

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of physical and mental health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Safeguarding Policy

2026/2027

Lindridge St Lawrence CE Primary School

‘Discovering life in all its fullness.’ *Hesed *Hamdah *Honesty *Horizons



Approved by: Helen Hadley – Head Teacher
Meryl Roberts – Chair of Governors

Date:
06/7/26

Last reviewed on: 6th July 2026

Next review due by: September 2027

AMENDMENTS TO POLICY

<i>Item</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date of change</i>	<i>By</i>

School Context

Lindridge St Lawrence CE Primary School Context

Lindridge St Lawrence CE Primary School is a small rural primary school serving the village of Lindridge and the surrounding areas of North Worcestershire. The school community includes children from a range of social, economic and family backgrounds. All staff are vigilant in their support and care of children and families and recognise that safeguarding issues can occur in any community, regardless of location or perceived risk. Staff understand that abuse, neglect and exploitation can affect children from all backgrounds and that safeguarding concerns may arise both within and outside the school environment.

The school is committed to maintaining a culture of vigilance and promoting the welfare of all pupils. Through ongoing safeguarding training, staff remain alert to local and national safeguarding issues, including:

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns;
- Online safety and the risks associated with the use of technology, social media and gaming platforms;
- Child-on-child abuse;
- Domestic abuse;
- Neglect;
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Radicalisation and extremism;
- Attendance concerns and children missing education;
- Risks associated with county lines activity;
- Family circumstances which may impact upon a child's safety, wellbeing or educational outcomes.

The school will regularly review its safeguarding practice and local context to ensure that emerging risks are identified and appropriate support is provided for children and families. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and safeguarding team work closely with Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership and other agencies where necessary to promote the safety and welfare of all pupils.

Senior leaders ensure that relevant training is kept up to date regarding vulnerabilities specific to our community and children. The school supports vulnerable children and families through a multi-agency approach to ensure a thorough and co-ordinated approach to safeguarding.

Agencies we work with include: Community Social Worker, School Nurse, Education and Welfare Officers, Behaviour Support Outreach Team, Local Community Police, Private Educational Psychologist, Learning Support Team and specialist support from Chadsgrove School, Action for Children.

Safeguarding Statement

Lindridge St Lawrence CE Primary School

Lindridge St Lawrence CE Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all its students and staff. We aim to provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child, and strive to make sure that every student in the school feels secure, well cared for, and able to reach their full potential. Every member of staff has a collective responsibility to do all they can to provide an environment and culture that helps our students feel safe and respected.

Lindridge St Lawrence CE Primary School Safeguarding Policy /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 [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#), the DfE's statutory Guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 [KCSIE 2025](#)

Part One: Safeguarding information for all staff

Schools will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)

KCSiE

- [West Midlands Regional Safeguarding Procedures](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>
- <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>
- [Promoting and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges \[gov.uk\]](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#)
- [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#)
- [Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools](#)
- [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People \[gov.uk\]](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>
- [Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools](#)
- [Harmful Online Challenges and Online Hoaxes](#)
- [Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges – Filtering and Monitoring: Core Standard](#)
- [Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance](#)
- [Out-of-School Settings: Safeguarding Guidance for Providers](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)
- <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/wscp>

In our school the following people will take the lead in these areas:

Our DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead is:
Helen Hadley

Our Data Protection officer is:
Katy Hurst

Our lead for Mental Health is:
Tracy Bourdeau

Our Designated Lead for Children who are Looked After is:
Megan Murphy

Our Operation Encompass Key Adult is:
Helen Hadley

Our Local Governing Board member with responsibility for safeguarding is:
Meryl Roberts

Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Please note that this policy and the statutory guidance behind it will now also be applicable to government funded post 16 Education; 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers, who are now required to have regard to KCSiE following the enactment of The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021. KCSiE now states that 'college' includes providers of post 16 Education as set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended): 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.

Refer to KCSiE Part One

Safeguarding information for all staff

- *What school and college staff should know and do - A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding*

This means that our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. We believe that:

- *Our pupils have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect*
- *Our pupils have the right to experience their optimum mental and physical health*
- *Every child has the right to an education and pupils need to be safe and to feel safe in school*

- *All pupils need support that matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse*
- *Our pupils have the right to express their views, feelings and wishes and voice their own values and beliefs*
- *Our pupils should be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other*
- *Our pupils have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, social and mental health needs as well as their educational needs. Our school will ensure clear systems and processes are in place to enable identification of these needs. Including consideration of when mental health needs may become a safeguarding need.*
- *Our school will contribute to the prevention of abuse, risk/involvement in serious violent crime, victimisation, bullying (including homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and cyber bullying), exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours*

All staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding pupils and protecting them from abuse and considering when mental health may become a safeguarding issue.

