it is necessary and proportionate to do so; and
- the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child or parent to keep secrets.

All safeguarding and child protection information will be handled in line with the principles of the *Data Protection Act 2018*, which require that sensitive information is:

- processed for limited purposes;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate;
- kept no longer than necessary;
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights;
- secure.

All written child protection and safeguarding information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected. All child protection records will only be made available to relevant individuals with a valid professional reason to see them, parents/carers subject to a subject access request and children upon request, subject to consultation with parents/carers and partner agencies, as deemed appropriate by the DSL.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a CD or flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage.

The school's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and pupils on request.

23. Extended school and off-site arrangements and use of school premises for non-school activities

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will ensure that effective child protection and whistleblowing arrangements are in place.

When services or activities are provided by the school or Community Academies Trust under the direct supervision or management of school staff, the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* and procedures will apply.

When hiring or renting the school's facilities to external organisations or individuals (for example community groups, sports associations and service providers that run community or extra-curricular activities) the SSC will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies (including safer recruitment procedures) in place, will inspect those as necessary and will put arrangements in place for the external body to liaise with the school in respect of these matters as appropriate. This applies irrespective of whether or not the children who attend any services or activities provided by the external body are children on the school roll.

The SSC will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; with the stipulation that failure to comply with the arrangements will lead to termination of the agreement. The DfE guidance ['Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings'](#) details the safeguarding arrangements that schools should expect these providers to have in place.

The DSL will maintain an overview of all pupils accessing any children's club, breakfast club or external wraparound provision and will ensure that robust arrangements are in place for timely and effective two-way sharing of safeguarding information - including records of all

safeguarding concerns - between the school and the safeguarding lead for that provision.

The DSL will also take responsibility for ensuring that robust procedures are in place to confirm attendance and swift reporting of non-attendance and children going missing from the children's club/breakfast club/wraparound provision at any time when they should be there. The DSL will also ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place in order to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of all safeguarding arrangements that the provision has in place.

24. Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- seek their consent for photographs or video images to be taken;
- seek parental consent;
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed; and
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs/images that are taken of them.

Furthermore, when using images for publicity purposes (e.g. on our website or in newspapers or publications), we will:

- avoid naming children when possible;
- if it is necessary to name children, use first names rather than surnames;
- if children are named, avoid using their image;
- establish whether the image will be retained for further use, where and for how long;
- ensure that images are stored securely and used only by those authorised to do so.

For the protection of pupils and staff, only school owned equipment will be used to record and store images taken by staff or volunteers on the school site or during offsite school activities, including residential visits.

Parents are welcome to take still photographs of their **own children only** during school activities, subject to other restrictions notified to parents in advance in writing or verbally (e.g. parents may be asked not to take photographs during concerts/performances in order not to distract children who are performing or other audience members). Parents must not publish (including on social media) photographs of other children inadvertently captured during school events without the express permission of the parents of those children.

Visiting practitioners who work directly with children are subject to the same restrictions as school staff and volunteers in respect of recording and storing images of children. However, some visiting professionals are permitted to record images of the premises only specifically for professional purposes and in order to support the school, e.g. professionals providing advice or preparing quotations for work such as maintenance, health and safety and building.

25. Online Safety

Children and young people commonly use electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via

social networking sites such as TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Instagram. Online gaming with linked chat function is also popular with many young people.

Such technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use them to harm children and the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm through child sexual and criminal exploitation, county lines activity, radicalisation, sexual predation, child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and online bullying.

The breadth of issues within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content; for example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention of grooming or exploiting them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos of children and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images, online bullying); and
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

All staff receive online safety training and are trained to be vigilant and to report any concerns about risks to children online in the same way that they notice and report offline concerns. The school's *Online Safety Policy* explains our approach to keeping pupils safe in school and protecting and educating pupils in the safe use of technology, including ways for them to report any harmful, distressing or abusive online content, contact, conduct or commercial activity.

The school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place on school devices and school networks to protect children from potentially harmful online material. The DSL is directly responsible for ensuring the appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place in order to safeguard the systems, with due consideration to the cyber security standards. Where the school is alerted to unsafe online behaviour, the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always informed, the concern is rapidly evaluated and where necessary, addressed as a safeguarding issue, within appropriate timescales, dependent on the nature of the report.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites in school. However, many pupils own or have access to hand-held devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.

The school is unable to filter activity on devices not owned by the school. The school recognises that when children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet (i.e. via 3G, 4G and 5G), it is likely that some will misuse this to bully, sexually harass, threaten or control their peers via their mobile and smart technology; share nude or semi-nude images and/or videos consensually and non-consensually, including via large chat groups; request/pressurise other pupils to create and share nude or semi-nude images and/or videos; and view or share pornography and other harmful content.

Staff are trained to assume and anticipate such misuse and to take action where they have reason to believe that this is happening or has happened, reaching out to pupils identified as

being at risk, reporting incidents to the DSL as with all other safeguarding issues and confiscating devices that they suspect may contain evidence of illegal or harmful content or activity. Parents may find it useful to refer to <https://www.internetmatters.org> for guidance on possible restrictions they could put in place to help keep their children safe online.

Online bullying, online sexual harassment and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying or sexual harassment and will be managed through our anti-bullying and child-on-child abuse procedures.

Safeguarding pupils in online learning and communication between staff and pupils

Staff receive advice regarding their personal online activity, use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils, about which there are strict rules, as detailed in the *Staff Code of Conduct*. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be the subject of a referral to the LADO and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Where school staff are delivering lessons remotely or communicating with pupils virtually (e.g. for children unable to attend school due to health issues or a pandemic), all such lessons and communication will be delivered in accordance with the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour and Acceptable use of ICT policies*. This will ensure that the school's filtering and monitoring software is enabled.

The school engages, informs and regularly reminds parents/carers about the importance of children being safe online; parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use. Information will be provided for parents/carers about what their children are being asked to do online, the sites they will be asked to access and which school staff their child will be interacting with online.

The school will take account of the DfE guidance [Safeguarding and remote education](#) (November 2022) in relation to the planning and delivery of online learning, as well as nationally recognised guidance including [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#).

Staff will always use school/service owned devices and accounts for the delivery of online lessons/learning. Where possible, applications that facilitate the recording of lessons will be used subject to data protection and retention/storage guidelines. School leaders will randomly sample recorded lessons in order to safeguard pupils and staff and to ensure that policies are being followed.

If a decision has been taken to deliver any online lessons on a one-to-one basis or when communicating with vulnerable children who are not attending school via video chat, staff will speak to parents/carers before lessons/conversations commence and when they finish before logging off. Any one-to-one online session must be approved by the Headteacher and/or DSL.

The school will request and obtain written consent from parents/carers, including consent to record lessons and video conversations, before staff communicate with children online.

It is important that all staff who interact with children online continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk, distressed for some reason or vulnerable in some other way; and report and record any concerns to the DSL in the normal way. The DSL will respond to any such concern as they would any other safeguarding concern.

The school will ensure that online learning tools and systems are used in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Online/virtual lessons should be timetabled and the headteacher or DSL will be able to drop

into any virtual lesson at any time - the online version of entering a classroom for pupil welfare and safeguarding purposes. Staff delivering online/virtual teaching will be expected to display the same standards of dress and conduct that they would when working face to face in school, modelling appropriate behaviour and presentation to pupils and parents.

Below are other issues that staff need to take into account when delivering online/virtual lessons or communicating with children online, particularly where webcams are used:

- Staff and children must be fully dressed and wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household;
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred. If it is not possible to blur the background, staff must consider what children can see in the background and whether it would be appropriate in a classroom. This includes photographs, artwork, identifying features, mirrors etc;
- Staff will ensure that resources and videos used are age-appropriate - the child may not have support immediately to hand at home if they feel distressed or anxious about content;
- Live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed;
- Live classes will be kept to a reasonable length of time so that children do not have too much screen time and in order to minimise disruption for the family;
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including that used by any family members in the background;
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by the school's ICT lead for communication with pupils;
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Staff members delivering lessons or communicating with children online/virtually will raise any issues in respect of inappropriate dress, setting, behaviour etc. with the child and/or parent immediately and will end the online interaction if necessary. Any such incident will be recorded and reported to the DSL.

If a staff member believes that a child or parent is recording a lesson or conversation without prior consent, the lesson will be brought to an end or the child will be logged out immediately.

In **rare and exceptional circumstances** where staff urgently need to contact a pupil or parent by telephone and do not have access to a school-owned device, they will discuss this with a member of SLT. If it is agreed there is no alternative to using a personally owned device, staff members will always use 'caller withheld' to ensure the pupil and/or parent is not able to identify the staff member's personal contact details.

