

Safeguarding Children Policy (Including Child Protection)

Adopted by

St Matthias CE Primary School



September 2025

This policy is reviewed annually by the Directors of The Spire Church of England Learning Trust and the individual Trust school's Local Governing Body.

This policy was provided by Worcestershire Children First and has been reviewed by the Trust's Safeguarding Lead. It has also been shared with Brightcore, the Trust's Safeguarding provider for compliance checking.

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Ratified: September 2025

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In collaboration with



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Commitment to Equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Section 1 Child Protection and Safeguarding Leads and Key Dates

Local Governors' Committee Responsible: Student Welfare and Pastoral Care committee

The nominated Safeguarding Local Governor is: Mrs Jenny Batelen

Designated Safeguarding Lead of Staff: Mrs Ginnie Beale

Prevent Lead: Mrs Ginnie Beale

Child Exploitation GET SAFE Lead: Mrs Ginnie Beale

Status & Review Cycle: Statutory Annual

Next Review Date: September 2026

Section 2 Safeguarding Statement

Our school, as part of the Spire Learning Trust, recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all children feel safe, 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. Child protection forms part of the Trust vision, our school vision, safer recruitment and safeguarding responsibilities and it is everyone's responsibility.

Our school, as part of the Spire Learning Trust, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy draws upon duties conferred by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, The Children and Families Act 2014, S175 of the 2020 Education Act, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (for independent schools), the Non-maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 (for non-maintained special schools) and the guidance contained in [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Role:	Name/Details:	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead of Staff / Headteacher / Head of School	Virginia Beale	head@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	James Thompson Carl Salmon	jwt50@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk cas121@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding	Jenny Batelen	c/o admin@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Headteacher / Head of School	Virginia Beale	head@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Liz Bessant	lizbessant@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Designated Teacher for Children who are In Care	Virginia Beale	head@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Online Safety Lead	James Thompson	jwt50@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Prevent Lead	Virginia Beale	head@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Child Exploitation GET SAFE Lead	Virginia Beale	head@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
SENDCO	Lauren Joyce	La169@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk
Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead	Rebecca Jenkin	
Nominated Director for Safeguarding /CP	Gareth Wigley	C/o Emily Kolb – Clerk to the Trust Board ekolb@spiretrust.co.uk
Chair of Trust Board	Rosie Shorter	C/o Emily Kolb – Clerk to the Trust Board ekolb@spiretrust.co.uk
Safeguarding in Ed Adviser, WCF	Denise Hannibal	01905 844436
Local Authority Designated Officer/ Position of Trust		01905 846221
Channel Chair Advanced Public Health Practitioner	Paul Kinsella	0800 0113764
Family Front Door	Initial contact and referral team for Worcestershire	01905 822666 (core working hours) Out of hours or at weekends: 01905 768020

Section 3 Introduction

Our school, as part of the Spire Learning Trust, recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support pupils in School. The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety, health, and well-being by creating an honest, open, caring, and supportive environment. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance.

This policy must be always followed and adhered to, in all situations and circumstances where the safeguarding and welfare of our pupils may be at risk.

In line with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, this policy outlines our procedures for safeguarding and child protection. It applies to all individuals working within **St Matthias C of E Primary School**, including permanent and temporary staff, agency supply staff, contractors, and volunteers.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

Keeping Children Safe in Education has been extended from early years, schools and colleges to cover 16-19 academies (and apprenticeships). There is reference to the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 which amends the Education Act 2002 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and places safeguarding duties on 16 to 19 academies and further education to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood and prohibiting funding being given if safeguarding requirements not complied with.

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on our school and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B (11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains our schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our AQC Board and Headteacher/Head of School should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupil/students with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupil/students (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils/students may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- Where a school has charitable status, Charity Commission guidance on charity and trustee duties to safeguard children is available at [Charity Commission Guidance](#)
- [NSPCC's whistleblowing advice line](#) dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by our school. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285).
- 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 [NSPCC – When to call the Police](#)

Part 1 Safeguarding Information for all staff

1.0 What School Staff Need to Know

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

All adults working with or on behalf of children know they have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. This includes a responsibility to be alert to possible abuse and to record and report concerns to staff identified with child protection responsibilities within the school (Designated Safeguarding Leads). Staff should be aware that they may need to work with other services as needed and assist in making decisions about individual children.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including Headteachers/Head of School, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their decisions about individual children.

Every member of staff, including volunteers working with children at our school, is advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and 'think beyond the obvious'. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to act as outlined in this policy. They take account of the 'one chance rule' in relation to honour based violence issues, that an adult may have only one opportunity to save a potential victim.

All staff should be aware of their expectation, role and responsibilities around filter and monitoring systems (see Online Safety). This means to understand the types of filtering and monitoring we have in school and how to identify risk and how to support.

All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. We realise that young people face great challenges when speaking out about abuse and will ensure we foster a supportive environment that enables them to do so. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues using the school's confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy.

All staff are aware of systems within our school, which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. Whistleblowing concerns about the Headteacher/Head of School should be raised with the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

In summary, all staff are aware of the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
 - Behaviour Policy- [Behaviour guidance updated](#)
 - [Anti-bullying policy](#)
 - Staff Behaviour Policy
 - Safeguarding response to children who are absent from/go missing from education/or have unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education; and
 - Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (including the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies).
 - Filtering and Monitoring in relation to online safety
 - Copies of Policies, copy of part one and Annex B ‘Further Information’ in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Low Level Concerns Policy
 - Acceptable Use Policy
- All our staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including low-level concerns, whistleblowing, online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – annually and at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, **all** staff will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
 - All our staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

All our staff should be alert to any child who:

- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
 - Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
 - Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- All our staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children’s social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (Children in Need) and Section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

All staff must be aware that children may not always feel ready or able to disclose abuse, exploitation, or neglect. They may not recognise their experiences as harmful, or may feel embarrassed, ashamed, humiliated, or afraid—especially if they are being threatened. Factors such as vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language barriers can further hinder their ability to speak out.

These challenges must not prevent staff from exercising professional curiosity. If there are any concerns about a child’s welfare, staff should always speak to the Designated

Safeguarding Lead (DSL). It is essential that staff actively work to build trusted, supportive relationships with children and young people that encourage open communication.

- All our staff know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the DSL or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- All our staff are able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Our staff are aware of:

[WCF Levels of Need threshold](#)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) requires safeguarding partners to publish a **threshold document**. This document outlines the local criteria for action, including:

- When an early help response is appropriate, and
- The criteria for making a referral to local authority children's social care.

Effective early help depends on local organisations and agencies working collaboratively to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help,
- Undertake assessments of need, and
- Provide targeted early help services to address those needs—focusing on improving outcomes for the child.

Under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the wellbeing of all children.

The terms 'Early Help' and 'Early Intervention' are often used interchangeably, which can lead to confusion. However, the Department for Education and Ofsted both use the term '*Early Help*', and this terminology has also been adopted by Worcestershire.

'Early Help' refers to the support provided to children and families at the first sign of unmet needs—at any stage in a child's life, from pre-birth through to age 18. Delivering the right support at the earliest opportunity helps to resolve problems before they escalate, reducing the need for more complex or statutory interventions later.

This guidance is designed to support professionals in making informed decisions when responding to the needs of children, young people, and families they are working with. It is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive, nor should it be viewed as a definitive gateway to specific services.

