



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

**Agreed by:** The Board of Trustees June 2028

**Review Date:** July 2025 **Next Review Date:** July 2026

Author: JC/WP

Statutory Policy



## **Key personnel**

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for safeguarding is Catherine Greenwell**

Contact details: [safeguarding@baltonsborough.acexcellence.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@baltonsborough.acexcellence.co.uk) Tel: 01458850526

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) are Lauren Gittens, Trudy Fowler and Dani Tooth.**

Contact details: [safeguarding@baltonsborough.acexcellence.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@baltonsborough.acexcellence.co.uk) Tel: 01458850526

**The nominated safeguarding Local Advocate is Anne Moody.**

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**The Headteacher is: Catherine Greenwell**

[office@baltonsborough.acexcellence.co.uk](mailto:office@baltonsborough.acexcellence.co.uk) 01458850526

**The Chair of the Local Advocate Board is: Anne Moody**

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## **Who should use this policy?**

This policy will apply to all parents, pupils and staff of the Academies for Character and Excellence in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection.

This policy will be reviewed every year unless significant Safeguarding changes occur before the review date.

***Policy in respect of safeguarding and child protection is determined at Trust and local authority level. It is the responsibility of each school to***

*personalise and implement such policy. Each individual school is responsible for ensuring compliance with its Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures and policies and for publishing its own safeguarding and child protection policy in accordance with statutory requirements.*

# Responding to a concern about a child

## Where a young person alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation

- Listen to the child. Take their concerns seriously.
- Reassure the child that you will take action to keep them safe
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Make a written record of what the child tells you.
- Explain to the child what you are going to do next

## Discuss concerns with the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL/DDSL).

- The DSL at Baltonsborough Church of England School is Catherine Greenwell. The DDSLs are Lauren Gittens, Trudy Fowler and Dani Tooth.
- If the matter involves the DSL, it should be brought to the attention of Anne Moody (*Chair of Local Advocates*).
- A written record of the concern will be kept in the Child Protection section of the child's file.

A member of staff should contact Children's Social Care directly only in exceptional circumstances and

## The child is judged to be in real and immediate danger:

## There is a safeguarding concern: the matter should be referred to Children's Social Care

**SOMERSET** During Office Hours, Contact Children's Social Care on 0300 1232224.  
Out of hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team on line is : 0300 1232327

Non-emergency police :101

## There is not a safeguarding concern:

- The DSL will carefully consider if the child/family has any further needs which ought to be addressed.
- The DSL will consult with family and relevant agencies and undertake an Early Help Assessment if required.
- The member of staff who made the referral will be informed of the outcome.

## Children's Social Care will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the referral
- Decide (within 24 hours) on next steps
- Inform the referrer of the course of action that has been

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## **Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and require all staff, governors, contractors and volunteers to share this commitment.

We recognise that all children, regardless of age, disability, SEND, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us, children are aware of the adults they can talk to if they have a concern. When there are concerns for a child's welfare, we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies. We will ensure concerns are discussed with parents/carers first, unless we have reason to believe that by doing so would be contrary to the child's welfare. This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy underpins our safeguarding procedures and protocols.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership board (SSCP).

## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **Policy statement and principals**

The Academies for Character and Excellence (ACE) is committed to ensuring that consistent effective safeguarding procedures are in place promoting the welfare and wellbeing of our children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio which also include statements on: *Staff Code of Conduct, online safety, complaints procedure, intimate care policy and behaviour policy*

The school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for behaviour and safety, and leadership and management.

This policy is available on the school website and is included in the safeguarding induction.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- 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, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- Children who feel safe make more successful learners
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

## Policy aims

- To ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to, and know how to approach adults if they are experiencing difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.
- To ensure all staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors both in and outside of school; and abusers can be both adult/s to child/ren or child/ren to child/ren (child on child abuse). All staff (but especially the DSL or deputy) will be considering the context within which such incidents and/ or behaviours occur: familial or contextual.
- To ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and all staff will give full consideration to the use of appropriate assessments, resources and agency support when identifying the factors present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. (Familial or contextual.)
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other partnership agencies, especially the Police, health and social care and SSCP.
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including

verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance)<sup>1</sup>, and a single central record is kept for audit.