Staff also receive advice regarding their personal online activity, use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils, about which there are strict rules. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be the subject of a referral to the LADO and/or may be subject to disciplinary action.

Filtering and monitoring

Considering the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process the SSC and proprietors should ensure the school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and **regularly review their effectiveness**. They should ensure that the SLT and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. The SSC and proprietors should consider the age range and number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems has been agreed by the school and is informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

To meet this duty, in reference to the DfE [digital and technology standards](#), our school will endeavour to:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems;
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually;
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning;
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet safeguarding needs.

The SSC and proprietors will review the standards and the DSL will discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support the school in meeting this standard.

26. Child Protection Procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of children. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home unsupervised.

Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing the 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 adult men or women or by other children or young people. Staff are trained to understand and recognise indicators of all four categories of abuse as defined below.

The four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect¹⁰

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

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

¹⁰ All definitions taken from *KCSiE 2023*.

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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including online bullying), 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

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. 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, known as child-on-child abuse. All staff should be aware of it and of our school policy and procedures for dealing with it (see section 14 above).

Neglect

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

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the DSL.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;

- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- change their eating habits;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- frequently miss school or arrive late;
- show signs of not wanting to go home;
- display a change in behaviour - from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their school work;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol;
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development;
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends' or adults recently acquainted with the child's family.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are - they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by one or more of the following: anxiety, depression or other mental health difficulties, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships, unfulfilled potential and long-term physical health difficulties.

Taking action

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "It could happen here". That includes the likelihood that child-on-child abuse happens in every school.

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child. For example, call 999;
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible - immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day;
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only - do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family;
- complete a record of concern, using a Form C (Green form) or other recording system;
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

If a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk without unequivocal evidence. The pupil's behaviour or usual presentation may have changed, their artwork could be unusual or bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk while remembering 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. The signs that staff notice may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. Staff are encouraged and supported to ask pupils if they are okay, if there is anything the child would like to talk to them about and if they can help in any way. Staff are trained to do this by asking appropriate open questions which do not lead the child in any particular direction but invite the child to talk about anything if they wish to.

Staff are expected to use the school's usual recording system, which is usually either green forms or an online recording system, to record these early concerns and should make a full record of all conversations with pupils relating to safeguarding concerns, whether or not the child makes some form of disclosure. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help Assessment process, as in section 9 of this policy.

If a pupil discloses abuse or neglect to a member of staff or volunteer¹¹

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual. Their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell. They may have lost all trust in adults. Or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, including child-on-child abuse, the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on - staff are not allowed to keep unsafe secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this, is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen but if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

Through the PSHE curriculum pupils will have been taught about confidentiality and will understand the concept of safe and unsafe secrets. They should have a good knowledge and understanding of why staff cannot keep some information confidential but also know that information is passed on to specific people on a 'need to know' basis only.

During their conversations with pupils, staff will:

- allow the child to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact - the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort - **'I'm glad you told me'/'Thank you for telling me'; 'You're doing well'; 'I believe you'; 'This isn't your fault'; 'I'm going to do what I can to help you';**
- not be afraid of silences - staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil;
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions - such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil's mother think about

¹¹ See also ['Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment'](#)

- it; (**however**, it is reasonable to ask questions to clarify understanding and to support a meaningful referral if that is required, e.g. When/Where did this happen?;
- at an appropriate time, tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on;
 - not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused;
 - avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
 - tell the pupil what will happen next;
 - let the pupil know that someone (either the member of staff or another named person, e.g. the DSL) will come to see them before the end of the day;
 - report verbally to the DSL, or headteacher if the child has made an allegation against a member of staff;
 - write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **record of concern form**, Form C (Green form) or other recording system, and pass it directly to the DSL/DDSL or headteacher if the child has made an allegation against a member of staff; and
 - seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents/carers. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL/DDSL will make contact with the parent/carer in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. Other staff should not notify parents/carers unless explicitly asked to do so by the DSL.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will be sought first from the Front Door.

Similarly, if the student concerned lives in another LA, the school will follow the guidance of that Local Authority’s Social Care Service in determining when or if to contact parents prior to a referral to Children’s Social Care.

27. Making a referral to Children’s Social Care

KCSiE, 2023, emphasises that the DSL/DDSLs are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns. The DSL will make a referral to Children’s Social Care and, if appropriate, the Police, if it is believed that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents, will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child or create undue delay.

KCSiE, 2023, also emphasises that **all** staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to 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.

Statutory assessments

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. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the *Children Act 1989*.

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 harm may be from within their home environment or external (extra-familial harm). Such enquiries enable Social Care 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, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called 'honour-based' violence, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.

28. Submitting Child Protection referrals

All Child Protection referrals for children living in Warwickshire¹² should be made by completing a Multi-Agency Contact (MAC) Form and submitting it to the Front Door at triagehub@warwickshire.gov.uk. The form can also be completed online.

All urgent child protection referrals, i.e. where there is an immediate concern about a child's safety, should be made in the first instance by telephoning the Front Door on 01926 414144. This should be followed by the submission of a MAC Form as above.

NB If a child is already the subject of an open case to Children's Social Care, the DSL will have the name and contact details of the allocated social worker. Further child protection concerns about any child in those circumstances must be referred directly to the allocated social worker, **not** to the Front Door again.

Where there is an immediate concern about a child's safety, the DSL should contact the social worker by telephone in the first instance. Any difficulties in contacting the social worker must be escalated to their line manager, **not** to the Front Door.

Outside of office hours, immediate concerns about a child should be referred to the Emergency Duty Team on telephone number 01926 886922.

If staff are ever concerned that a child is in immediate danger, they will contact the Police by dialling 999.

Staff may seek support directly from the Front Door Education Lead on 01926 418608 should they consider that necessary.

29. Staff reporting directly to Child Protection agencies

Staff should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, as highlighted above, all staff should be aware of the early help process and understand their role in it and all staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989. **Any member of staff may**

¹² Referrals for children living in other Local Authority areas should be made following the procedures for that LA.

therefore refer their concerns directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, the deputy DSL, the headteacher and/or the chair of governors are all unavailable; or
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety; or
- for any other reason they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

In any of those circumstances, staff may make direct child protection referrals and share information without being subject of censure or disciplinary action. However, staff should inform the DSL and/or headteacher at the earliest opportunity that they have made a direct referral unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

If in any doubt, members of staff may consult the Front Door and/or seek support from the Education Lead via 01926 418608.

30. What will Children's Social Care do?

Children's Social Care should acknowledge receipt and make a decision about the type of response required within one working day of a referral being made, informing the referrer of the outcome. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required;
- the child is in need, and should be assessed under section 17;
- 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;
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services; and
- further specialist assessments are required in order to help the LA to decide what further action to take.

The school will follow up if this information is not forthcoming and if, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the school will consider following the [Warwickshire Safeguarding Practitioner Escalation Protocol](#) to ensure the referred concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

While every effort will be made to resolve concerns via informal discussion, the school will always complete the [Escalation Protocol Monitoring Form](#) when following the Practitioner Escalation Protocol. The DSL will share the completed form with the appropriate manager in Children's Social Care and a copy will be placed on the pupil's school safeguarding file.

If Children's Social Care decide to carry out a statutory assessment, school staff will do everything they can to support that assessment, led by the DSL/DDSL, as required.

31. Bullying, child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

In our school we believe that all children have a right to attend school and to learn in a safe environment. Children and young people should be free from harm, both from adults and from other young people.

Our staff are trained to be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Staff are trained to recognise the

indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and to respond to reports by pupils about themselves or other children as they would with any other safeguarding issue.

The school recognises that, even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the school, that does not mean it is not happening. Staff are expected to give pupils every opportunity to talk to them in the event that they are experiencing anything causing them harm, distress or worry and to discuss any concerns about child-on-child abuse (reported and suspected) with the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

KCSiE, 2023 states that child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including online, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as teenage relationship abuse);
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm¹³;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault¹⁴;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-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.
- 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.

Staff are trained and expected to challenge all such inappropriate behaviours between pupils and not to tolerate, downplay or dismiss any form of child-on-child abuse as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up', 'boys being boys' or 'girls being girls' which the school recognises can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and, at worst, a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse; for example, being sexually touched or assaulted or being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. Whilst mindful of the particular vulnerability of women and girls to violence and sexual harassment, it is also recognised that boys as well as girls can be abused by members of the opposite sex as well as the same sex group.