Every child and family is unique. Their needs must be considered individually, using professional judgement supported by this guidance

1.11 Abuse and neglect

All our staff are aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Abuse includes where children see, hear or experience its effects in relation to domestic abuse. As part of our safeguarding training, staff know what signs to look for to identify early signs of abuse and neglect and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation to safeguard children who may need help or protection. If staff are unsure, they always speak to the designated safeguarding lead, or deputy.

All our staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

Abuse

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

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

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

activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.⁸ can be signs that children are at risk. Below are some safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of.

1.12 Online safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. All staff are aware that abuse can take place solely online.

The Spire Learning Trust and our school's Local Governing body ensures online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school

approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This includes considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies) and any parental engagement.

There is a separate policy in relation to online safety and the school have a robust approach to promoting safety through the curriculum. The practice of children sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media or mobile messaging apps is a concern that schools have to manage. Online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. (sharing of nudes and semi-nudes) 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 UKCCIS guidance "Sharing nude and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people." 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 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/carers should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents/carers would put the child at risk of harm.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to Family Front Door/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 these factors are not present, then the DSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to students involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher/Head of School, to respond to the incident without escalation to Family Front Door or the Police.

In applying judgement as to management within school or referral in line with child protection procedures, the following factors may be relevant.

- 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.
- capacity of child and understanding of 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.
- there are previous similar incidents

Filtering and Monitoring

Our Trust and Local Governing Bodies are responsible and need to insure the limit of children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. Our Trust and Local Governing Bodies ensure our school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. We ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. We also consider the age range of our children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks.

In accordance with KCSIE 2025, the addition of filtering and monitoring forms part of the DSL role. Filtering is designed to restrict, and block known malicious websites and other harmful content. Monitoring is a real time solution that flags incidents as they happen, through a variety of means. Both filtering and monitoring are implemented across The Trust to protect staff and pupils.

Our monitoring solution is '**Smoothwall**'. We have combined 'safe search' (or school alternative) as this is enabled on browser search engines and online safety is taught across the curriculum. Both our Internet Service Providers (**Chestnut**) along with our monitoring solution provider, have submitted documents outlining their self-certification to the Safer Internet Centre. As such, any search performed in school will be safer for a pupil than one at home where parental controls are much less stringent and often not applied at all. We are aligning the infrastructure of our school with the DfE's Digital and Technology Standards.

Filtering is a challenging technical issue. The DSL will work closely with IT to maintain knowledge and keep abreast of changes that implicate safeguarding.

1.13 Online safety policy

At our school we have a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology. We understand the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e., 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. We have carefully considered how this is managed on their premises and reflect this in our Mobile and smart technology policy, Online Safety Policy and our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

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

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Considering the 4Cs (above) will provide the basis of an effective online policy. Our school has a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology, which will also reflect the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share

indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

As an education setting, we are directly responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Guidance on e-security is available from the [National Education Network](#). In addition, schools should consider meeting the [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK](#). Broader guidance on cyber security including considerations for governors and directors can be found at [Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK](#).

1.14 Remote Education

We are in regular contact with parents and carers. These communications are be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems our school uses to filter and monitor online use. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will asked to access and be clear who in our school, their child is going to be interacting with online.

We ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures including how online safety is reflected in other relevant policies. We consider online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role, and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and engaging with parents/carers to raise an awareness in order to support their children.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education>

1.15 Cybercrime

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

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources;

- Making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme.

Additional advice can be found at:

Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' [When to Call the Police – Safe4Me](#)

National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK [National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

1.15.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Our School recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

We will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our anti-bullying policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. Our requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. And where any indecent images have been shared that are AI-generated we will follow the guidance of the UKCIS on Sharing nudes and semi-nudes.

1.16 Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

In our school, children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.

As part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools). The statutory guidance can be found here: [Statutory guidance: relationships education relationships and sex education \(RSE\)and health education.](#)

1.17 Safeguarding in the Curriculum

Children are taught about safeguarding in our school. Schools play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biophobic and sexual violence/harassment.

The following areas are among those addressed in **PSHE/RSE** and in the wider curriculum. This is the bare minimum all pupils will receive; where specific issues arise, they will be targeted through an appropriate medium.

- Bullying/Cyber Bullying
- Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse
- Online Safety / Mobile technologies / Artificial intelligence
- Stranger Danger
- Fire and Water Safety
- Child on Child Abuse
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Road Safety
- Domestic Abuse
- Healthy and respectful relationships / boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- So called Honour Based Violence issues (HBV) e.g. Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Child Exploitation (Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE))
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-fundamental-british-values-through-smsc>

- Extremism and Radicalisation (in line with the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

1.18 Children with special educational needs, disabilities, or health issues

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. We ensure our 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 condition without further exploration
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in our school or the consequences of doing so.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) and the school SENCO.

We offer extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions
[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

And from specialist organisations such as:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: [Find your local IAS service \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

- [Mencap](#) - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people

1.19 Private fostering - LA notification when identified

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of our school staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.

We will then notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

See DfE statutory guidance [Children Act 1989](#) Private fostering for comprehensive guidance on private fostering.

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative care 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 school staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.

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. If we become aware of a privately fostering arrangement, we will check that Children's Services have been informed.

1.2 Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After

The Designated Teacher at St Matthias C of E Primary School is: Ginnie Beale

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse and/or neglect. Governing bodies and The Spire Learning Trust will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

In particular, we ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. We also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have

details of the child's social worker and the name of the Virtual School Headteacher/Head of School in the authority that looks after the child.

1.21 Statutory Children's Social Care Assessments and Services

Concerns about a child's welfare should be referred to Local Authority Children's Social Care. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, our school will immediately make a referral to Children's Social Care and if appropriate the Police. Referrals will follow the local referral process. Children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, our school will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

Additional information is available here [Contextualised Safeguarding](#)

Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children. Examples of poor practice include:

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

[Escalation Policy: Resolution of Professional Disagreements](#)

1.22 - Mental Health

We are 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.

Our trained staff, who are also Trauma Informed trained, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

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

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

Our staff have access to a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies. More information can be found in the [mental health and behaviour in schools guidance](#)

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

We will seek advice and guidance from [Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#)

1.3.0 Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

1.3.1 Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

Sometimes children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead may hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This will be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and our school, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Findings from the Children in Need review [‘Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection’](#) contains further information; the conclusion of the review, [‘Help, protection, education’](#) sets out action Government is taking to support this.

1.3.2 What school staff look out for

Any child may benefit from Early Help, but all our staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan).
- Has a mental health need;
- Is a young carer;
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- Has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- Has returned home to their family from care;

- Is at risk of honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- Is a privately fostered child; and
- Is persistently absent from education.

1.3.3 Children Missing from Education

Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Our school's response to children missing from education, supports identifying such abuse and helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Children at risk of missing in education are;

Children of compulsory school age who are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (4 weeks)

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system
- They are removed by their parents
- Behaviour and/or attendance difficulties
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion, illness or bullying
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Problems at home

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education.

Our school duties, regarding children missing education, including information school staff must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points can be found in the department's statutory guidance:

[Worcestershire children first children missing from education guidance](#)

Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how we should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

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

General information and advice for schools can be found in the Government's [Missing Children and Adults Strategy](#) and [Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings](#)

1.3.4 Elective Home Educated

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. At our school we expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, we know this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended, we must inform our Worcestershire Children First all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan local authorities will need to review the plan, working closely with parents and carers.

DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective home education sets out the role and responsibilities of local authorities and their powers to engage with parents. Although this is primarily aimed at local authorities, schools should also be familiar with this guidance. [Elective home education - GOV.UK](#)

1.3.5 Domestic Abuse

[Ending Domestic abuse Save Lives](#)

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of sex or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate

relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

If we identify a victim of domestic abuse being high risk. We will consider a referral to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). The purpose of MARAC is to share information and establish a multi-agency action plan to support the victim and to make links with other public protection procedures, particularly safeguarding children, vulnerable adults and the management of offenders. We will continue to provide help and support in order to safeguard children. This will usually be led by the designated safeguarding lead. MARAC does not replace a referral to children social care.

[Worcestershire children first Domestic abuse guidance](#)

1.3.6 Homelessness

We understand that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#). The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

We will consider homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

1.3.7 Mental health

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and progress at school.

More information can be found in the Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See Every Mind Matters for links to all materials and lesson plans.

[Better Health Every Mind Matters](#) | [Campaigns](#) | [Campaign Resource Centre](#)

[School Zone](#) | [Campaigns](#) | [Campaign Resource Centre \(dhsc.gov.uk\)](#)

1.3.8 Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

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

1.3.9 Children with Family Members in Prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders [NICCO](#) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

[Barnardo's - NICCO](#)

1.3.10 Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

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

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

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important we provide practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. At our school we provide outdoor-safety lessons run by our teachers or occasionally by local police staff. Lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

School-Arranged Homestays Abroad

When arranging homestays outside of the UK, the school will work closely with **partner schools** to discuss and agree upon the safeguarding arrangements in place.

On a case-by-case basis, the school will:

- Consider whether to contact the relevant foreign embassy or High Commission to determine what background checks may be possible on host families.
- Use professional judgement to assess whether the proposed arrangements are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard pupils.

All pupils participating in international exchanges will be provided with emergency contact details to use in the event of a safeguarding concern or if they feel uncomfortable during their stay.

Privately Arranged Homestays

Where a parent or pupil arranges their own homestay independently of the school, this is considered a private arrangement. In these cases, the school is not the regulated activity provider and holds no legal responsibility for conducting safeguarding checks.

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

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

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation. It is sexual abuse involving criminal behaviours against children and young people which can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people. Victims can be boys or girls; this can be one off or reoccurring. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. It may also be linked to child trafficking. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

The DSL will use the Worcester Safeguarding Children's Board CSE Screening Tool or relevant documentation depending on the local authority on all occasions when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually exploited.

In all cases if the tool identifies any level of concern the DSL should contact their local Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation Forum and email the completed CSE Screening Tool along with

a Family Front Door (FFD) Cause for Concern form (or equivalent for each authority) If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 999.

1.4.1 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) can take various forms. It often involves children being forced or manipulated into criminal activity, such as:

- Transporting drugs or money across county lines;
- Working in cannabis factories;
- Shoplifting or pickpocketing;
- Committing vehicle crime; or
- Threatening or committing serious acts of violence.

Children may also be coerced into carrying weapons—such as knives—either under pressure from perpetrators or for a perceived sense of protection against others.

Victims of CCE are often trapped in exploitative situations through threats of violence, coercion, or the creation of debt. This entrapment can make it extremely difficult for them to escape.

Because children involved in criminal exploitation frequently engage in criminal behaviour themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised—particularly in the case of older children. As a result, they may not receive the support they need, despite the significant harm they have experienced. It is essential to understand that a child may still be a victim of exploitation, even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

The experience of criminal exploitation can differ between boys and girls. While signs may vary, professionals must remain alert to the fact that girls are also at risk of CCE, even if the indicators are less visible or different from those seen in boys.

Importantly, both boys and girls involved in criminal exploitation may also face an increased risk of sexual exploitation, and this should be considered during any assessment or safeguarding intervention.

1.4.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

1.4.3 County Lines

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

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

If our school identifies a child who may be at risk of exploitation, the Designate Safeguarding Lead will work with and support and consider completion of a GET SAFE risk assessment which will be referred to Worcestershire Children First GET SAFE team for further assessment and support. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also consider referral to Worcestershire Children First Family Front Door as part of our schools and local safeguarding procedures. More information can be found: [Get Safe - keeping children and young people safe from criminal exploitation](#)

1.4.4 Operation Encompass

Our school receives Operation Encompass Notifications. Operation Encompass is to highlight that a Domestic Abuse incident has taken place and the police have been called. Following an Operation Encompass notification staff will keep a close eye on any change in behaviour and log anything out of the ordinary. Operation Encompass is working well in Worcestershire Schools and Worcestershire Children First have successfully sent DA notifications to our school. All this is great news for children and their families. It helps police and schools like ours to work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform Worcestershire Children First, who then inform the School (usually the Designated

Safeguarding Lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This is so we have up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs.

Operation Encompass Early Years

Worcestershire Children First now send DA notifications to early years settings, our school receives Operation Encompass notifications, and we support those children and their families via our Early Help offer (Supporting Families)

1.4.5 Honour-Based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

Honour-Based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as **breast ironing**. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. We are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and are handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

[The right to choose: gov guidance on forced marriage](#)
[2023 Forced Marriage Guidance](#)

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care and the National Forced Marriage Unit.

Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers.

1.4.6 FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

FGM involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Four types of procedure:

- Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris.
- Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora.
- Type 3 Infibulation - entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia.
- Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising, and scraping the genital area.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#)

Teachers must and will personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless a teacher has good reason not to, we will still consider and discuss any such case with the school’s designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

1.4.7 Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Staff in our school understand we could potentially play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit has published [statutory guidance](#) and [Multi-agency guidelines](#), pages 35-36 of which focus on the role of schools.

- Our staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email, including for outreach work: fm@fcdo.gov.uk

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

1.5.0 Preventing Radicalisation

We know children are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from harm. As part of our whole safeguarding approach, we include and consider the following:

- **Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:
 - Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
 - Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
 - Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points
- Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence may involve an exchange for something the victim wants, and/or the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator'.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

As defined in the Government's Counter Extremism Strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy>.

As defined in the Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>.

As defined in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents>

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

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

The school's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

1.5.1 The Prevent Duty

Our school staff understand that Schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent Duty. The Prevent Duty is ‘the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism

The Prevent Duty is part of our schools wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders are familiar with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#),

[Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

1.5.2 Channel

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

Guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#).

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

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

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

The Education & Training Foundation (ETF) Online Learning environment provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, support staff and governors/Board members outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty [Prevent for FE and Training](#). This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals.

Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. DfE guidance for local authorities

on Elective home education sets out the role and responsibilities of LAs and their powers to engage with parents in relation to EHE. Although this is primarily aimed at LAs, school staff should also be familiar with this [Worcestershire children first home education](#)

1.5.3 Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels public organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them.

Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. Further information (including on absolute and qualified rights) can be found at Human Rights | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com).

Guidance to help school staff understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act can be found at:

- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Homepage | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)

1.6.0 What school staff do if they have concerns about a child

All our staff who are working with children, maintain an attitude of *'it could happen here'* where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, we act on them immediately. If staff have a concern, we follow this safeguarding policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputies).

Options will then include:

- Managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes or Supporting Children and Families (formerly known as The Early Help Offer)
- Undertaking an early help assessment; or
- Making a referral to statutory services, or example as the child might be in need, in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.

1.6.1 Early Help

Any child may benefit from Early Help, our staff, are experienced and appropriately trained to early identify the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- Has a mental health need.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage.
- Is a privately fostered child; and
- Is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Our Early Help Offer also known as 'Supporting Children and Families' is accessible on our school website, as part of our Early Help Offer/Supporting Families, we support children and young people by completing an Early Help Assessment.