## Terminology

### The following terms

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- the process of providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside of the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- making sure 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 being 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.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

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

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## Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has informed the development of this policy:

- [Education Act 2002 Section 175 \(maintained schools only\)](#)
- [Education Act 2002 Section 157 \(Independent schools incl Academies and CTC's\)](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Teachers' Standards \(Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguarding Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)
- [Information Sharing 2018](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)
- [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)
- [Statutory Guidance on Alternative Provision](#)

## **Related Trust Policies**

The following ACE/School policies and procedures support the implementation of safeguarding in line with this document:

- Health and Safety Manual (including first aid)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- IT Policy (including AI provisions)
- Use of Mobile Phones
- Attendance Policy
- Exclusions Policy
  - Staff behaviour/code of conduct
  - Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
  - Behaviour
  - Personal and intimate care
  - Complaints procedure
  - Anti-Bullying
  - SEND
  - Managing allegations
  - Grievance and disciplinary
  - Staff/pupil online communication

## **Section 2 : Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Introduction**

We will follow the statutory guidance as set out in the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), and other associated

documents and guidance, relating to the roles, responsibilities and expectations for the following:

- The Academies for Character and Excellence ('The Trust')
- Local Advocate Boards
- The Headteacher
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- The deputy designated safeguarding lead/s (DDSL)
- Staff
- Visitors and contractors

These are summarised in figure 1 below, with detail in the following paragraphs:

*Figure 1 : Summary of Roles and responsibilities:*

ACE

The Trust's Board of Directors hold ultimate accountability for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements in each of its schools are effective and compliant with relevant legislation and guidance. The Trust is responsible for ensuring their school has robust policies and procedures in place to manage safeguarding (including the identification of a Designated Safeguarding Lead), support the Head and DSL, and holding them to account for delivering these effectively.

Local

The Local Advocate Board maintains an oversight of safeguarding at a local level, working with the headteacher to identify, review and – where appropriate escalate safeguarding issues in school. A safeguarding 'portfolio' advocate leads on this work through regular liaison with the Headteacher and DSL, and by feeding back to the local board and Trust.

Headteacher

Is accountable for the delivery of effective safeguarding policies and procedures across the school, and reporting on this to the Local Advocate Board Committee and Trust.

Designated Safeguarding  
Lead/Deputy DSL

Holds day to day responsibility for managing and co-ordinating safeguarding across the school, including case responsibility for child protection, child in need, look after children and early help.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for safeguarding, and are appropriately trained to identify and report concerns they have about the welfare of children

Visitors and Contractors

All visitors and contractors will be informed of, and bound by, safeguarding protocols and procedures when working in the school, or with children from the school.

The Trust (ACE) will:

- ensure each school appoints a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has received appropriate training for the role
- ensure that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- ensure that the school has an appropriate safeguarding child protection policy and procedures, including a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, that are consistent with Somerset Safeguarding Boards and statutory requirements. These are reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Headteacher and allegations against other children
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations
- ensure a training strategy is in place that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, code of conduct and the role of the DSL on induction, and appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the Somerset Safeguarding Board.
- ensure the DSL receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals.
- ensure that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's Safeguarding policy and code of conduct policy
- ensure that the school contributes to early help arrangements and inter agency working and plans
- provide a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of

- family/children are identified
- consider how pupils may be taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- ensure that local advocates receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic support to their schools on safeguarding (via the headteacher/DSL).
- ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority and Somerset Safeguarding Boards and national guidance.
- ensure schools conduct an annual 175/157 safeguarding audit and submit this to the local authority, including identification of actions for strengthening safeguarding in their setting.

The Local Advocate Board (LAB):

- works with the headteacher to review safeguarding arrangements in school, and identify any specific safeguarding risks or concerns at a local level
- escalates any concerns about safeguarding in school to the Trust's Safeguarding and Inclusion lead and/or the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding
- acts as a point of contact for any safeguarding concerns relating to the headteacher.