Overall aims:

This policy will contribute to the protection and safeguarding of our pupils and promote their welfare by:

- Adopting a Whole school approach to safeguarding
- Making clear the need for ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development in schools and colleges
- Clarifying standards of behaviour for staff and pupils
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient and robust ethos in the school, built on mutual respect and shared values
- Introducing appropriate work within the curriculum
- Encouraging pupils and parents to participate
- Alerting staff to the signs and indicators that all may not be well
- Developing staff awareness of the causes of abuse
- Developing staff awareness of the risks and vulnerabilities that their pupils may face
- Addressing concerns at the earliest possible stage
- Reducing the potential risks pupils face of being exposed to multiple harms including violence, extremism, exploitation, discrimination or victimisation
- Recognising risk and supporting online safety for pupils in school and in the home

This means that In our school we will:

- *Identify and protect all pupils especially those identified as vulnerable pupils*
- *Identify individual needs as early as possible; gain the voice and lived experience of vulnerable pupils and design plans to address those needs*
- *Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and other agencies*

Our policy extends to any establishment our school commissions to deliver education to our pupils on our behalf including alternative provision settings.

Our Governors will ensure that any commissioned agency will reflect the values, philosophy and standards of our school. Confirmation should be sought from the school that appropriate risk assessments are completed, and ongoing monitoring is undertaken.

Guiding Principles

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

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

This means that In our school:

- *All governors, staff and any other stakeholders will be aware of the procedures and identified in the school policies, legal documentation and local advice for both safeguarding and Early Help.*

All staff will be enabled to listen and understand the lived experience of pupils / students by facilitating solution focused conversations appropriate to the child/young person's preferred communication style. This includes with non-verbal children, for whom appropriate strategies should be identified.

It also means that where early help is appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will liaise with other agencies and complete an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. If required to, all staff will support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help Assessment (EHA), in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

Early help cases will be kept under constant review, and if the child's situation does not improve/ is getting worse, consideration will be given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services in order to escalate the child's case.

Expectations

All staff and visitors will:

- Be familiar with this Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Understand their role in relation to safeguarding
- Be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse (See Appendix 1 for current definitions and indicators)
- Record concerns and share the record to the DSL or deputy DSLs
- Deal with disclosures of abuse from children in line with the guidance in Appendix 2, informing the DSL immediately and providing a written account as soon as possible
- Be involved, where appropriate, in the implementation of individual school-focused interventions, Early Help Assessments, Child in Need Plans and inter-agency Child Protection Plans

This means that In our school:

All staff will receive annual safeguarding training and update briefings as laid out in our annual training programme. All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse and signs to look for. Key staff will undertake more specialist safeguarding training as agreed by the School. Our LGB members will be subjected to an enhanced DBS check and Section 128 check. We will follow Safer Recruitment processes and checks for all staff including online checks. All staff will be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

All staff are aware of systems within our school, which support safeguarding, and these will be explained to them as part of staff induction /onboarding and revised yearly.

These include the:

- *Child Protection Policy.*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and*
- *All our staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.*
- *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 our staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.*
- *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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) and children's social care. Staff 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.*

What we will do when we are concerned – Early Help response

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

All staff should be aware of the school Early Help process and understand their role in it.

The child/young person's voice must remain paramount within a solution focused practice framework.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

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

This means that In our school:

All staff will notice and listen to children and young people, sharing their concerns with the DSL in writing.

Safeguarding leads will assess, plan, do and review plans.

Senior leaders will analyse safeguarding data and practice to inform strategic planning and staff CDP.

The DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up the Early Help plan or Multi Agency response. will then be reviewed regularly, and progress updated towards the goals until the unmet safeguarding needs have been addressed.