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause children considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

Staff are expected to address, record and report all incidences of bullying, including online-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. All such incidents will be managed through the school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying procedures, which can be accessed on the school website. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. All members of staff

¹³ This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse

¹⁴ This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence

receive a copy of the school's *Behaviour Policy*, which contains the anti-bullying procedures, as part of their induction and are trained to be aware of the harm caused by bullying and to respond to all incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse proactively.

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected behaviour to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent behaviour. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate, may cause developmental damage and is referred to as 'Harmful sexual behaviour' (HSB), which can occur online, face to face and also simultaneously between the two.

HSB encompasses a range of behaviour, which can be displayed towards younger children, children of the same age, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as the people towards whom it is directed.

HSB will be considered in a child protection context. The ages and stages of development of children are critical factors when considering incidences of HSB. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. For more information about harmful sexual behaviour please refer to: [Understanding Sexual Behaviour in Children - NSPCC](#) and [The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#).

Pupils may report child-on-child abuse, including HSB, in respect of other pupils in the school and sometimes young people attending other schools. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Members of staff to whom such allegations are made should record their concerns in the usual way, either electronically or on a green form and report them to the DSL as soon as possible, as with any other safeguarding concern.

It is likely that for an allegation or concern to be addressed under child protection procedures, some of the following features will be found. The allegation or concern:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil;
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence;
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school;
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student;
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

The school will address inappropriate behaviour as an important early intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Staff understand that children who display harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma; and that it is important they are offered appropriate support.

It is important for our school to consider the wider environmental factors and context within which child-on-child abuse occurs. Such factors may include the potential for bullying and child-on-child abuse to take place across a number of social media platforms and services and for things to move from platform to platform online. The school will also consider the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than our local community (e.g. for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools/colleges) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator¹⁵) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities.

¹⁵ N.B. The terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' are used within this policy because they are widely recognised, understood and helpful in delineating clear safeguarding responses to child-on-child abuse. However, the school

There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online. Online concerns can be especially complicated. Support is available from *The UK Safer Internet Centre* at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk and the *Internet Watch Foundation* at www.iwf.org.uk.

Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage and between children of the opposite or the same sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Staff are trained to be aware that although boys can experience sexual violence and sexual harassment, girls are more likely to be the victims and boys are more likely to cause this kind of harm to others. Some children may be more at risk of specific forms of sexual violence and sexual harassment such as homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, trans or non-binary can be targeted by other children, as can a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT or non-binary (whether they are or not). Staff are trained to be aware of those vulnerabilities, notice any signs that a pupil may be at risk or suffering sexual violence or harassment, reach out to any pupil who may want to talk or need support and report and record those issues as with any other safeguarding concern.

As with all other forms of abuse, staff are trained to understand that children may not find it easy to talk to an adult about an experience of abuse; and may well not make a direct report. That is why it is so important for staff to notice signs of distress, anxiety, changes in presentation and behaviour and reach out to children, as above. The school may also find out about possible abuse by a pupil reporting something about another pupil or a member of staff overhearing a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed.

The initial response by a school to a report from a child is incredibly important. The response can either encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment in the school to report abuse.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. As with all other safeguarding issues, staff are trained and expected to maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' in relation to the possibility of sexual violence and sexual harassment happening in the school. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support and that any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment is taken seriously.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school, including intimate personal relationships, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

It is essential that all victims are reassured 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

recognises that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in that way. Staff will bear those sensitivities in mind when managing and responding to any individual situation, particularly when speaking in front of children; and will seek always to use terms with which children who have or may have suffered abuse are most comfortable. The school also recognises that abusive behaviour will sometimes be harmful to the 'perpetrator' as well as the 'victim'.

a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children rather than criminalise them. This will be explained to pupils in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

The school will respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and/or online. This policy largely refers to sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils at this school. However, there may be occasions when pupils report sexual violence and/or harassment perpetrated by other young people who attend a different educational provision. In that situation, the DSL will liaise with the DSL at the alleged perpetrator's school as well as the victim's parents, the Police and Children's Social Care. Support for the victim will be provided as described below, irrespective of which educational provision the alleged perpetrator attends.

What is sexual violence and sexual harassment?

When referring to sexual violence, this policy uses the definitions of sexual offences in the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* as follows:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (N.B. Sexual assault covers a wide range of behaviours; a single act of kissing someone without their consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. It is important to note that:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment in the context of child-on-child behaviour is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online and face-to-face and both inside and outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to:

- violate a child's dignity; and/or
- make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated; and/or
- create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names; sexual 'jokes' or taunting; physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (NB this may cross a line into sexual violence - the school will listen to the victim and take her/his perspective and experience into account in deciding that); displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and upskirting, which is a criminal offence.

Online sexual harassment may happen on its own or as part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos; sharing of unwanted explicit content; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages including via social media; sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are not comfortable with online.

Sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. The school therefore recognises the importance of identifying and challenging sexual violence and sexual harassment in its wider approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, through its policies, culture and curriculum.

Minimising the risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment at school through a planned curriculum

Through a broad and balanced curriculum, the school seeks to minimise the risk of sexual violence and harassment. Our PSHE curriculum provides age-appropriate information and learning opportunities on themes such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- what respectful behaviour looks like;
- consent;
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- prejudiced behaviour;

Relationships and Sex Education and Citizenship Education are also taught across the curriculum at age-appropriate intervals.

In addition, the school's ethos and its inherent values and standards are demonstrated, promoted and upheld throughout the daily life of the school. When appropriate, in Assemblies and during class teaching, opportunities are taken to make clear that sexual violence or sexual harassment is not tolerated and will never be dismissed as 'just having a laugh'.

The school recognises that, in some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT; these pupils are supported by the school and again, it is made clear to students that this type of abuse is unacceptable.

Pupils are made aware of the process for them to raise their concerns or make a report and they know how any report will be handled. This includes processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

How the school responds to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

While it is not possible to anticipate every particular set of circumstances and therefore what the response will be to every case, the school will respond to reports of specific incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment in accordance with Part 5 of *KCSiE 2023*, which all staff working directly with children are encouraged to read.

This policy outlines a set of principles which the school will consider in responding on a case-by-case basis.

All responses to disclosures of sexual violence will be subject to an immediate risk and needs assessment undertaken by the DSL/DDSL, using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies, such as Children's Social Care and the Police. Advice may also be sought from the Trust's Director of Safeguarding or the Front Door Education Lead.

Risk assessment

The need for a risk and needs assessment in relation to reports of sexual harassment will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- whether there may be other victims;
- the alleged perpetrator/s;
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s) or from future harms;
- the time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer for all pupils.

The DSL/DDSL should ensure they are engaging with Children's Social Care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and/or sexual violence specialists will be required. The school's risk assessment should not replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils and updating its own risk assessment.

The DSL/DDSL will maintain an up-to-date awareness of the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment by the Police and Children's Social Care including details of what local specialist support is available for all children affected (including victims and alleged perpetrators) by incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment; and how to access that support when required.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

What to consider

The DSL/DDSL is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will therefore be the most appropriate person to lead the school's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. However, if the victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, the DSL/DDSL will have

to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. It is likely to be justified and lawful to share the information if doing so is in the public interest, e.g. to protect the victim and other young people from harm and to promote the welfare of children;

- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether harmful sexual behaviour has been displayed;
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- whether the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children;
- the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following an incident;
- whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff;
- informing parents/carers (unless this would put the victim at greater risk);
- only sharing information with those staff who need to know in order to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation. For instance, teachers may be asked to monitor the victim's welfare or ensure a pupil sits on their own without needing to know that they are a victim or alleged perpetrator of sexual violence or harassment.
- other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

Considering confidentiality and anonymity

In the event of sexual violence and harassment, it is very likely to be in the child's best interests to seek advice and guidance from others to provide support and engage appropriate agencies. The victim may ask the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, to which there are no easy or definitive answers. If the victim does not consent to their information being shared, it may still be lawfully shared if there is a legitimate purpose for doing so, which includes the need to safeguard children and to detect and prevent criminal offences.

In responding to the victim's request, the DSL will consider the following:

- parents or carers will normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk);
- if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care; and
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this will be referred to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, in the event of the alleged perpetrator being under ten, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in any such cases.