The Headteacher

- ensures that the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- 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 the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online

- School leaders and governors ensure that the child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken or services to be provided
- liaises with the designated officer or team in the local authority where an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- 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
- is appropriately trained, with updates every two years
- acts as a source of 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 needs and young carers
- has a working knowledge of DSCB processes
- makes staff aware of training courses and the latest policies on safeguarding
- has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and interventions
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Front Door service for advice and action
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. The pupil's social worker is also informed
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the Somerset safeguarding partnership.
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the safeguarding and child protection policy
- ensures that the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated

- annually
- liaises with the nominated governor and Headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the Headteacher) as appropriate
- keeps a record of staff attendance at safeguarding and child protection training
- makes the safeguarding and child protection policy available publicly, on the school's website or by other means
- ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- will contribute to and provide, with the Headteacher and Safeguarding governor, the 'Audit of Statutory Duties and Associated Responsibility' (S175/157 audit) to be submitted annually to the Education Safeguarding Team working on behalf Somerset Council.
- Overseeing and acting upon filtering and monitoring systems and reports for IT systems. Ensuring that a programme of regular checks is undertaken in these systems to demonstrate ongoing effectiveness
- Ensures appropriate safeguarding checks are conducted on any Alternative Provision providers that are attended by a pupil on roll at the school, in line with government guidance.

#### The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

- Is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, will carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

#### All School Staff:

- understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action
- consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child
- will be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect both familial and contextual and recognise that contextual harm can take a variety of different forms

- know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through delivery of 'Working together to Safeguard Children', and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the DSL or if necessary where the child is at immediate risk to the police or Front door.
- will be aware of the Case Resolution protocol or the duty to report concerns if the DSL fails to do so without reasonable cause
- are aware of the Early Help process and understand their role within it including identifying emerging problems for children who may benefit from an offer of Early Help, liaising with the DSL in the first instance and supporting other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment through information sharing. In some cases, staff may act as the Lead Professional in Early Help cases
- will provide a safe environment in which children can learn, and
- will be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously.
- Being aware of systems within school which support safeguarding e.g. safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, code of conduct, CME, online filtering, and monitoring
- Recognising that children missing or absent in education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Understand and adhere to the school's policies on use of mobile phones by staff and acceptable use of IT.

#### Visitors and Contractors

- All visitors and contractors will receive appropriate briefing and/or training in the school's safeguarding and child protection protocols and procedures. They will be required to follow said protocols and procedures at all times when working in the school and when working with pupils off site.

## **Section 3 : Principles and Guidance for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Everybody involved in the school, including staff, contractors and volunteers must recognise that any child may be vulnerable to harm, to maintain professional curiosity about the welfare of pupils at all times, and maintain an attitude of "It could happen here".

### **Supporting Children**

#### **Principles**

- We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses' violence may have experienced an adverse childhood experience (ACE) and may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth
- We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm
- We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn as well as exhibiting signs of mental health problems
- We understand the impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and education when experiencing difficulties, abuse and/or neglect.

#### **Our school will support all children by:**

- encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school
- responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress and anxiety
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support;
- liaising and working together with all other settings, support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- notifying MASH as soon as there is a significant concern
- providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information

is copied under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority

- children are taught to understand and manage risk through our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and through all aspects of school life. This includes online safety
- by accessing and utilising the necessary resources, guidance and toolkits to support the identification of children requiring mental health support, support services and assessments and the subsequent systems and processes, and
- reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

### **Prevention / Protection**

- We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

### **The school community will therefore:**

- work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to;
- include regular consultation with children e.g. through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying week, asking children to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes/playtimes;
- ensure that all children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help; in particular this will include anti-bullying work, information about child on child abuse (sexual harassment and sexual violence, consent), online-safety, road safety, pedestrian and cycle training; provide focussed activities to prepare key

year groups for transition to new settings and/or key stages e.g. more personal safety/independent travel; and

- ensure all staff, pupils and parent are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and the safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks have been shared.

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### **Keeping Children Safe In Education:**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) is statutory guidance for all schools which is issued by the Department for Education annually. Schools and colleges in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Designated Safeguarding lead will ensure all staff, local advocates and volunteers read KCSiE Part 1, Annex B and senior leaders read Part 2 annually and sign to say they read and understood it. In addition, KCSiE requires that

- all staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the school's safeguarding statement, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)<sup>2</sup>, safeguarding policy and child protection, behaviour policy, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(ies), and sign to say they have read, understood and will abide by it
- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection information, including online safety, at induction
- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, in line with advice from Somerset Safeguarding partnership which is regularly updated (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually
- all members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns

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<sup>2</sup> The code of conduct should include acceptable use of technology, staff & pupil relationship boundaries and communications, including the use of social media.