School link to their Supporting Children and Families Offer:

<https://www.stmatthiasceprimary.co.uk/parents/support-for-parents-and-families>

[Worcestershire Children First Early Help information page](#)

1.6.2 Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

There are many children who have additional needs or whose living arrangements may mean that they are more vulnerable to harm, for example children with special educational needs, disabled children, children in public care or privately fostered children. It is essential that the school knows who shares parental responsibility for children and has effective relationships with partner agencies in relation to these children (for example, Virtual School for Children in Care).

Our school will ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge and guidance so that they are aware of the additional challenges faced by these children and the impact of their additional vulnerabilities. These can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's disability without further exploration; no single point of contact for the school as a child has a number of care-givers and involved professionals; assumptions that state approved care-givers are providing safe care for the child; communication needs of a child which can lead to over reliance on parental accounts and interpretations.

1.6.3 What should schools do?

We will contact Family Front Door when we have a concern about a child. We will contact the Family Front Door if the concerns are based on more concrete indicators – i.e. the young person says this is going to happen to them, or disclosure that it has happened to them or to an older sister – we should make a child protection referral and inform the Police as required by the mandatory reporting duty. School staff should not:

- Contact the parents/carers before seeking advice from Children's Social Care.
- Make any attempt to mediate between the child/young person and parents/carers.

It is important to keep in mind that the parents/carers may not see FGM or Breast Ironing as a form of abuse; however, they may be under a great deal of pressure from their community and or family to subject their daughters to it.

1.6.4 The 'one chance' rule

In the same way that we talk about the 'one chance rule' in respect of young people coming forward with fears that they may be forced into marriage, young people disclosing fears that they are going to be sent abroad for FGM are taking the 'one chance', of seeking help.

It is essential that we take such concerns seriously and act without delay. Never underestimate the determination of parents who have decided that it is right for their daughter to undergo FGM. Attempts to mediate may place the child/young person at greater risk, and the family may feel so threatened at the news of their child's disclosure that they bring forward their plans or take action to silence her.

1.7.0 Protecting Children

- Our school will be doing all we reasonably can, to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process, our Governing Body and Trust, will ensure that our school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place.
- We will safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn. We will take into consideration the age range of pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks.
- The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for our school and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like: [UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring](#).
- Guidance on e-security is available from the [National Education Network](#). Support for our school is available via the: [schools' buying strategy](#) with specific advice on procurement here: [buying for schools](#).

- Our school's approach to online safety, will include a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via 3G, 4G and 5G in particular and the school should carefully consider how this is managed on their premises.

1.8.0 Relationships and Sex Education

This may include covering relevant issues in our school through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) which was made compulsory from September 2020. The statutory guidance can be found here: Statutory guidance: [RSE Guidance](#)

The following resources may be helpful:

- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection command](#): is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report made to one of its Child Protection Advisors
- The [NSPCC](#) provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk The helpline provides expert advice and support for school staff and will be especially useful for the DSL (and their deputies)
- Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisations such as [Rape Crisis](#) or [The Survivors Trust](#)
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance has developed resources to support schools: [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)
- School staff should recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation. Online concerns can be especially complicated, and support is available from:

The UK Safer Internet Centre provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school staff with regard to online safety issues

- [Internet Watch Foundation](#): If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

- [Childline/IWF Report Remove](#) is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online
- [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice](#): Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).
- [Thinkuknow](#) from NCA-CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online
- [LGFL 'Undressed'](#) provide our school with advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.
- Public Health England: Rise Above Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) which will be compulsory from September 2021. Our school has the flexibility to decide how we discharge our duties effectively within the first year of compulsory teaching and could take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects.

1.8.1 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning

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

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

LGB or gender questioning inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help our school counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

All staff understand that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and that children may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The school recommends that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

The section of KCSIE 2025 on gender questioning children remains under review, pending the publication of revised guidance.

We recognise that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. See our behaviour policy for more detail on how we prevent bullying based on gender or sexuality. We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children and young people are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

When families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning pupils, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Risks can be compounded where children and young people lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where pupils can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff in line with KCSIE 2025.

1.8.2 Child on Child Abuse

All our staff are aware that children can abuse other children. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of Child-on-Child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All our staff understand, that even if there are no reports in our school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important if

staff have any concerns regarding Child-on-Child abuse, they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

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

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

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

All our staff are clear as to the school’s policy and procedures with regards to Child-on-Child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

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

All our staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently

excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. Advice for our school is provided in the Home Office's [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance](#).

1.8.3 Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

School should always respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school, and/or online.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. Schools should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it
- recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
- challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

Our school will respond to reports of Child-on-Child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

For detailed information on what sexual violence and sexual harassment constitutes, important context to be aware of, related legal responsibilities for schools, advice on a whole school approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and more detailed advice on responding to reports see Part five: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment KCSIE 2025 [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)

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

Our school carefully considers any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. We will

support victims to be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with our school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.

At our school, we recognise the term '**victim**' to refer to those who have been subjected to abuse. But we recognise that not every victim will view themselves as such, also we use the term '**alleged perpetrator(s)**' and where appropriate '**perpetrator(s)**.' Though they caution the use of this term as in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well:

- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the children involved.
- The developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature).

1.8.5 Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

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

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated, reflecting the considerations. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

1.8.6 Options to manage the report

It is important that schools consider every report on a case-by case basis. Where a report is going to be made to local authority children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, the designated safeguarding lead should speak to the local authority children's social care and the police and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed

of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school.

There are four likely scenarios for schools to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

The four scenarios are:

1. **Manage internally**
In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals to statutory services are not required, and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support.
2. Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
3. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).
4. Child and adolescent mental health services CAMHS is used as a term for all services that work with children who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing. Services vary depending on local authority. Herefordshire and Worcestershire CAMHS have their own website, which has information about access, referrals and contact numbers <https://camhs.hacw.nhs.uk/>

1.8.7 Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s)

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- Our school have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, we need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education; we will safeguard and support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions.
- We will consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- We will consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as

appropriate, from Children's Social Care, specialist sexual violence services and the Police.

- If an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), we will inform the new educational institution of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file. Information sharing advice, referenced at WCF, will help support this process.
- The National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) provides support for professionals involved in work with, or related to, sexual offending.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

We understand the importance that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. We know that evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGB and gender questioning children are at greater risk.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is sexual violence and sexual harassment? It is important that school staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

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

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

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent? Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but

not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

1.8.8 Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of Child-on-Child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (our school will consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos.

- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and upskirting.

Harmful Sexual behaviour

All staff understand that children’s sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is “harmful sexual behaviour” (HSB).

When considering HSB, staff must consider the ages and stages of development of the children. The DSL and deputy will have a good understanding of HSB as part of their safeguarding training. This will aid in planning preventative education, implementing preventative measures, drafting and implementing effective policies and procedures and incorporating the approach to HSB into the whole school approach to safeguarding.

1.8.9 Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s

clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

1.9.0 Use of School Premises for Non-School Activities

We will ensure that when/if hire out our school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

When services or activities are provided by our school under the direct supervision or management, the arrangements for child protection will apply.

Where an external body is providing community or extra-curricular activities, we will ensure and seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place.

We will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

1.10.0 Alternative Provision

Our school staff are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to.

The Department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

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

Where a school places a pupil in an alternative provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil.

Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes)

so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

1.11.0 Other Relevant Policies

The Governing Body's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond compliance with child protection procedures. The safeguarding duty is relevant for the discharge of all functions and activities. This policy needs to be considered in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Management
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) including Child on Child Abuse
- Physical Interventions/Restraint (DfE Guidance "Use of Reasonable Force" and "Screening, Searching and Confiscation")
- Special Educational Needs
- Trips and Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Relationships
- Site Security
- Complaints Procedure
- Safe and Appropriate Use of Images
- Equal Opportunities
- Toileting/Intimate Care (where applicable)
- Online Safety and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Extended School Activities
- Supporting Pupils/Students with Medical Conditions
- Looked After Children
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Whistleblowing

1.12.0 Information Sharing

At our school we recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. We have ensured arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within our school and with WCF Children's Social Care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

Our staff are proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority Children's Social Care.

We are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to

process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

This includes:

- We are confident of the processing conditions which allow us to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and is treated as 'special category personal data'.
- Understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- For schools, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. Example: In a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met they must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt our school should seek independent legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of Keeping Children Safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

When children transfer from our school, the safeguarding records are also transferred (your own safeguarding system, CPOMS, my concern etc). Safeguarding records will be transferred separately from other records and best practice is to pass these directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving education setting, with any necessary discussion or explanation and to obtain a signed and dated record of the transfer. In the event of a child moving out of area and a physical handover not being possible then the most secure method should be found to send the confidential records to a named Designated Safeguarding Lead. Files requested by other agencies e.g. Police, will be copied.

1.13.0 Records, Monitoring and Transfer

All our staff are clear about the need to record, and report concerns about a child or children within the school. Staff know to include the child's words as far as possible and should be timed, dated, and signed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Where children leave our school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, and **within 5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the **first 5 days** of the start of a new term to allow the new school

to have support in place for when the child arrives. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained, this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file.

The receiving schools will ensure key staff, such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO's), are aware as required.

Records relating to actual or alleged abuse or neglect are stored apart from normal pupil or staff records. Normal records sometimes have markers to show that there is sensitive material stored elsewhere. This is to protect individuals from accidental access to sensitive material by those who do not need to know.

Child protection records are stored securely, with access confined to specific staff, e.g. Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Headteacher/Head of School. As well as keeping records of concerns, discussions and decisions, designated safeguarding leads should keep record of the rationale for any decisions made.

Child protection records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints or concerns about any individuals (e.g., child who repeatedly goes missing) and ensuring these are acted upon. Each stand-alone file should have a chronology of significant events.

A record of any allegations (proven) made against staff is kept in a confidential file by the Headteacher/Head of School.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in detail your own method of recording i.e. CPOMS Information is be kept confidential and stored securely.

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 in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

Part 2 The Management of safeguarding

2.1.0 Management of Safeguarding

This policy applies to all our staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors to our school. Child protection is the responsibility of all our staff. We will ensure that we will comply with our duties under all relevant legislation. We will ensure this policy and our procedures are effective and always comply with the law, this includes training for all staff.

We will ensure that all our parents and working partners are aware of this policy by mentioning it in our school prospectus, displaying appropriate information in our reception and on the school website and by raising awareness at meetings with our parents/carers.

In our school our Governing Body and Trust will ensure we facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. Ultimately, all our systems, processes and policies will operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. Where there is a safeguarding concern, our Governing Bodies and Trust and school leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are sought and considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

Raising concerns or complaints.

We respond robustly when concerns are raised or complaints made (from children, adults including parent/carers) as we recognise that this promotes a safer environment, and we seek to learn from complaints and comments. The school will take action and seek to resolve the concerns in a timely way, keeping people informed as to progress wherever possible. The school's complaints procedures are available on our school website or from the school office.

2.1.1 Filter and Monitoring

Our Governing Body will ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from our school leadership team, is appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is not appropriate for a member of the Trust to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This is explicit in the role holder's job description.

Our Governing Body ensures the Designated Safeguarding Lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. The role carries a significant level of responsibility and that person should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively. We ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with any advice from the safeguarding partners.

The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. To support our school to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published [filtering and monitoring standards](#) which set out that schools should:

- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.

- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

We review the standards and discuss with Trust IT staff and other service providers what more can be done to support our school in meeting this standard.

[The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers](#) and Home Office Additional guidance on filtering and monitoring can be found at: UK Safer Internet Centre: “appropriate” filtering and monitoring.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring>.

South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) have created a [tool](#) to check whether a school filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content).

Data Protection

Staff, governors and directors should use the DfE’s data protection guidance for schools. [Data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This guidance helps schools to:

- Comply with data protection law
- Develop data policies and processes
- Know what staff and pupil data to keep
- Follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.

2.1.2 Headteacher/Head of School

The Headteacher/Head of School of our school will ensure that:

- The Safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are effectively implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
- Allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff or adult working at school may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person are notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer in a timely manner.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a

timely manner. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285).

- All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns and that if all else fails to report these directly to Children's Social Care (Children's Services) or the Police.

2.1.3 School Governors/Directors

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" September 2025 our Governing Body will ensure that:

- Safeguarding & Child protection policy, procedures and training are in place which are always effective and comply with the law. The policy is made available publicly.
- We will ensure that all governors and directors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in our school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.
- The policy will be reviewed annually or more often, for example in the event of new guidance or a significant incident.
- Governors in maintained school have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS.
- We carry out a section 128 check for school governors, because a person subject to one is disqualified from being a governor.
- We check if a person we recruit as a governor is barred because of being subject to a section 128 direction.
- We operate safer recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Furthermore, the Headteacher/Head of School, a nominated Governor and other staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers/ people in a position of trust.
- There is a senior member of our leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (the "Designated Safeguarding Lead") and there is always cover for this role (at least one deputy) with appropriate arrangements for before/after school and out of term activities.

In addition, Governors should ensure that:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes effective Local authority training (in addition to basic child protection training) and this is refreshed at least every two years, however at our school DSLs training is updated annually. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals (at least annually) via safeguarding e-briefings etc.
- The Headteacher/Head of School, and all other staff and volunteers who work with children (including early years practitioners within settings on the school site), undertake appropriate training which is regularly updated (at least every year); and that new staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities (including this policy and

Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025). Training should include FGM/Prevent/Child Exploitation.

- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in these arrangements brought to the attention of the Governing Body and will be rectified without delay.
- The Chair of Governors, **Liz Bessant** (or, in the absence of a Chair, the Vice Chair **Allan Foulds** deals with any allegations of abuse made against the Headteacher/Head of School, with advice and guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually including a behaviour “code of conduct” for staff and volunteers [Professional and Personnel Relationships \(saferrecruitmentconsortium.org\)](http://saferrecruitmentconsortium.org)
- Information is provided to the Local Authority (on behalf of the WSCP) when requested, for example through the Annual Safeguarding Return (e.g. section 175 audit)
- Our school Governing Body and Directors ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. This as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There is an individual member of the Governing Body, **Jenny Batelen**, who will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the school, liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and provide information and reports to the Governing Body.
- As part of our Trust, our Safeguarding Governor visits the DSL on a termly basis completing an audit and checklist on policy and procedures.
- Our school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654422/Working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance.pdf) including providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help for children who require this, at our school this is called ‘Supporting Children and Families’. Early Help may be offered directly through our school ‘Supporting Children and Families’ provision or via referral to an external support agency. Safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership- (WSCP)
- GDPR- Our Governing Body/Proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the [Data Protection Act 2018](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654422/Working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance.pdf) and the UK GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information we hold safe and secure in [Data protection : Toolkit for schools – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654422/Working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance.pdf)
- Our school complies with all legislative safeguarding duties, including the duty to report suspected or known cases of FGM and the duty to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism. In conjunction with the Headteacher/Head of School and DSL they should assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk.

In our school we will:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.

- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities (specifically through PHSE/ ICT/RSE), which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse (including online) and to know where to get help.
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers and colleagues from other agencies.
- Operate safer recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children including identity, right to work, enhanced DBS criminal record and barred list (and overseas where needed), references, and prohibition from teaching or managing in schools “S128” For senior leaders in Academies and for Governors in maintained schools (Since September 2018)
- As Education Safeguarding Practitioners we will liaise with the three safeguarding partners in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- Criminal history and suitability to work with children information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted.
- As part of the shortlisting processes we will consider conducting an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which our school would explore with the applicant at interview.

2.1.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Trust and Governing Bodies will ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from our school will have responsibility for the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This DSL role is explicit in their job description. It is advised that the DSL has received enhanced Prevent training.

We also have Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (DDSLs) who have been trained the same as our DSL. Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with our Designated Safeguarding Lead. This responsibility will not be delegated.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies will liaise with the safeguarding partners, and work with other agencies in line with [Working Together to safeguard children](#) will help our Designated Safeguarding Lead understand when they should consider calling the Police and what to expect when they do.

During term time, our Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or one of our deputies will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Where appropriate our Designated Safeguarding Lead will arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies have undertaken training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role.

In addition to our formal training as set out above, their knowledge and skills will be updated (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

All our staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues using the school's confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy.

Whistleblowing concerns about the Headteacher/Head of School should be raised with the Chair of Governors. Any concerns regarding school staff will be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Statutory guidance contains further information on: [The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher](#)

2.1.5 Multi-Agency Working

At our school, we have a pivotal role to play in Multi-agency Safeguarding arrangements. Our Governing Bodies and Trust ensure that we will contribute to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

In our school our Leaders/Governing Body/Directors understand our Local Safeguarding arrangements and work with partners from Worcestershire Children's Safeguarding partnership WSCP to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. The Worcestershire Children First WCF Headteacher Safeguarding Steering Group HTSG, who is represented by all phases of education are part of our WSCP and make all school aware and follow the local arrangements for local protocol and assessment policies and procedures. We are also prepared to supply information as requested by the safeguarding partners.

[Worcestershire Children First \(worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk\)](http://worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk)

Our school works with WCF Social Care, the Police, Health Services, and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

In our school we allow access for Children's Social Care from the host Local Authority (according to where the child lives) and, where appropriate, from a placing Local Authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

Part 3. Safer Recruitment

3.1.1 Safer Recruitment and DBS checks – Policy and Procedures

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, our school adopts robust recruitment procedures that are designed to deter, reject, or identify individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children. This is a vital part of our safeguarding culture.

The Local Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that all recruitment procedures comply with statutory requirements and that all staff involved in the recruitment and selection of

staff have received appropriate safer recruitment training, and are familiar with Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.

At least one member of the interview panel must have completed accredited safer recruitment training.

Single Central Record (SCR)

All pre-employment checks are recorded in the school's **Single Central Record (SCR)**. Where appropriate, copies of checks will also be kept in individual personnel files. The school follows statutory guidance and best practice when retaining and storing this information.

SCR Oversight and Monitoring

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Headteacher/Head of School, and Safeguarding Governor review the SCR regularly throughout the academic year.
- The Safeguarding Governor conducts a formal termly SCR audit.
- The Headteacher/Head of School checks the SCR at least half-termly with the SCR administrator.
- All staff involved in managing the SCR have received training via Worcestershire Children First (WCF).

Job Adverts and Role Descriptions

When advertising roles, the school will clearly define:

- The skills, experience, qualifications, behaviours, and attitude required.
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the role and whether it involves regulated activity with children.

All adverts will include:

- A statement of the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Notification that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- Whether the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 and that spent convictions subject to legal exceptions must be disclosed.
- A reference to the school's Safeguarding Policy and Policy on the Employment of Ex-Offenders, either included in the application pack or available via a link to the school website.

Application Process

Application forms must include a statement that:

"It is a criminal offence for a person barred from working with children to apply for a role involving regulated activity with children."

Applicants are required to provide:

- Personal details including full name (current and former), address, and National Insurance number.
- Full employment history (education, employment, voluntary work) with no unexplained gaps.
- Details of qualifications (including awarding body and dates).
- Reasons for leaving previous employment.
- Details of at least two referees.
- A personal statement demonstrating how the applicant meets the person specification.

Curriculum vitae (CVs) are only accepted alongside a completed application form. A CV alone will not be accepted.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting must be carried out by at least two people and should include:

- A careful review of employment history and qualifications.
- Identifying and probing any gaps or inconsistencies.
- Consideration of any potential safeguarding concerns.

Self-Declaration of Criminal Record

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of criminal history including whether they:

- Have a criminal conviction or caution.
- Are barred from working with children.
- Are prohibited from teaching or school management.
- Are disqualified from providing childcare.
- Are known to social care or police for safeguarding concerns.
- Have any relevant overseas convictions.

This declaration will be signed and discussed at interview before the DBS certificate is received. If an electronic signature is used, a hard copy will be physically signed at interview.

Online Searches

The school will carry out online searches as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates. This helps identify any publicly available information that may raise safeguarding or reputational concerns. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that this may be part of the process.

References

References will be sought **before interview** where possible, to enable concerns to be explored directly with the candidate.

Reference Requirements:

- Must be from the current employer and provided by someone with appropriate seniority.
- Verified as accurate by the Headteacher/Head of School if from another school.
- Include previous relevant employment, especially where the applicant worked with children.
- Confirm the applicant's suitability to work with children, including any substantiated safeguarding concerns or disciplinary action meeting the harm threshold.
- Do not include unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious allegations.
- No open references (e.g. "To Whom It May Concern") will be accepted.
- References must be verified directly with the referee and not sourced by the applicant.

Interviews and Selection

The school will use a variety of methods to assess candidates, including:

- Structured questions tailored to the role.
- Exploration of motivation for working with children.
- Investigation of employment gaps or frequent job changes.
- Probing for safeguarding-related behaviours and attitudes.

Warning Signs to Explore Further:

- Equalising children with adults.
- Lack of understanding of appropriate boundaries.
- Inappropriate idealisation of children.
- Poor grasp of safeguarding principles.

Any information relating to previous disciplinary action or substantiated allegations will be evaluated in the context of the specific case.

Pupil Involvement

Where appropriate, pupils will be involved in the recruitment process (e.g., through observation, interaction, or pupil panels), under supervision. This is recognised as best practice.

All decisions and factors considered during selection will be clearly recorded, including reasons for appointment or non-appointment.

Shortlisted candidates should be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records; further information can be found on [Welcome to GOV.UK](#)

All offers of appointment should be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. All must:

- verify a candidate's identity, it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate, where this is available. Further identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website.
- obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity with children). Note that when using the DBS update service, you still need to obtain the original physical certificate
- obtain a separate children's barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available.
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role.
- verify the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then schools and colleges should follow advice on the GOV.UK website
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school or college consider appropriate and,
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate. The Teaching Regulation Agency's (TRA) Employer Access Service should be used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS), and the completion of teacher induction or probation.

In addition:

- all schools must ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State for prohibition checks or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE, before its abolition in March 2012
- before employing a person to carry out teaching work in relation to children, schools and colleges must take reasonable steps to establish whether that person is subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- all schools providing childcare must ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for

children up to the age of 8, are not disqualified from working in these settings under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is. We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult.