Ultimately, the DSL/DDSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. Subject to the risk assessment and whether a crime has been committed, the DSL may need to consider issues in relation to [Gillick competency and the Fraser guidelines \(NSPCC.org.uk\)](#) in making a judgement.¹⁶

If the DSL/DDSL decide to go ahead and make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or a

¹⁶ Further resources are available at <https://safeguardinghub.co.uk/gillick-competence-and-fraser-guidelines-guide-and-resources/>

report to the Police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled with extreme care, the reasons will be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support will be offered.

Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, the school will be aware of anonymity, witness support, and the criminal process in general so we can offer support and act appropriately. The school will do all it reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff need to know about it; and any support that can be provided for the children involved. The school will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.

Children sharing a classroom - initial considerations following a report of sexual violence

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim. However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult for the victim and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with Children's Social Care and the Police, the alleged perpetrator will usually be removed from any classes they share with the victim. Careful consideration will also be given to how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after-school school-based activities and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and questions regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and transport, will be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated, following the guidance set out in paragraph 470 of *KCSiE 2023*. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

Responding to the report/disclosure

If an offence has been committed, the Police will be informed. It is the prerogative of parents and victims to make complaints to the Police directly but the school will also speak to the Police in order to ensure effective action is taken to safeguard other young people as well as the victim.

If a child has suffered significant harm, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care via the Children and Families Front Door to ensure that the needs of both the victim and perpetrator are the subject of professional risk assessments by social workers. Similarly, any instance of sexual activity between pupils on school site will always be referred to Children's Social Care.

Responses to all incidents of both sexual violence and sexual harassment will be underpinned by the principles of:

- zero tolerance of sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- support for both the victim and alleged perpetrator/s, particularly pending the outcome of investigations;
- all parties have an ongoing right to an education and are safest if they remain in school, subject to appropriate risk assessments and risk management;

- exclusion will be avoided unless that is the only realistic option to keep one or more parties safe.

Informing the alleged perpetrator(s) should be considered carefully. Where the school informs the Police and/or Children's Social Care, the relevant agency will be consulted about how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, this will not stop the school taking immediate action to safeguard pupils, where required.

Decisions and actions will be reviewed regularly. Where patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour are identified, the DSL will review relevant policies and procedures with the Strategic Leadership Team, the SSC and relevant staff teams as appropriate and take any appropriate action such as curriculum review or further staff training as required.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded as with all other safeguarding concerns.

In principle, there are four possible responses to an allegation or concern about sexual violence or harassment on the part of a pupil:

1. Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment - for example, one-off incidents - the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally. This might be through utilising the behaviour policy and anti-bullying procedures, speaking to the alleged perpetrator and her/his parents, making expectations of future behaviour clear (in writing, where appropriate) and by providing pastoral support.

Careful consideration will be given to the need to separate the victim and alleged perpetrator/s in lessons (as with sexual assaults) pending investigation and possibly thereafter.

2. Early help

The school may decide that the child/ren involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help, which can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Early help and the option to manage a report internally are not mutually exclusive. The school may decide to manage the report internally but may also offer early help to both the victim and the perpetrator(s).

3. Referrals to Children's Social Care

In keeping with an explicit requirement set out in *KCSiE, 2023*, where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the school will make a referral to Children's Social Care. All instances of sexual activity between pupils on the school premises will be referred to Children's Social Care. All instances of sexual violence perpetrated by a child under ten years of age will be referred to Children's Social Care. This will facilitate a consultation about the role of the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten years, the starting principle of reporting to the Police via the Front Door remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

When referring to children social care, the school will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (i.e. if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk or create undue delay). Any such decision should be made with the support of Children's Social Care.

Collaborative working will help ensure that the best possible package of co-ordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

However, the school will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Children's Social Care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. The DSL/DDSL will work closely with Children's Social Care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. The risk assessment as above will help inform any decision. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator, any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school should be **immediate**.

In some cases, Children's Social Care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school (generally led by the DSL or a deputy) will refer again, using Warwickshire Safeguarding's escalation protocol¹⁷ as necessary if there is reason to believe that the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the DSL/DDSL will consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.

4. Reporting to the Police

Any report to the Police will generally be in conjunction with a referral to Children's Social Care (as above).

Where the school receives a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the starting point is this should be passed on to the Police. It is the prerogative of victims and their parents/carers to make direct complaints to the Police. However, the school should also be very clear with victims and parents/carers that the school has a duty to ensure the Police are informed when an alleged crime has been committed in order to safeguard other young people.

Where a serious crime is reported, the school can report directly to the local Police. However, in most circumstances, the school will consult with the Front Door in the first instance in order to ensure that both the Police and Children's Social Care are informed. The school will also take account the National Police Chiefs' Council advice [When to call the police guidance for schools and colleges.pdf](#) in deciding when to engage the police directly and what to expect of them when they do.

Where a report has been made to the Police, the school will consult the Police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others and in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

In some cases, it may become clear very quickly, that the Police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, the school will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim and alleged perpetrator, as required.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), it will be important for the DSL, or a Deputy DSL, to work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school takes do not jeopardise the police investigation. The DSL will consult the Police in the event of any queries. *KCSiE, 2023* states that "The police will help and support the school or college as much as they can (within the constraints of any legal restrictions)".

¹⁷ www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/safeguarding-children/i-work-with-children-and-young-people/practitioner-escalation-protocol

The school will also be informed by the Police or Children's Social Care about referrals made directly to those agencies from other sources (e.g. family members, family friends, parents of other children) in relation to alleged sexual offences or harmful sexual behaviours displayed by pupils inside and/or outside school.

In all such circumstances, the school may be required to attend a strategy meeting under WS inter-agency child protection procedures in order to facilitate risk management and planning with other agencies.

The school is committed to participating in plans to provide pupils who are at risk from other children and those pupils who may present a risk to other children, with appropriate services to address any concerns and, wherever possible, to facilitate ongoing access to education in school for all children concerned, subject to appropriate risk assessments and risk management plans.

Subsequent considerations

The needs and wishes of the victim should continue to be paramount (along with protecting the child) as the case progresses. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.

Similarly, the alleged perpetrator(s) has an ongoing right to an education and should be able to continue in their normal routine, subject to the ongoing risk assessment and the needs of the victim.

Where a pupil is subject to bail, with or without conditions, after a first court appearance; or is released under investigation (RUI), the school will work with Children's Social Care and the Police to manage any implications and safeguard all pupils concerned without jeopardising the Police investigation. In seeking to develop a balanced set of arrangements that meet the needs of all pupils concerned, particular regard will be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim within the school; the potential for the suspected pupil to intimidate the victim or a witness; and the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life etc.)

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. The school will not wait for the outcome, or even the start, of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children in the school, subject to the risk assessment as above.

If a student is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all pupils and consider any suitable action in line with the *Behaviour Policy*. This process will include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator remains at the school along with the victim, the school will meet with the perpetrator and her/his parents/carers to revisit and reiterate in writing, expectations of them in terms of future behaviour and complying with any restrictions and arrangements put in place to safeguard the victim and other pupils.

In the light of possible publicity, speculation and interest within the pupil and parent body, the school will consider any other measures necessary to safeguard both the victim and perpetrator, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

In respect of a not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with a criminal prosecution, the school recognises that this will likely be traumatic for the victim and will continue to offer

support. The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

As with all other safeguarding concerns about pupils, all discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider whether the child and/or the person who made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and the allegation was a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Social Care may be appropriate.

If a report is found to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate in accordance with the *Behaviour Policy*.

Ongoing response

Support will be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The needs and wishes of the victim will be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority will be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.

The school recognises that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Pupils that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse will be supported to access specialist NHS support from a *Sexual Assault Referral Centre* (SARC). SARCs offer confidential and non-judgemental support to victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. They provide medical, practical, and emotional care and advice to all children and adults, regardless of when the incident occurred.

Other support can include early help and referral to Children's Social Care; emotional and practical support for victims from Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors in the specialist sexual violence sector and/or provision of a designated trusted adult in the school of the pupil's choice, where reasonably possible, to talk to about their needs. Every effort will be made to avoid isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, but it is recognised that there may be times when a victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. The school will provide a physical space for the victim to withdraw.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will consider any suitable sanctions in light of the *Behaviour Policy*, including consideration of Permanent Exclusion. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault by penetration will constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils).

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand it needs to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and/or materials. Advice will be taken, as appropriate, from Children's Social Care, specialist sexual violence services and the Police.