- all staff and LABs have annual training (Level 2 or LAB specific) in safeguarding and awareness, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse
- the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is made available via the school website or other means and that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy via the school handbook/newsletter/website. All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through the publication of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and reference to it on the school's website
- the school provides a coordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of a family are identified and contributes to early help arrangements with collaborative working with partner agencies where plans and assessments are recorded on the Early Help system.
- all staff will understand their role in the early help process, including indicators where early help may be needed including where a child:
  - has experienced multiple suspensions, and is at risk of permanent exclusion
  - has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
  - is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care;
- our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time, for example, by having evidence of DBS checks having been undertaken;
- community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, guidelines and procedures;
- the name of the designated members of staff for child protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy(ies), are clearly advertised in the school with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

### Confidentiality

- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 2018<sup>3</sup> is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.

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<sup>3</sup> The UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) is supplementary to the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (the GDPR) and replaces DPA 1998.

- Our school recognises that in order to effectively meet a child's needs, safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm the school must contribute to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and share information between professionals and agencies where there are concerns.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing
- However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, in this respect they are confidential and the Headteacher or DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff or professionals on a need to know basis
- We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to the Front Door with their parents' /carers consent unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will contact the Front Door consultation line or other safeguarding partners for advice
- In line with KCSiE, all children's safeguarding files will be kept confidential and stored securely. Safeguarding files will be kept separate from pupils' schools' files

### **Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils, the following standards of good practice underpin a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves 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 may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, online safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with

and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language

- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and collaboration with parents and professionals
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary directly to police or Front door.
- following the school's rules with regard to relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media

### **Abuse of position of trust**

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.

### **Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

We recognise that some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, children who have a special educational need, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. However, there are also a number of specific safeguarding concerns that we recognise our pupils may experience, including:

- child missing or absent from education
- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE)

- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- radicalisation
- youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking
- child on child abuse
- up-skirting
- serious violence
- sexual harassment

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 with communication needs

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse.

We also recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another.

### **Children Missing or Absent in Education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing or absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The DSL will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day in

conjunction with 'Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'<sup>4</sup>.

Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage

### **Helping children to keep themselves safe**

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and 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 and with the support of staff work out 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 also reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children, and pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

### **Support for those 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 recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSLs and to seek further support as appropriate including supervision.

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

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person 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 a 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

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<sup>4</sup> [CME Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#)

- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

### **Trust 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 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

### **Whistleblowing if a member of staff has concerns about a colleague**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff will be made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) following guidance in the Whistleblowing Policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call:

0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Whistle-blowing regarding the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Local Advocate Board whose contact details must be made readily available to staff.

### **Physical Intervention**

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering themselves or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness. Headteachers (or the most senior member of staff in school in the absence of the headteacher) must inform the parent/carer on the same day that a physical intervention was necessary and the reasons for this.

Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.

### **Allegations against staff**

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction<sup>5</sup>. We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff or staff may have concerns about another staff member.

If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headteacher<sup>6</sup>.

The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)<sup>7</sup> at the earliest opportunity and before taking any further action.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult the LADO as above, without notifying the Headteacher first. The process is show in the diagram below.

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction.

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to “Guidance for Safe Working Practice”

<sup>6</sup> Chair of Local Advocate Board in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher

<sup>7</sup> Duty LADO **0300 123 2224** or email [sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk)

1. All employees and volunteers must record in writing, any concerns they have about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff and share it with the Headteacher (or equivalent senior member of staff).



2. The Headteacher will make an assessment to determine if the matter is a 'low level concern' or an 'allegation' (this means that the concern may meet the harm threshold).



3. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for all 'allegations' and the relevant guidance will be followed. If the Headteacher needs advice or guidance they should contact the LADO. If the allegation is against the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO or Chair of the Local Advocate Board (LAB) directly.



4. Where concerns are considered to be 'low level' by the Headteacher, they should be managed in-line with part 4 of KCSiE and the wider school policies and procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may be involved in this process.



5. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, the person receiving the information will immediately inform the Chair of the Local Advocate Board who will consult the Trust's Safeguarding Lead / LADO as above, without notifying the Headteacher first.



6. In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of the Trust Board and the Trust CEO, with advice from the LADO and and LAB chair.

The school will follow the Somerset procedures for managing allegations against staff, procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and the school's Managing Allegations policy and procedures.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and the Trusts HR Lead in making this decision.

In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Trustees and the CEO with advice as above.

We have a procedure for managing the suspension of a contract for a community user in the event of an allegation arising in that context.

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.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation.