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

Volunteers (DBS for checks on volunteers are free and will be completed before volunteers begin their role)

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for all volunteers who are not in regulated activity, but who have an opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis, for example, supervised volunteers
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in our school. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, our school must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the EU, our school should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

Governance

The Spire Learning Trust must require enhanced DBS checks on all members of the academy trust, individual charity trustees, and the chair of the board of charity trustees. They must also require enhanced DBS checks for permanent and supply staff. The enhanced DBS checks will include the Barred List information if working in regulated activity.

The Spire Learning Trust delegates' responsibilities to each school's local governing body and therefore the Trust must require an enhanced DBS check on all delegates and all members of such committees, including identify checks. The Spire Learning Trust must also check that members are not disqualified from taking part in the management of the school as a result of a section 128 direction.

Further checks, as the Trust considers appropriate, should be undertaken where, by reason of the individual's living or having lived overseas, obtaining an enhanced DBS check is not sufficient to establish an individual's suitability to work in a school.

Part 4 Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors

4.1.0 Procedures for Managing Concerns

We will adhere to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Safeguarding Worcestershire www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk

Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the [West Mercia Consortium inter-agency procedures](#) and the [WSCP Levels of Need Guidance](#)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our school. Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the Deputy Designated Lead. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff or the Trust DSL at Parkside Middle School.

All concerns about a child or young person are to be reported without delay and recorded in writing using the agreed template which for our school is **CPOMs**.

The DSL will consider what action to take and have appropriate discussions with parents/carers prior to referral to children's social care or another agency unless, to do so would place the child at risk of harm or compromise an investigation

All referrals will be made in line with [local procedures](#) as detailed on the [Worcester Children First Website](#).

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child is to call 999 and make referral is made to Children's Services immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSL and/or the Headteacher/Head of School. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

Staff follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Services, or the Police if:

- The situation is an emergency and the Designated Senior Person, their Deputy and the Headteacher/Head of School are all unavailable.
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.

Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Headteacher/Head of School or the Chair of Governors. If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point, they should contact Children's Services directly with their concerns.

4.2.1 Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors

We have our own procedures for dealing with allegations against a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor. These procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance and have regard to this guidance. It is important that policies and procedures make clear to whom allegations should be reported and that this should be done without delay. A “case manager” will lead any investigation. This will be either the Headteacher/Head of School or where the Headteacher/Head of School is the subject of an allegation, the Chair of Governors.

They may have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

4.2.3 The initial response to an allegation

Where we identify that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, we will contact Children’s Social Care services and as appropriate the Police immediately.

We will consider when an allegation is made:

- Looking after the welfare of the child - the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk, referring cases of suspected abuse to the Local Authority Children’s Social Care.
- Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation - the case manager should discuss with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, we will:

- Apply common sense and judgement.
- Deal with allegations quickly, fairly, and consistently; and
- Provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

We will ensure all staff understand the Local Authority arrangements for managing allegations, including the contact details and what information the LADO will require when an allegation is made. Before contacting the LADO, we will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future Police investigation. For example:

- Was the individual in the school at the time of the allegations?
- Did the individual, or could they have, come into contact with the child?
- Are there any witnesses? and,
- Was there any CCTV footage?

In our school we are familiar with what initial information the LADO will require. This information can be found in local policy and procedural guidance provided by the LADO service.

When to inform the individual of the allegation should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, with guidance as required from the LADO, and if appropriate Children Social Care and the Police.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the Police and/or Children's Social Care Services will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance: [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should take into account that teachers and other staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour. Where it is clear that an investigation by the Police or Children's Social Care services is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial evaluation decides that is the case, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the case manager.

4.2.4 Supply teachers

In some circumstances we will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply; for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business.

Whilst we are not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will we decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Our Governing Bodies/Proprietor will discuss with the supply agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, Police and/or Children's Social Services. We will take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by our school, are under the supervision, direction and control of our Governing Body when working at our school. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the school during the investigation.

When using a supply agency, we will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

4.2.5 Governors

If an allegation is made against a Governor, we will follow their own local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, we will follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

4.2.6 Suspension

Suspension is not an automatic response when an allegation is reported. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. The case manager must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school, or until the allegation is resolved. It should be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at our school, is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from their personnel adviser and the LADO, as well as the Police and Children's Social Care where they have been involved.

Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the member of staff's family, they should discuss these concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a risk assessment of the situation. It may be necessary for the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make a referral to Children's Social Services.

When we are made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order, in respect of an individual who works at our school, we will take immediate action to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order. This means that pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual must not carry out teaching work. Our school has clear policy on pay arrangements whilst the person is suspended or where there is an interim prohibition order in place.

In many cases, an inquiry can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. The employer will decide on whether the individual should continue to work at our school based on consultation with the LADO who will provide relevant information we receive from the Police or Children's Social Care on whether they have any objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation of the case. The case manager should be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension.

Based on advice from the school's HR provider and/or a risk analysis drawn up with the LADO, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned.
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children.
- Redeploying to alternative work in school so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children.
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted.
- Temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or where available, work for the Local Authority or academy trust.

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension, this will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager will consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, malicious, or false.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the case manager should record the rationale and justification for such a course of action. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.

Children's Social Care services or the Police may give their view to the LADO but they cannot require the case manager to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although the case manager should give appropriate weight to their advice. The power to suspend is vested in our Governing Body who are the employers. However, where a strategy discussion, or initial assessment, concludes that there should be enquiries by the Children's Social Care Services, and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass Police and Children's Social Care services for views about whether the accused member of staff should be suspended from contact with children. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment about whether the person poses a risk of harm to children.

We have processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concerns about staff members (including supply staff and volunteers).

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

- This should be referred to the Headteacher/Head of School
- Where there are concerns/allegations about the Headteacher/Head of School, this should be referred to the chair of governors.

We will comply with guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones. Pupils' allegations or concerns about staff conduct will be taken seriously and followed up in a transparent and timely way.

We will follow where it is alleged that anyone working in the school that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers and volunteers has:

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

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching we may refer to the Police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the Police.

Members of staff, supply staff and volunteers who are currently working in any school regardless of whether the school is where the alleged abuse took place. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching will be referred to the Police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the Police.

We have a duty of care to their employees. We will ensure we provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide them with a named contact if they are suspended. Where we are not the employer of an individual, we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately and that we liaise with relevant parties, this includes supply teachers and volunteers. We will manage any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in our school very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Non recent allegations

Where an adult makes an allegation to a school that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, should be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with local authority children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Concerns and/or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

Our Governing Body and Trust have policies and processes to deal with any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold, referred to as 'low-level' concerns.

Low Level concerns

We ensure that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of our school (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:

- Encourage an open and transparent culture
- Enable our school to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- Minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

4.2.7 What is a low-level concern?

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

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- Humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent/carer, or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of our school from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings

All schools within the Spire Trust have a low-level concerns policy which contains a procedure for sharing confidentially such concerns which is clear, easy to understand and implement. Whether all low-level concerns are shared initially with the DSL (or a nominated person (such as a values champion), or with the Headteacher/Head of School is a matter for the school to decide. If the former, then the DSL should inform the Headteacher/Head of School of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern.

The Headteacher/Head of School should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in some schools, the Headteacher/Head of School may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If schools are in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they should consult with their LADO.

All schools within the Spire Trust ensure they create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

4.2.8 Managing Professional Disagreements

On occasions there will be disagreements between professionals as to how concerns are handled, and these can impact on effective working relationships. We will support staff to promote positive partnerships within our school and with other agencies and will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns and disagreements if appropriate and use the WSCP escalation procedures if necessary.