If a perpetrator (alleged or convicted) does move to another educational institution (for any reason), the school will make the new educational institution aware of any ongoing support needs and, where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The DSL will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

Sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos

Children and young people who share nude and semi-nude images and videos of themselves or their peers are breaking the law. However, as highlighted in national guidance, it is important to avoid criminalising young people unnecessarily. The primary concern at all times will be the welfare and protection of the children involved. The school will work in partnership with external agencies with a view to responding proportionately to the circumstances of any incident.

The school will act in accordance with the advice endorsed by the DfE [Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes - Advice for education settings working with children and young people](#), UK Council for Child Internet Safety, 2020.

The sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos by young people is a safeguarding issue and can be a sign that children are at risk. Pupils being coerced or pressurised by other children to create and share such images is a form of sexual harassment and can also be part of a wider process of child-on-child abuse, grooming, criminal and/or sexual exploitation.

However, the school also recognises that children and young people's motivation for sharing nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can also include flirting, developing trust in a romantic relationship, seeking attention for a 'joke' or because they are too young to understand the risks involved in doing so. Although technically an offence, such sharing of material of that nature is referred to as 'experimental' and it is usually not necessary or appropriate to criminalise young people in those circumstances.

Although there are clear risks associated with such behaviour and those children are likely to need support, it is unlikely they have any intention to cause harm or distress to anybody; whereas children and young people who have been pressured to share nude and semi-nude images are more likely to report negative consequences.

The UKCIS guidance named above highlights that *“Addressing sensitive issues promotes a whole setting approach to safeguarding, giving children and young people the space to explore key issues and the confidence to seek the support of adults should they encounter problems. It is important to recognise how difficult it may be for children and young people to challenge or deny their peers' requests for images, especially those to whom they are attracted or whose approval they seek. It may also be extremely difficult for them to ask adults for help. Children and young people may have made a decision they are worried about and may find it difficult or embarrassing to ask for help. It is essential that lessons help children and young people develop the confidence they may need to put their skills and strategies into action”*.

This school is committed to providing an emotionally safe learning environment in order for

children to be able to explore issues and ask staff for help when they need it. Staff are trained and expected to respond to disclosures of concern about sharing nudes or semi-nude images and/or videos in the same way they respond to all other disclosures of child protection issues, as set out in this policy.

The school also recognises that a child's circumstances, background or sexuality may make them additionally vulnerable to wanting to share nude and semi-nude images and/or videos consensually and/or to being pressured, manipulated or coerced into doing so. Those factors may include:

- being in care;
- having special educational needs or disability;
- having been a victim of abuse;
- having less direct contact with parents;
- lacking positive role models at home.

Where there are wider concerns about the care and welfare of a child or young person who has shared indecent images, consideration will be given to referring to Children's Social Care.

Staff are trained to be vigilant and to notice and record any concerns about young people sending and receiving indecent images, which includes listening to what young people say to each other and to staff. In addition to reporting disclosures, staff are expected to report any evidence or suspicion about pupils sharing nude and semi-nude images and/or videos with other pupils or anybody else outside the school to the DSL as with all other safeguarding issues and concerns. Staff will not make their own judgements about whether any such issue is serious enough to warrant a report to the DSL. What may seem like less serious concerns to an individual member of staff may be more significant when considered in the light of other information known to the DSL, of which the member of staff may not be aware.

If staff become concerned about the possible sharing of indecent images of children in relation to a device in the possession of a pupil (e.g. mobile phone, tablet), the member of staff will secure the device by confiscating it. This is consistent with [Searching, Screening and Confiscation - Advice for schools, \(DfE July 2022\)](#) p17, 'Items found as a result of a search'.

Staff will not look at or print any indecent images. The confiscated device will be passed immediately to the DSL (see 'Viewing the imagery' below).

The DSL will discuss the concerns with appropriate staff and speak to young people involved, as appropriate. Parents/carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process, unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of significant harm.

In the event of a young person requesting that the school does not inform her/his parents/carers about an incident involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images of themselves or other children the DSL will need to consider issues in relation to Gillick competency and the Fraser guidelines in making a judgement. (See links above.)

If, at any point in the process, there is concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made immediately to Children's Social Care and/or the Police via the Front Door.

The Police will always be informed when there is reason to believe that indecent images involve sexual acts and/or any child in the imagery is under 13 years of age, as children under the age of 13 are unable to consent to sexual activity.

With reference to the definitions in *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes - Advice for education setting*

working with children and young people, as above, the DSL will make a judgement about whether a reported incident of sharing nude or semi-nude images and/or videos is 'experimental' or 'aggravated'.

Aggravated incidents involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of nude and semi-nude images and videos of children, produced by children under 18 years old. These include the involvement of adult offenders. e.g. adults attempting to develop 'relationships' by grooming children and young people and/or soliciting children to create and send indecent images to them; criminal or abusive behaviour by young people such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, deception or exploitation; malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts such as break ups or fights among friends, coercion; an imbalance of power e.g. an older pupil pressurising a younger or vulnerable pupil to create or share an indecent image, or reckless creation, sending or showing of images without the knowledge, or against the will, of a young person who is pictured, causing that person harm.

Where there are abusive and/or aggravating factors, the school will always refer incidents to the Front Door for advice about whether or not a response by the Police and/or Children's Social Care is required. This will facilitate consideration of whether:

- there are any offences that warrant a Police investigation;
- child protection procedures need to be invoked;
- parents/carers require support in order to safeguard their children;
- a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting is required;
- any of the perpetrators and/or victims require additional support. This may require the initiation of the Early Help Pathway to Change process and the offer of early help services.

Examples of aggravated incidents include:

- evidence of adult involvement in acquiring, creating or disseminating indecent images of young people (possibly by an adult pretending to be a young person known to the victim);
- evidence of coercing, intimidating, bullying, threatening and/or extortion of pupils by one or more other pupil to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- pressure applied to several pupils (e.g. all female pupils in a class or year group) to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- pressurising a pupil who does not have the capacity to consent (e.g. due to their age, level of understanding or special educational needs) or with additional vulnerability to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- dissemination of indecent images of young people to a significant number of others with an intention to cause harm or distress (possibly as an act of so-called 'revenge porn', bullying or exploitation);
- where what is known about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage or are violent;
- where sharing of indecent images places a young person is at immediate risk of harm, for example the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

The DSL will make a judgement about whether a situation in which the non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos with a small number of others in a known friendship group with no previous concerns, constitutes an aggravated incident or whether the school is able to contain the situation in partnership with all parents/carers of the pupils involved, arrange for the parents to ensure that all indecent images are deleted and that the young people involved learn from the incident, in order to keep themselves safe in future.

In the latter instance, the DSL will usually consult with the Police and/or Children's Social Care through the Front Door to check that no other relevant information is held by those agencies and to ensure an agreed response is documented before proceeding.

Viewing the imagery - adults should **not** view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible, the DSL's responses to incidents will be based on what they have been told about the content of the imagery.

Any decision to view imagery will be based on the DSL's professional judgement. Imagery will never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to a pupil.

If a decision is made to view potentially indecent images, the DSL will be satisfied that viewing:

- is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved);
- is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent/carer in making a report;
- is unavoidable because a young person has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a school device or network.

If it is necessary to view the imagery then the DSL will:

- never copy, print, share, store or save the image(s) because to do so is illegal. If that has already happened, the Police will be contacted for advice and to explain the circumstances;
- discuss and agree the decision to do so beforehand with the Headteacher, Children's Social Care or the Children and Families Front Door Education Lead;
- ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL or Deputy DSL with delegated authority from the headteacher;
- ensure viewing takes place with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the headteacher, another DSL or a member of SLT. The other staff member does not need to view the images;
- wherever possible ensure viewing takes place on school premises, ideally in the headteacher or DSL's office;
- ensure wherever possible that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery;
- record how and why the decision was made to view the imagery in the pupil's safeguarding record, including who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions.
- Ensure the record is signed and dated and meets any wider standards such as those set out in statutory safeguarding guidance and WS policies and procedures;
- if any devices need to be taken and passed on to the Police, the device(s) will be confiscated and the Police will be called. The device will be disconnected from Wi-Fi and data and turned off immediately to avoid imagery being removed from the device remotely through a cloud storage service. The device(s) will be secured, for example, in a locked cupboard or safe, until the Police are able to collect it from school.

Deletion of images - if the school has decided that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given in consultation with parents/carers to deleting nude and semi-nude images and videos of children from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery.

32. Serious Violence

All staff are made aware of indicators that children may be at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime and are trained to record and report any concern about children at risk of, or involved in perpetrating, serious violence, as with any other safeguarding concern. Indicators may include increased absence, 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 could also

indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal gangs and/or criminal exploitation.