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. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension, the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and in the Trust's Code of Conduct policy and procedures

## **Safer recruitment**

Our Trust endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* together with the Somerset Board and the Trust's Staff Recruitment policy and procedures. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* can be obtained from the staffrooms, the office or the website.

The Trust's procedures in relation to safer recruitment are outlined in our safer recruitment policy. In summary, Safer recruitment means that applicants will be required to:

- 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 engaged in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted.

The school will also

- 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

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

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and staff code of conduct and identification of their child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the safeguarding and child protection policy and staff code of conduct.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The Trust maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

### Regulated Activity

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 *Keeping Children Safe in Education part three*.

### Volunteers

Volunteers, including governors 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.

### Work Experience

The Trust has procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education part three*. Children do not go on work experience from our Trust schools, but they do have other excursions which are risk assessed and all necessary safeguarding checks completed.

### Contractors or Consultants

The school checks the identity of all contractors or consultants working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity

## Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors or consultants, are asked to sign in and are given a 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 regulations 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.

## Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to

satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

### **Photography and images**

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

To protect pupils, we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- use only the pupil's first name with an image
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

### **Online Safety**

Our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, MSN, tumblr, snapchat and Instagram, to name but a few.

Unfortunately, some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Artificial Intelligence may also be used to create inappropriate or abusive message or images; the Trust will work with Heads, staff and pupils in the safe use of this fast developing technology.

Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

Children may also be subject to misinformation, disinformation (including

fake news) and conspiracy theories on-line. The school aims to address these issues in an age appropriate way through the IT curriculum and wider PSHE / Character education.

The school's **online safety policy**, which can be found on the school explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our sexual exploitation policy or child protection procedures.

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. Children will hand in mobile phones to the office on arrival at school. These will be kept locked in the safe until the end of the day and returned to the children.

Pupils are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated including an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

### **Online Safety - Filtering and Monitoring**

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that appropriate systems for filtering and monitoring of IT content are in place across the school, and these things are checked on an ongoing basis. As part of safeguarding training, all staff will be made aware of:

- The expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, e.g., part of their role is to monitor what's on pupils' screens
- How to report safeguarding and technical concerns, such as if:
  - They witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed
  - They are able to access unsuitable material
  - They are teaching topics that could create unusual activity on the filtering logs
  - There is failure in the software or abuse of the system
  - There are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks
  - They notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material

### **Staff/pupil relationships**

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic

communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation staff are not permitted to befriend children on Facebook or other on-line social media websites.

### **Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)<sup>8</sup>**

The practice of children sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace.

However, this online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of 18 is illegal.

Youth produced sexual imagery refers to both images and videos where;

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a safeguarding concern and in line with the UKCIS guidance 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'<sup>9</sup>, and 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident.'<sup>10</sup>

Cases where sexual imagery of people under 18 has been shared by adults and where sexual imagery of a person of any age has been shared by an adult to a child is child sexual abuse and should be responded to accordingly.

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the DSL as soon as possible. The member of staff should confiscate the

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<sup>8</sup> Youth refers to anyone under the age of 18

<sup>9</sup> [Sexting in schools and colleges](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident \(UCKIS\)](#)

device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off.

**Staff should not view, copy or print the youth produced sexual imagery.**

The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm. At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to Front door or the Police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to MASH/Police if;

- The incident involves an adult;
- There is good reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special education needs);
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are violent;
- The imagery involves sexual acts;
- The imagery involves anyone aged 12 or under;
- There is reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply then the DSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to pupils involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher, to respond to the incident without escalation to MASH or the police. Such decisions will be recorded.

In applying judgement, the DSL will consider if;

- there is a significant age difference between the sender/receiver;
- there is any coercion or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver;
- the imagery was shared and received with the knowledge of the child in the imagery;
- the child is more vulnerable than usual i.e. at risk;
- there is a significant impact on the children involved;

- the image is of a severe or extreme nature;
- the child involved understands consent;
- the situation is isolated or if the image been more widely distributed;
- there other circumstances relating to either the sender or recipient that may add cause for concern i.e. difficult home circumstances;
- the children have been involved in incidents relating to youth produced imagery before

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be escalated according to our child protection procedures, including reporting to the police or Front Door. Otherwise, the situation will be managed within the school.

The DSL will record all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery, including both the actions taken, actions not taken, reasons for doing so and the resolution in line with safeguarding recording procedures.