4.2.9 The Use of 'reasonable force' in School

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

- Departmental advice for our school is available; [Use of reasonable force in schools guidance](#)

Annex A Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

This part of the statutory guidance is about how school staff should respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and / or online.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. As set out in Part one of this guidance, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. As stated in KSCIE 2025, Schools play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. All Spire Trust Schools have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life.

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.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, are likely to find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. As set out in Part one of this guidance, we should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school, including intimate personal relationships.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. But it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Part Five of KCSIE (2025) provides detailed information on:

- What sexual violence and sexual harassment constitutes,
- Important context to be aware of, including what is consent, power imbalances, and developmental stages,
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), including that a child displaying HSB maybe an indication that they are a victim of abuse themselves,
- Related legal responsibilities for schools,
- Advice on a whole school approach to preventing Child on Child sexual violence and sexual harassment, and
- More detailed advice on responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, including safeguarding, and supporting both the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s).

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Systems are in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

Staff in our school not recognising, acknowledging, or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying some behaviours related to abuse can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning, effective training and effective policies will provide our school with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports. Governing Bodies and our Trust should ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

This part of the guidance does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed guidance on what to do in any or every particular case. The guidance provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for our school to consider in our decision-making process.

Ultimately, any decisions are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as Children's Social Care and the Police as required.

The immediate response to a report

Responding to the report

It is important to note that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a member of school staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have **any** concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

The school's initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

It is essential that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised.

All staff should be trained to manage a report. Local policies (and training) will dictate exactly how reports should be managed. However, effective safeguarding practice includes:

- if possible, managing reports with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy). However, this might not always be possible.
- where the report includes an online element, being aware of searching screening and confiscation advice (for schools) and UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.

The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection.

- Not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or children's social care) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to; recognising that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be **anyone** on the school staff. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child; recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse;
- Keeping in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation;
- Listening carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was;
- Considering the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second member of staff is present). However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking. Either way, **it is essential a written record is made**;
- Only recording the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Staff in our school should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care and/or part of a criminal investigation; and
- Informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

Risk assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support.

- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.

Risk assessments should be recorded (written or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

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

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

What to consider

As set out above, sexual violence and sexual abuse can happen anywhere, and all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'**. School staff should be aware of and respond appropriately to **all** reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or sexual harassment both online and offline, including those that have happened outside of the school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed.
- The ages of the children involved;
- The developmental stages of the children involved;
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature);

- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff; and
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff should act in the best interests of the child. In all cases, all staff should follow general safeguarding principles as set out throughout this guidance. **Immediate** consideration should be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) (and any other children involved/impacted).

The starting point regarding any report should always be that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It is especially important not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim, and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator(s) is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children’s social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) **should** be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school should also **carefully** consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated.—The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

Options to manage the report

It is important that we consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police, then, as a general rule, the school should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required.

There are four likely scenarios for all staff to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. It will be important in all scenarios that decisions and actions are regularly reviewed and that relevant policies are updated to reflect lessons learnt. It is particularly important to look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, the school should decide on a course of action. Consideration should be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again. The four scenarios are:

1. Manage internally

- In some cases of **sexual harassment**, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals need to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

2. Early help

- In line with 1 above, the school may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from Early Help. Early help is defined as support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. It is particularly important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) know what the Early Help process is and how and where to access support. More information on Early Help is set out in Part one of this guidance with full details of the early help process in Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Multi-agency early help will work best when placed alongside strong school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.

- Early Help and the option to manage a report internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: our school could manage internally and seek early help for both the victim and perpetrator(s) through the 'Supporting Children and Families' process.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons rationale for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

3. Referrals to children's social care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the DSL (Deputies) should make a referral to local Children's Social Care.
- At the point of referral to Children's Social Care, the DSL/ Headteacher/ Head of School or Deputy DLS will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of Children's Social Care.
- If a referral is made, Children's Social Care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.
- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school (especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy) should be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.
- School staff should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. The risk assessment will help inform any decision. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator(s), any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school should be **immediate**.
- In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school (generally led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy) should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- **All concerns**, discussions, decisions and reasons rationale for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

4. Reporting to the Police

- **Any report** to the Police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care (as above).
- It is important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and their deputies) are clear about the local process for referrals and follow that process.
- Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this should be passed on to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. The following advice may help us decide when to engage the Police and what to expect of them when they do: When to call the Police.
- Where a report has been made to the Police, the school should consult the Police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.
- At this stage, we will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.
- All Police forces in England have specialist units that investigate child abuse. The names and structures of these units are matters for local forces. It will be important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and their deputies) are aware of their local arrangements.
- In some cases, it may become clear very quickly that the Police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, it is important that the school continue to engage with specialist support for the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) as required.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), it will be important for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) to work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the Police investigation.
- If school staff or senior leaders have questions about the investigation, they should ask the Police. The Police will help and support the school as much as they can (within the constraints of any legal restrictions).
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMs our online system.

Considering bail conditions

- The Police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of Police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.
- Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People Released Under (RUI) can have no conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.
- Whatever arrangements are in place; the school will need to consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within their institution.
- Particular regard should be given to: the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim within the institution; the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness; the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).
- Careful liaison with the police investigators should help to develop a balanced setoff arrangement.

Managing any delays in the criminal process

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. School staff (HT/DSL/DDSL) **should not wait** for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children in the school.

The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school should update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all the children at the school and, if it has not already, consider any suitable action in line with their behaviour policy. This process should include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remains in the same school as the victim, the school should be very clear as to their expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school thinks are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator(s)' timetable.
- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils in the school. It will be important that the school ensure both the victim and perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as "No Further Action" (NFA) by the Police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the school should continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The

Headteacher/Head of School or DSL should discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Social Care maybe appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school, should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Ongoing response

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

- The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. School staff should beware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s).
- The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.
- School staff should be aware that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Children and young people that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- Childline provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.

- Internet Watch Foundation works internationally to remove child sexual abuse online images and videos and offers a place for the public to report them anonymously.
- Childline / IWF: Remove a nude image shared online *Report Remove* is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online, to see if they can be removed from the internet.

Victims may not talk about the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, school staff should ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or Designated Safeguarding Lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's (as far as reasonably possible). School staff should respect and support this choice.

A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While school staff should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, school staff should provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

It may be necessary for the Headteacher/Head of School or DSL to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. They should also be prepared for this and should work with Children's Social Care and other agencies as required.

It is therefore important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead knows how and where to seek support.

It is important that the school do everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.

Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

It is important that if the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate their parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

Ongoing Considerations: Victim and alleged perpetrator(s) sharing classes

Once the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) has decided what the next steps will be in terms of progressing the report, they should carefully consider again the question of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) sharing classes and sharing space at school. This will inevitably involve complex and difficult professional decisions, including considering their duty to safeguard children and their duty to educate them.

It is important each report is considered on a case-by-case basis and risk assessments are updated as appropriate. As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, the best interests of the child should come first. In all cases, all school staff should follow general safeguarding principles as per this guidance.

Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during before and after school-based activities) and on transport to and from school where appropriate. This is in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s). Close liaison with the Police is essential.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school should take suitable action, if they have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator(s) to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school should, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator(s) is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator(s) in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

In all cases, school staff should record and be able to justify their decision-making. Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the Police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the Police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the Police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator(s). Appropriate support should be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, school staff should record and be able to justify their decision-making.

All of the above should be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s) and children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, they need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s), the nature of the allegations and frequency of allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made. It is important that if an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file. Information sharing advice will help support this process.
- Stop it now - professionals looking for advice provides support for professionals in child sexual abuse prevention, so that they're well equipped to keep children safe.