All staff are trained to be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

33. Extra-familial Harm (Contextual Safeguarding)

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors both outside children's home environments and outside school and/or can occur between children outside the school. The DSL, Deputy DSLs and all staff will consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. Contextual safeguarding means that assessments of children should consider wider environmental factors present in a child's life which are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Staff will listen to children and be vigilant about any signs or indicators that would suggest children may be at risk in the community and/or online and will share intelligence with the Police in order to prevent children suffering harm. Some extra-familial harms are likely to constitute significant harm and will therefore be referred to Children's Social Care as necessary. The school will provide as much information as possible when asked to do so as part of a police investigation and/or when making referrals to Children's Social Care, thus allowing any investigation or assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

34. Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a form of child abuse. Both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual and/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.

The victim may have been sexually and/or criminally exploited even if the sexual/criminal activity appears consensual. CSE and CCE do not always involve physical contact; they can also occur through the use of technology.

CSE and CCE can affect any child or young person, female or male, under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally give consent to have sex.

Sexual exploitation can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they may have created and posted on social media).

CSE is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to other criminal activity including trafficking and illegal drugs. Drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

Criminal exploitation of children can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence. It can be perpetrated

by individuals or groups; males or females; and young people or adults. It is typified by some form of power imbalance, in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. As well as age, the power imbalance can also be due to other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources.

Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual and/or criminal exploitation through grooming behaviour that may present as the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs, alcohol and sometimes accommodation.

Child criminal exploitation may include activities such as:

- a child travelling outside the area in which she/he lives in order to transport, distribute or sell drugs, or transport money, for others by whom they are being exploited. This form of criminal activity and exploitation is referred to as **county lines** (see below);
- a child committing crimes on behalf of, or at the behest of, others because they, their friends or relatives have been threatened, deceived or manipulated;
- a child being forced or manipulated to:
 - commit crime in order to settle actual or fabricated debts;
 - shoplift or pickpocket;
 - threaten other young people or adults;
 - commit acts of serious violence;
 - commit some form of vehicle crime;
 - work in a cannabis factory;
 - carry weapons or begin carrying a knife for protection;
- gang membership, which may lead to the child being exploited to do something illegal or dangerous in return for kudos/status in the gang;
- a child being encouraged or manipulated to commit crime via social media;
- a child receiving food, money, kudos or status in return for storing a weapon or drugs for others.

Adults need to be aware that both boys and girls can suffer criminal exploitation, though their experiences may differ. All children who suffer criminal exploitation are at greater risk of sexual exploitation.

All staff are trained to be vigilant about and report indicators of CSE and CCE including:

- children appearing with money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children in relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- children frequenting areas known for sex work and/or criminal activity;
- children who associate with gangs and/or become isolated from their peers/social networks;
- children who present with significant changes in emotional well-being;
- children receiving excessive texts/phone calls;
- multiple callers (unknown adults or peers) to children;
- concerning use of internet or other social media by children;
- increasing secretiveness around children's behaviours;
- children presenting inappropriate sexualised behaviour for their age and/or with sexually transmitted infections and/or becoming pregnant;
- children self-harming or presenting with significant changes in their emotional well-being;
- children arriving at school or returning home under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- children who regularly miss school or education, have unexplained absences or do not take part in education;
- children being exposed to or perpetrating serious levels of violence and/or being manipulated or forced into excessive violence towards others by somebody who is exploiting them;¹⁸

¹⁸ For further information see [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - DfE, March 2015](#)

- evidence or suspicions of children suffering physical or sexual assault.

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation and/or criminal exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited and child sexual and criminal exploitation can occur without any of these issues:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually and/or criminally exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work and/or other criminal activity;
- Having a physical or learning disability; and
- Being looked after (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories);
- Issues/anxieties about sexual identity.

The school teaches children about consent and the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual and criminal exploitation is that the child often does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see her/himself as a victim. The child may initially resent what she/he perceives as interference by staff but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are trained to report all concerns about CSE and CCE immediately to the DSL. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to Children's Social Care via the Front Door (see sections 29 and 30 above) as with any other child protection concern and with particular reference to WS procedures. Parents will be consulted and notified as above.

Following a referral to Children's Social Care, a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting may be convened under WS inter-agency safeguarding procedures. The school will attend and share information at MACE meetings as required. Parents and young people will be invited to attend MACE meetings by Children's Social Care, as appropriate.

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas, within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of "deal line".

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation and may become victims of modern slavery as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Further information:

[County Lines Guidance - DfE - Sept 2018](#)
[The Children's Society - County lines toolkit](#)

35. So-called ‘honour based’ abuse

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. Such crimes include 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.

Staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered HBA.

All forms of so-called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and staff will record and report any concerns about a child who might be at risk of HBA to the DSL as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to the Police, and/or Children’s Social Care as with any other child protection concern and may also contact the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or via email at fmu@fco.gov.uk for advice as necessary.

Further information: [Multi-agency guidance for dealing with forced marriage - Gov.uk](#)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is a criminal offence and child abuse. It is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls and will be treated as such by the school. FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress with long-lasting harmful consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age though it typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old. However, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years’ imprisonment or a fine, or both. It is also an offence for a UK national or UK resident to perform FGM abroad, even in countries where it is not illegal, to assist a girl to perform FGM on herself outside the UK and to assist, from outside the UK, a non-UK resident in carrying out FGM on a UK national or UK resident outside the UK.¹⁹

School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM or they suspect she may already have suffered FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other child protection concern. The DSL will discuss the concern with Children’s Social Care with a view to making a referral and will inform the Police, as appropriate.

Factors that might indicate a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- Child’s family have a low level of integration into UK society;
- Child’s mother and/or sister have/has undergone FGM;
- FGM is known to be practised in the family’s country of origin;

¹⁹ See [Female Genital Mutilation guidelines - DfE](#) for further information.

- Child is withdrawn from PSHE;
- It is known that a female elder from the family's country of origin is visiting the family;
- The child is being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin;
- Staff hear or overhear talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman.

Indications that FGM may already have taken place may include a child:

- having difficulty or looking uncomfortable when walking, sitting or standing;
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating;
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems;
- having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems;
- having prolonged or repeated absences from school, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return;
- being reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations;
- confiding in a member of staff without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear;
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

Teachers are subject to a statutory duty defined by Section 5B of the *Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003* (as inserted by section 74 of the *Serious Crime Act 2015*) to report to the Police personally where they discover (e.g. by means of a disclosure) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18. This is known as mandatory reporting. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence and they should not examine pupils (unlike in the medical profession where an observation may be made). Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation - Procedural information](#).

Teachers in that situation will record their concerns and inform the DSL, who will support the teacher in making a direct report to the Police by calling 101 or, where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, by dialling 999 immediately. In any case, reports to the Police will be made as soon as possible after the teacher discovers a child has suffered FGM and by the close of the working day at the latest. A child protection referral will also be made to Children's Social Care as soon as possible after the report to the Police and also by the close of the working day at the latest.

The duty to report to the Police does not apply to children who a teacher suspects may be at risk of FGM (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 will record their concerns and inform the DSL in the usual way.

Further information about FGM can be found at: [FGM-The Facts - Gov.UK](#).

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

In a forced marriage, children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. School staff will be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014, forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under section 121 of the *Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (revised 2023)*.²⁰

36. Protecting Children from Radicalisation and Extremism

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (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**.

Some children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school’s wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. As such, the DSL is responsible for the school’s strategy for protecting children from those risks.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including 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. Even very young children have been exposed, in rare circumstances, to extremism at home and elsewhere, including online.

As children get older, they look for adventure and excitement and they may start to ask questions about their identity and belonging. During that stage of their development they are vulnerable to extremist groups that may claim to offer answers, identity and a social network apparently providing a sense of belonging. Many of those extremist groups make sophisticated use of the internet and social media to target young people and spread their ideology, making young people more vulnerable to being influenced by extremist ideas. Young people who feel isolated or disaffected in some way are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation as they are to other forms of abuse and exploitation.

The school has defined responsibilities to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school.

During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. The school is committed to preventing pupils from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The school promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing pupils with opportunities through the curriculum to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and to learn how to discuss and debate points of view and by ensuring that all pupils are valued and listened to within school.

School staff receive training that provides them with both the information they need to understand the risks affecting children and young people in this area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and how to support them. Staff are trained to report all concerns about possible radicalisation and extremism to the DSL immediately as they would any other safeguarding concern, identifying early indicators of possible radicalisation including changes in behaviour and attitudes to

²⁰ See www.gov.uk/forced-marriage and [Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage - Gov.UK](#) for further information.

learning and expressions of interest in extremist ideas along with a tolerance towards potential violence to certain members of society.