## Section 4: Child protection procedures

### Recognising abuse

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". We also recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in the 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Abuse and Neglect may also take place outside of the home, contextual safeguarding, and this may include (but not limited to), sexual exploitation criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, radicalisation.

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.

Further information about the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, (familial and contextual) and indicators that a child may be being abused can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1

### Four categories of abuse

#### **1. 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).

## **2. Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber 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.

## **3. Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **4. 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 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 these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

#### Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racist, homophobic, gender-related bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

#### Racist Incidents

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately, and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents and report them to both the Strategic Board and the Local Authority

#### Child on Child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children and it can happen both inside or outside of school or on-line. It is important that all staff recognise the signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify and respond to reports.

As a Trust we operate a zero tolerance approach to abuse and it should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up', or 'boys being boys' or 'girls being girls' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and unsafe environment for children.

As a Trust we recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable.

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

- Bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudiced-based discriminatory bullying);
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise physical harm (this may include an on-line element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an on-line element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and on-line 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 nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- Up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this includes activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an on-line element).

As a Trust all our schools have procedures to help minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and there are clear systems in place for children to confidently report abuse. We work closely with our collaborative partners, such as the NSPCC and CAP to ensure that our children are safe. Our DSL's are trained to support both the victim and the perpetrator and any other child affected by child on child abuse will be supported. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous), can

be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

As a Trust we also recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse in our schools, such abuse may be taking place and is simply not being reported. Research indicates that young people rarely disclose child-on-child abuse and if they do, it is likely to be to their friends. Therefore, our school will also educate pupils in how to support their friends if they are concerned about them, that they should talk to a trusted adult in the school and what services they can contact for further advice.

Where a concern regarding child-on-child abuse has been disclosed to the DSL(s), advice and guidance will be sought from Front Door and where it is clear a crime has been committed or there is a risk of a crime being committed the police will be contacted.

## **Reporting concerns of potential abuse**

**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, neglected or exploited 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, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- 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
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

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.

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, and they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed.

We recognise that the signs 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. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding.

In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way

## **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 anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric 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".

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely 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
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

### **Responding**

Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing, see FLOW CHART A. Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.

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

If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice in FLOW CHART A below and in the table below 'pupil making a disclosure'.

All concerns however small must be recorded and shared with the DSL as this information could provide the 'missing' piece of the bigger picture of the lived experience for the child.

## FLOW CHART A

1. Offer reassurance, listen and take seriously what is being said. Never promise to keep secrets or be persuaded by the child, young person or their family not to take action.



2. Recognise that it is not your job to investigate, verify what is being said or examine the individual disclosing; this is the statutory responsibility of the child protection services and/or the Police. However, it is important to ascertain relevant information.



3. Explain the process to the individual; that you will need to pass this information on, to whom, the reasons why and possible actions.



4. Any concerns will be recorded, including the child's voice, body map (if necessary) and other relevant information in line with our schools recording procedure. Concerns may also be shared with the DSL/DDSL verbally, these conversations will also be recorded in writing

### Children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Local Committees and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

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

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be 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. The signs they have noticed 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. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

All Staff should use the CPOMS programme for reporting and recording safeguarding logs to record these early concerns. 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 process

If a pupil discloses to you

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, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they respond quickly the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, 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.

During their conversations with the pupil's staff will:

- allow them 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 so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- 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 the pupil’s mother thinks about all this.
- Do remember your TED questions: **Tell me.... Explain to me..... Describe to me.....**
- 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. The pupil may agree to go to see the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **record of concern form** and hand it to the designated person
- seek support if they feel distressed

### Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from MASH.

### Enquiry to Front Door

The DSL will make an enquiry to the Front Door, with parental consent, however if parental consent is not given advice will be sought if it is believed

that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that an enquiry is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct enquiry to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

## Section 5: Specific Safeguarding and Child protection issues

### Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff, who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

### Exploitation (incl. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance could be due to age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and /or access to economic or other resources. The abuse could be linked to an exchange for something the victim perceives that they need or want and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increase status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and adults or children (who themselves may be experiencing exploitation). The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It may involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Victims can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different from boys, the indicators may not be the same and both boys and girls that are being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

CSE can occur over time or be a one off occurrence. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex.

Child Criminal Exploitation can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be force or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in the exporting of 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'.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited should be passed without delay to the DSL. Our School is aware there is a clear link between regular school absence/truanting, CSE and CCE. Staff should consider a child to be at potential CSE/CCE risk in the case of regular school absence/truanting and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

The DSL will use the Devon Children and Families Partnership Adolescent Safety Framework Safer Me Assessment<sup>11</sup> on all occasions when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited. The Safer Me Assessment will indicate to the DSL whether a Safer Me Early Help approach or referral to the Exploitation Hub is required. If the DSL is in any doubt they will contact MASH consultation.

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<sup>11</sup> [DCFP Adolescent Safety Framework info and Safer Me Assessment](#)

In all cases if the assessment identified any level of concern the DSL should contact their local MACE<sup>12</sup> (Missing & Child Exploitation) and email the completed Safer Me assessment along with a MASH enquiry form. If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 999.

Our School is aware that a child often is not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. As a consequence, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse.

Our School includes the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation in the PHSE and RSE curriculum. Pupils will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to CSE/CCE, including online, and knowing how and where to get help

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. A mandatory reporting duty requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> [DCFP MACE guidance](#)

<sup>13</sup> [FGM procedural information](#)

The duty applies to all persons in school who is employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether or not they have qualified teacher status. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, however the DSL should be informed.

If a teacher is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the teacher should personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. The report should be made by the close of the next working day.

School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM. Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported as per the School's child protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community.

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

There are no circumstances in which a teacher or other member of staff should examine a girl.

## **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.

Children may be married at a very young age and well below the age of consent in England. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. (See *school* or *DSCB guidance for further information*).

School staff should never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Contact should be made with MASH.

<https://www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk/>

## **Honour-based Abuse**

Honour based abuse (HBA) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Honour based abuse might be committed against people who;

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage;
- want to get out of a forced marriage;
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others.

### One Chance Rule

All staff are aware of the 'One Chance' Rule' in relation to forced marriage, FGM and HBV. Staff recognise they may only have one chance' to speak to a pupil who is a potential victim and have just one chance to save a life.

### **Radicalisation and Extremism**

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

Our school seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements. School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism.

Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL. They should then follow normal safeguarding procedures. If the matter is urgent then Devon & Cornwall Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In non-urgent cases where police advice is sought then dial 101. The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

**Further information on Preventing Radicalisation'** has been included in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* in line with:

**Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales**, published in March 2015 as part as the UK's Counter Terrorism strategy. (p.10-15 for schools, registered childcare providers and further education).

### **The Prevent Duty, Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers**

published in June 2015. This non-statutory departmental advice is for governing bodies, Headteachers / Principals, Designated Safeguarding Leads and school staff. The document clarifies what the *prevent* duty means for schools and what actions are necessary to demonstrate compliance with the duty. It also provides sources of information, advice and support.

*(See school or DSCB guidance for further information).*

<https://www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk/>

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, and religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence.

Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse.

### **Mental Health**

Staff will be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Whilst school recognise that only appropriately trained professionals can diagnose mental health problems; staff are able to make day to day observations of children and identify such behaviour that may

suggest they are experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

How traumatic ACE's and experiences of abuse and neglect can impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and education through to adolescence and adulthood will be covered in safeguarding awareness training and updates. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern they will share this with the DSL or deputy. School will also refer to the mental health and behaviour in schools guidance<sup>14</sup>

[Senior Mental Health Lead Training](#)

[Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#)

[Rise Above: Resources for School from Public Health England #esafety](#)

[Every Interaction Matters Webinar](#)

[Wellbeing for Education Recovery](#)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

## **Private fostering arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that schools are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country

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<sup>14</sup> [Mental health and behaviour in schools: guidance](#)

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the DSL will notify MASH of the circumstances. (See *school* or *DSCB* guidance for further information).

<https://www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk/>

## Confidentiality and sharing information

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

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher/Executive Head or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018<sup>15</sup> and HM Government Information Sharing and Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, July 2018

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate

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<sup>15</sup> The UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) is supplementary to the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (the GDPR) and replaces DPA 1998.

- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not routinely be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. [If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be kept in locked storage.] Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

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.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. 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 Headteacher or DSL.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

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

## **Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns**

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". We also recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another.

- Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in the 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.
- Abuse and Neglect may also take place outside of the home, contextual safeguarding, and this may include (but not limited to), sexual exploitation criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, radicalisation.
- Staff are aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.