The school recognises the importance of providing a safe space for children to discuss controversial issues and building their resilience and the critical thinking skills they need in order to challenge extremist perspectives. However, the DSL/DDSL will make appropriate referrals to the Police PREVENT team and Channel programme in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

As a Channel partner, the school may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred, to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support.

The school will discuss any concerns about possible radicalisation identified in school with a child's parents/carers as with any other safeguarding or child protection issue unless there is reason to believe that doing so would place the child at risk; the school will also support parents/carers who raise concerns about their children being vulnerable to radicalisation. Subject to consultation with the Police PREVENT team and in the interests of making proportionate responses, the school may offer support to children and their families through the provision of early help as appropriate.

The school expects all staff, volunteers, governors, visiting practitioners, contractors and individuals or agencies that hire school premises to behave in accordance with the school's *Staff Code of Conduct*. It will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on school premises or at school events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

Parents and staff may find the website www.educateagainsthate.com informative and useful. The website is designed to equip school leaders, teachers and parents with the information, tools and resources they need to recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people and how best to support them. The website provides information on training resources for teachers, staff and school leaders.

As part of the school's overall safeguarding arrangements and ongoing action plan for improvement, the DSL will consider identified local issues; intelligence from pupils, parents, staff and partner agencies, along with new information from national issues and learning in order to review practice and procedures so as to keep pupils safe.

Referrals to the Prevent team will be made via safeinwarwickshire.com/prevent, from where a Prevent Referral Form can be downloaded by clicking the button.

37. Looked after children, previously looked after children and children who have a social worker

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Children who were previously looked after potentially remain vulnerable. All schools should consider extra pastoral support for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children and previously looked after children safe and ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children and the DSL hold details of the social workers for all looked after/previously looked after children as well as the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for looked after children. The DSL will work closely with the designated teacher to monitor the progress of all looked after and previously looked after children in order to ensure they receive the appropriate pastoral and academic support to promote their welfare and attainment.

Children with a social worker

The school recognises that when a child has a social worker, that is an indicator that she/he may be more vulnerable to harm than other children as well as facing barriers to educational attainment in relation to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health issues.

The school will take those issues and needs into account when making plans to support children who have a social worker. The school will also work with the virtual school head to promote the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker.

Care leavers

Local authorities have ongoing responsibilities to young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. That includes keeping in touch with them, preparing an assessment of their needs and appointing a Personal Advisor who develops a pathway plan with the young person. This plan describes how the LA will support the care leaver to participate in education or training. The DSL will have details of the Local Authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support all care leavers; and should liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting a care leaver.

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a LA) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (*under 18 if the child has a disability*) by someone other than a parent or close relative²¹, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Children looked after by the LA or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify who has parental responsibility for the child and the relationship of the adults accompanying the child who is being registered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture; a private fostering arrangement may start at any age.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported, looked after and remain safe and well, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the LA, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect; have been trafficked; are sexually or criminally exploited; or suffer modern-day slavery.

²¹ A close relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform Children's Social Care in the relevant LA at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to Children's Social Care in the LA where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement.

School staff are expected to notify the DSL when they become aware of, or suspect, private fostering arrangements. The DSL will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school will also fulfil its duty to inform the LA of the private fostering arrangement.

38. 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 or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse between family members at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Exposure to domestic abuse/violence can have a detrimental and long-term impact on a child's health, well-being, development and ability to learn. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse based on the [existing cross-government definition](#).

'Abusive behaviour' is defined in the act as any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

For the definition to apply, both parties must be aged 16 or over and 'personally connected'.

'Personally connected' is defined in the act as parties who:

- are married to each other;
- are civil partners of each other;
- have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child;
- are relatives.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. The Act recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. Statutory obligations to victims of domestic

abuse are afforded to children too.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse and they are related to the abusive person. The definition can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk.

All concerns about children being affected by domestic abuse will be reported to the DSL as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will respond to the report by consulting Children's Social Care in order to establish whether a referral is required or if the situation should be managed by discussion with parents/carers and possibly the offer of early help.

Operation Encompass

The school works in partnership with Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire Children's Services to support pupils who are affected by incidents of domestic violence and abuse. This scheme is called *Operation Encompass*.

When the Police attend any incident of domestic violence or abuse in any household in which a pupil of the school lives, the headteacher and/or DSL will receive a confidential and secure email on the morning of the next school day, notifying them simply that there has been an incident and that the child may need support.

On receipt of any such notification, the headteacher and/or DSL will ensure that teachers and other staff directly in contact with affected children support them with due kindness, care and sensitivity. In addition to supporting children, the process means that the school will also be able to offer parents and carers support as appropriate, if they reach out. The school will not routinely make contact with the parent to discuss the event nor initiate discussion about the incident with the child.

The information will be managed and stored with the utmost sensitivity and discretion consistent with all other confidential safeguarding records.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

39. Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL/DDSL refer any concerns to 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, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into Children's Social Care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

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 that 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. Children's services will be the lead agency for these

young people and the DSL/DDSL will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

40. Special Circumstances

Alternative Provision

KCSiE 2023 states that “Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.” The school will act in accordance with that guidance.

The DSL will maintain an overview of all pupils accessing any part of their learning from an alternative provider or via delivery online or offsite provided by any organisation or individual not employed by the school. The DSL will ensure that robust arrangements are in place for timely and effective two-way sharing of safeguarding information - including records of all safeguarding concerns - between the school and alternative/external providers.

The DSL will also take responsibility for ensuring that robust procedures are in place to confirm attendance and to enable the swift reporting of non-attendance and children going missing from alternative/external providers at any time when they should be with that provider. The DSL will also ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place in order to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of all safeguarding arrangements that alternative/external providers have in place.

Work Experience²²

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervising pupils on work experience, which are in accordance with the guidance in *KCSiE 2023*.

Children staying with host families

The school may arrange for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in *KCSiE 2023*, Annex D to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the LA to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

It is not possible for schools to obtain criminal record information from the DBS about adults abroad. Where pupils stay with families abroad, we will agree with partner schools a shared understanding of the arrangements in place. Staff will use their professional judgement to satisfy themselves that the arrangements are appropriate to safeguard the pupils, which will include ensuring pupils understand who to contact should an emergency occur, or a situation arise which makes them feel uncomfortable. We will also make parents aware of these arrangements.

Children and the court system

²² Secondary schools only

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. The school will access guidance highlighted in *KCSiE, 2023*, which explains each step of the process and the support and special measures which 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 entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool²³ with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The school will seek to support pupils in this position through pastoral care, early help and discussions with parents/carers and other family members as appropriate.

41. Related safeguarding portfolio policies and procedures

- *Staff Code of Conduct (Staff Behaviour Policy)*
- *Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force*
- *Behaviour and Anti Bullying*
- *Child-on-Child Abuse*
- *Personal and intimate care*
- *Complaints procedure*
- *Whistleblowing*
- *SEND*
- *Safer recruitment and selection*
- *Managing allegations*
- *Grievance and disciplinary*
- *Online Safety*
- *Social Networking*
- *Missing Children procedures*

²³ Please see [Get help with child arrangements - justice.gov.uk](https://www.justice.gov.uk/get-help-with-child-arrangements).

Appendix 1 - Additional School Specific Safeguarding Information and Procedures

Any/all further safeguarding information and procedures specific to individual schools can be found under the above heading on each school's website and/or by request from the school.

Appendix 2 - Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools

The school's child protection and safeguarding responsibilities are inspected under the 'Leadership and Management' judgement in Ofsted inspections. The following standards may assist schools in evaluating their practice. They should be used jointly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Designated Governor for Safeguarding to ensure the school is effective in safeguarding and child protection matters.