Further information about the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, (familial and contextual) and indicators that a child may be being abused can be found in appendices 1 - 17 and in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1/Annex A/Annex B. There are also a number of specific safeguarding concerns that we recognise our pupils may experience:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• child missing or absent from education</li> <li>• child missing from home or care</li> <li>• child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE)</li> <li>• bullying including cyberbullying</li> <li>• domestic abuse</li> <li>• drugs</li> <li>• fabricated or induced illness</li> <li>• faith abuse</li> <li>• female genital mutilation (FGM)</li> <li>• forced marriage</li> <li>• gangs and youth violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)</li> <li>• mental health difficulties</li> <li>• private fostering</li> <li>• radicalisation</li> <li>• youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)</li> <li>• teenage relationship abuse</li> <li>• trafficking</li> <li>• child on child abuse</li> <li>• upskirting</li> <li>• serious violence</li> <li>• sexual harassment</li> </ul>
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- There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, and they may write stories or

poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed.

- We recognise that the signs 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. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding.
- In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

## **Special Circumstances**

### **Looked after children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal 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 children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual school head for children in care.

### **Children staying with host families**

The school may make arrangements 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), Annex C 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 local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

### **Additional Resources**

NSPCC: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline: <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>

Anti-Bullying Alliance: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Beat Bullying: <http://www.beatbullying.org/>

Childnet International -making the internet a great and safe place for children. Includes resources for professionals and parents

<http://www.childnet.com/>

Thinkuknow (includes resources for professionals and parents)

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Safer Internet Centre <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

Provision for Gender Questioning pupils: [Guidance for maintained schools and academies in England on provision for transgender pupils November 2022](#)

Appendix 1 : Contact Details for Local Children's Services Teams

**SOMERSET : If you have concerns about a child/young person in Somerset**

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	<b>POLICE 999</b>	
To make an URGENT referral, i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call Somerset Direct.	<b>Somerset Direct 0300 122 2224</b>	
To make a NON-URGENT referral, complete an Early Help Assessment and send to	<b>SD inputters</b>	
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact Somerset Direct).	<b>PREVENT DUTY - 01278 647466</b> <a href="mailto:PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk">PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk</a>	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	<b>Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – Avon and Somerset police 01278 649228</b>	
<b>DSL Consultation Line</b> 0300 123 3078	<b>Early Help Hub</b> 01823 3555803	<b>Critical Incident Support</b> EPS SSE 01823 357000

**If you have concerns about a professional working with a child...**

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO) Anthony Goble 0300 122 2224
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**For information, advice, and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures.**

<b><u>Education Safeguarding Service</u> <a href="mailto:ESS@somerset.gov.uk">ESS@somerset.gov.uk</a></b>		
<b>Service Manager</b> <b>Toby Jenkins</b>	<b>Team Manager East</b> Jane Weatherill	<b>Team Manager West</b> Jane Weatherill
Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	<b>Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police)</b> <a href="https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul">https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul</a>	
Child Missing from Education	<a href="http://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-and-families/missing-children">Somerset County Council</a>	
Children affected by Forced Marriage	<b>Forced Marriage Unit</b> T: (0) 20 7008 0151 E: <a href="mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk">fmu@fco.gov.uk</a>	
Online Safety Advice	<b>Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline</b> T: 0344 381 4772; E: <a href="mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk">helpline@saferinternet.org.uk</a>	

Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	<b>Child Exploitation and Online Protection command</b> <a href="https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/">https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/</a>
FGM advice	<b>NSPCC FGM Helpline</b> T: 0800 028 3550; E: <a href="mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk">fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk</a>
Domestic Abuse Helpline	<b>0800 6949999</b>
Young Carers – advice and support.	0300 123 2224 <a href="mailto:YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk">YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk</a>
Whistleblowing professional policy	<b>NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline</b> T: 0800 028 0285; <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>
<b>Primary Mental Health Specialists (advice) Child and Adolescent Mental Health</b> <a href="mailto:Cyp@somerset.org">Cyp@somerset.org</a>	
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	DSL consultation line 0300 123 3078  <b>Brook Traffic Light Tool</b>

## Appendix 2

### Glossary

Word	Definition
DSCB	Devon Safeguarding Children's Board
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MACSE	The Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation Forum
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DAF	Devon Assessment Framework
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
REACH	Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care or Home
DfE	Department of Education
SMSC	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation

CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
EY	Early Years
KS	Key Stage
FE	Further Education
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
DSL	Designated Senior Lead
SMCS	Spiritual, moral, cultural, social and education
KCSiE	Keeping Children Safe in Education