Best practice schools:

1. have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
2. provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties;
3. work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
4. ensure all staff are able to identify children who may benefit from early help; provide co-ordinated offers of early help; and ensure that children receive the right help at the right time to address concerns and risks and prevent issues escalating;
5. are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby all members of staff report such cases to the DSL or, in their absence, a Deputy DSL, and are aware of Local Authority and WS procedures so that information is passed on effectively to the relevant professionals;
6. monitor children who have been identified as in need of early help or at risk; maintain clear records of pupils' progress and welfare *in a secure place*; maintain sound policies on confidentiality; provide appropriate information to other professionals and submit reports to, and attend, child protection conferences;
7. provide and support regular child protection training and updates for **all** school staff, governors and volunteers; ensure that DSLs attend refresher training every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date; ensure that targeted funding for this work is used solely for this purpose;
8. contribute to an inter-agency approach to safeguarding and child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;

9. use the curriculum to teach children about safeguarding to raise their awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to identify risk, know who they can talk to about anything which causes them concern and understand the importance of protecting others;
10. provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children in respect of child protection, relationships and behaviour and the school's approach to bullying;
11. have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying and child-on-child abuse - face to face, online, physical, verbal, sexual, prejudice-based and indirect - and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the school's position on this issue and who they can contact for support;
12. have a clear understanding of the signs and impact of racist, disability, homophobic, transphobic and teenage relationship abuse; and a clear commitment to identifying and challenging those forms of abuse in order to safeguard children and maintain the safeguarding culture of the school;
13. take particular care that pupils with SEN, disabilities and/or mental health difficulties in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills;
14. have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times, using the guidance set out in *KCSiE 2023* and WS inter-agency child protection procedures;
15. have a written whole school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which is produced, owned and regularly reviewed by all school staff, taking into account the views of children, parents/carers and governors, and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards;
16. ensure that specified information is passed on in a timely manner to the Local Authority and WS for monitoring purposes;
17. Have a Single Central Record in place that fully complies with the guidance in *KCSiE 2023*.

Appendix 3 - Reference Documents and Support & Advice Lines

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2023)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE 2023)
- *Warwickshire Safeguarding inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures* - <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/safeguarding-children/i-work-with-children-and-young-people/interagency-safeguarding-procedures>
- *Child Protection Record Keeping Guidance* (WCC Education Safeguarding Service)
- *What to do if You're Worried a Child is being Abused 2015 - Advice for Practitioners* (HMG 2015)
- *Children missing education - Statutory guidance for local authorities* (DfE 2016)
- *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes - Advice for education settings working with children and young people* (UK Council for Child Internet Safety 2020)

For advice and support about any safeguarding matter in school, please contact the Education Lead on 01926 418608 or email MASHeducationlead@warwickshire.gov.uk

For strategic advice and support about safeguarding matters in school, please contact: The Headteacher Coach on 01926 413625 or email carllewis@warwickshire.gov.uk

Integrated safeguarding training

For information about a range of integrated safeguarding training courses, please contact:

Heidi Saunders
Targeted Support Officer and Training Lead
07879 113776
heidisaunders@warwickshire.gov.uk

Sophie Morley
Training Administrator
01926 742601
07747 758712
sophiemorley@warwickshire.gov.uk

NSPCC helpline to provide support and guidance to any victims of sexual abuse in schools. This includes how to contact the police and report crimes if they wish. **0800 136 663**

Appendix 4 - Key Safeguarding Personnel in Schools

Key personnel in Birchwood Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Neil Coleman	email: coleman.n2@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Ella Webb	email: webb.e@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Neil Coleman	email: coleman.n2@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
Other staff members trained to undertake the functions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead	Laura Scotchmer Emma Haynes	email: scotchmer.l@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913 email: haynes.e@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
Mental Health Lead	Ella Webb	email: webb.e@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Ella Webb	email: webb.e@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Sue Hogben	email: hogben.s@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892913
Chair of School Standards Committee	Mike Potts	Email: potts.m@welearn365.com Tel: 01827892913

Key personnel in Budbrooke Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Corinne Thomas	email: thomas.c3@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Corinne Thomas	email: thomas.c3@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)	Ruth Fletcher	email: fletcher.r1@welearn365.com ; tel: 01926 492045
	Lisa Hopkins	email: Hopkins.l6@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045
	Sally Foreman	email: Martin.S6@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045
	Nikki Orton	email: Orton.n@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045
Mental Health Lead	Sally Martin	email: Martin.S6@welearn365.com Tel: 01926 492045
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Lisa Hopkins	email: Hopkins.l6@welearn365.com Tel: 01926 492045
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Liz Appleyard	email: Appleyard.e@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045
Chair of School Standards Committee	Liz Appleyard	email: Appleyard.e@welearn365.com tel: 01926 492045

Key personnel in Dordon Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Executive Headteacher	Moira Cross	email: cross.m2@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422 or 01827 872237 (Wood End)
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Sinead McGroarty	email: McGroarty.S1@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Luisa Counihan SENDCo	email: counihan.l@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422 or 01827 872237 (Wood End)
Mental Health Lead	Moira Cross	email: cross.m2@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422 or 01827 872237 (Wood End)
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Luisa Counihan	email:counihan.l@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Kirsty Clarke	email: clarke.k10@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422
Chair of School Standards Committee	Martin Eades	email: eades.m@welearn365.com tel: 01827 892422

Key personnel in Heathcote Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Steph Rowett	email: head2056@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Steph Rowett	email: head2056@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Kim Abernathy	email: Abernathy.k@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
	Anna Cowcher	email: cowcher.a@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
	Nick Harwood	email: harwood.n1@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
	Tabitha Bradburn	email: bradburn.t1@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
Mental Health Lead	Steph Rowett	email: head2056@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Tabitha Bradburn	email: bradburn.t1@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Ben Moses	email: moses.b@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330
Chair of School Standards Committee	James Stacey	email: Stacey.j2@welearn365.com tel: 01926 290330

Key personnel in Kingsway Community Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Byrne	email: headteacher@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs Sharon Byrne	email: headteacher@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Sophie Finch	email: Finch.S@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
Other staff members trained to undertake the functions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead	Alex Atkinson Lorna Connelly	email: Atkinson.A@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896 email: Connelly.L@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
Mental Health Lead	Mrs Sharon Byrne	email: headteacher@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Mrs Sharon Byrne	email: headteacher@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Helen Rufus	email: Rufus.H@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896
Chair of School Standards Committee	Helen Rufus	email: Rufus.H@kingswayprimaryschool.org tel: 01926 426896

Key personnel in The Polesworth School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Maura Favell	email: m.favell@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Katie Downing	email: k.downing@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	John White	email: john.white@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
Other staff members trained to undertake the functions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead	Becky Knight	email: b.knight@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
	Jacqui Bailey	email: j.bailey@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
	Julia Grigg	email: j.grigg@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
	Dawn Williams	email: d.williams@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
Mental Health Lead	John White	email: john.white@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Katie Downing	email:k.downing@thepolesworthschool.com tel: 01827 702205
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Jo Collinson	email: j.collinson@thepolesworthschoolgov.org tel: 01827 702205
Chair of School Standards Committee	Sue Eaton	Email s.eaton@thepolesworthschoolgov.org Tel: 01827 702205

Key personnel in Stratford-upon-Avon Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Humphriss	email: head2042@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs Gill Humphriss	email: head2042@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)	Mrs Lisa Chisholm Ms Tracey Parton Anna Slater	email: chisholm.l@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201 email: parton.t@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201 email: slater.a@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Mrs Gill Humphriss	email: head2042@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201
Mental Health Lead	Mrs Gill Humphriss	email: head2042@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Mrs Karen Kennedy	email: kennedy.k@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201
Chair of School Standards Committee	Jacqui O'Hanlon	email: ohanlon.j@welearn365.com tel: 01789 293201

Key personnel in Wood End Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Executive Headteacher	Moira Cross	email: cross.m2@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237 or 01827 892422 (Dordon)
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Joanne Smith (Associate Head)	email: Smith.J1@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Luisa Counihan (SENDCo)	email: counihan.l@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237 or 01827 892422 (Dordon)
Mental Health Lead	Joanne Smith (Associate Head)	email: Smith.J1@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Luisa Counihan (SENDCo)	email: counihan.l@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237 or 01827 892422 (Dordon)
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Kristy Clarke	email: Clarke.k10@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237
Chair of School Standards Committee	Martin Eades	email: eades.m@welearn365.com tel: 01827 872237

Key personnel in Woodloes Primary School

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Andy Mitchell	email: head5207@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Tina Lambert (to October 2023) Laura Morris (from October 2023)	email: lambert.t@welearn365.com morris.l9@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Andy Mitchell	email: head5207@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
Other staff members trained to undertake the functions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead	Victoria Liney Sarah Barlow Natalie Lyons	email: liney.v1@welearn365.com barlow.s1@welearn365.com lyons.n1@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
Mental Health Lead	Sunny Khaira	email: khaira.s1@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Natalie Lyons	email: lyons.n1@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Sue Robinson	email: robinson.s8@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491
Chair of School Standards Committee	Sue Robinson	email: robinson.s8@welearn365.com tel: 01926 497491