Safeguarding Issues

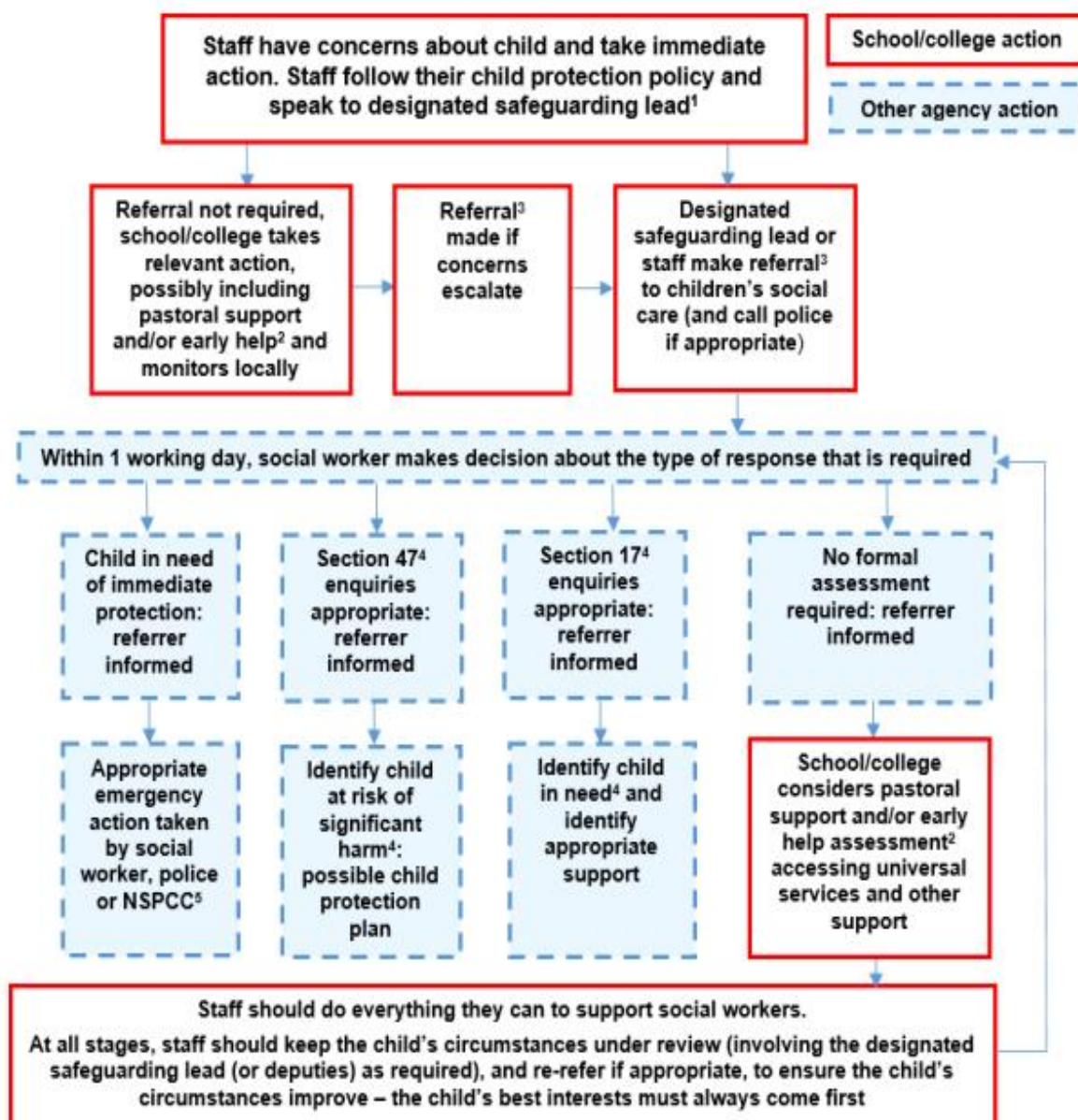
All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in Appendices.

In our school:

These appendices will be addressed within our annual Safeguarding training plan to ensure further understanding for all staff.

- *Child-on-child abuse*
 - *Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)*
 - *Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*
 - *Domestic Abuse*
 - *Private Fostering*
 - *Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)*
 - *Mental Health*
 - *Prevent*
 - *Online Safety*
 - *Use of reasonable force*
 - *Children who are LGBGQ+*
-

Actions where there are concerns about a child



Part 2 The management of Safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

- The DSL will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL. This responsibility should not be delegated.
- DSLs should help promote educational outcomes by working closely with teachers about children's welfare, safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- 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).
- Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that the DSL role is explicit in the post-holder's job description and appropriate time is made available to the DSL and deputy DSL(s) to allow them to undertake their duties.
- Safeguarding and child protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
- The DSL will ensure that the school is clear on parental responsibility for children on roll, and report all identified private fostering arrangements to the local authority.
- Safeguarding records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. Individual files will be kept for each pupil: the school will not keep family files. Files will be kept for at least the period during which the pupil is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation and guidance.
- If a pupil moves from your school, child protection and safeguarding records will be forwarded on to the DSL at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records

This DSL team in our school will be:

Lead: Helen Hadley

Deputies: Katy Hurst, Megan Murphy, Tracy Bourdeau

Any steps taken to support a child/ young person who has a safeguarding vulnerability must be reported to the lead DSL or DDSL.

We havemonitoring systems to ensure online safety and safeguarding monitoring online.

Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the DSL feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to support an individual child and/or family. A written record will be made of what information has been shared, with whom, and when. Because we use CPOMs and store our records electronically we do not hold paper files.

We will not disclose to a parent any information held on a child/young person if this would put the child at risk of significant harm

We will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date.

This will allow the new setting to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the pupils arrive.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding is about the impact of the public/social context on young people's lives, and consequently their safety. It seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people. As an approach it looks at how interventions can change the processes and environments, to make them safer for all young people, as opposed to focussing on an individual.

This means In our school:

DSLs will consider contextual safeguarding and give due regard to the effectiveness of the school safeguarding system within the wider system. This will be evidenced in:

- *Informal and formal assessments of need/ risk for the child*
- *Case discussions in DSL supervision sessions*

Mental Health Lead

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

Mental health support

Additional information has been added to help schools prevent and tackle bullying and support pupils whose mental health problems manifest themselves in behaviour.

Department for Education (DfE) (2017) Preventing bullying.

Government publication preventing and tackling bullying

Department for Education (DfE) (2018) Mental health and behaviour in schools

Government publication mental health and behaviour in schools 2

Schools and colleges may choose to appoint a senior mental health lead, though this is not mandatory. The senior mental health lead should be supported by the senior leadership team and could be the pastoral lead, special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) or DSL.

In our school this means that:

- *All staff will be alert to signs of mental ill-health and be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation*
- *All staff will take immediate action and speak to a DSL if they have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern*
- *We take seriously our organisational and professional role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of children/young people through:*
- ***Prevention:*** *creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos;*
- ***Identification:*** *recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible;*
- ***Early support:*** *helping pupils to access evidence based early support and interventions; and*
- ***Access to specialist support:*** *working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment*

The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

- The governing body must appoint a designated teacher (in non-maintained schools and colleges an appropriately trained teacher should take the lead) and should work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.
- Designated teachers will have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children/ young people who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Worcester Children First has ongoing responsibilities to the young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers.

Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Children with a social worker may face barriers to education because of complex circumstances
- Effective support for children with a social worker needs education settings and local authorities to work together. All agencies can play a crucial role in establishing a culture where every child is able to make progress.
- Education settings and local authorities will have different responsibilities but establishing shared priorities can help to drive change for children.

Virtual school heads should identify and engage with key professionals such as designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, headteachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads, other local authority officers, including Designated Social Care Officers for SEND, where they exist. to help them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children.

In our school the Designated Teacher (DT) is:

Name: Megan Murphy

Our Designated Teacher will:

- *Work with the Virtual School to provide the most appropriate support utilising the pupil premium plus to ensure they meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan.*
- *Work with the Virtual School headteacher to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.*

Our school will work with partners to effectively identify the needs of children with a social worker and ensure they can access interventions that make a difference to their education. The DT will continue to support any care leavers and families and liaise with Worcester Children First to ensure they continue to access interventions as required.

The Virtual School Head Teacher has non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker. The DT will work with the Virtual School Head Teacher to identify risks and support for LAC and Post LAC pupils within their care.

The Governing Body

Governing bodies and proprietors have strategic responsibility for the schools/colleges safeguarding arrangements and therefore should ensure that there are appropriate policies

and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare:

- The school operates "Safer Recruitment" procedures and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and relevant volunteers (including members of the governing body)
- The Headteachers and all other staff who work with **children and young people** undertake safeguarding training on an annual basis with additional updates as necessary within a two-year framework and a training record maintained
- Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It should be recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding & child protection and their responsibilities
- The school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay
- All governors will be equipped at the point of induction with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to assure themselves that the schools safeguarding policy and procedures are effective and deliver a robust whole school approach to safeguarding
- The Local governing body has a written policy and procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff, visitors, volunteers or governors that complies with all BSCP procedures
- The Nominated Governor is responsible for liaising with the Headteacher and DSL over all matters regarding safeguarding and child protection issues. The governor role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils.

In our school this means that:

All governors must read and implement part 2 of 'KCSiE'

Our nominated governor for safeguarding and child protection is:

Name: Meryl Roberts

This governor will receive safeguarding training relevant to the governance role and this will be updated at least every two years with annual refresher training.

All our Governors will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction.

The governing body will review all policies/procedures that relate to safeguarding and child protection annually.

The governing body will ensure that school has a robust RSE / PSHE programme to ensure pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe both online and offline.

The governing body will review all policies/procedures that relate to safeguarding and child protection annually.

The Headteacher (DSL) will produce a report at least annually for governors and ensure the annual Section 175 safeguarding self-assessment is completed and submitted on time.

In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will take responsibility for contacting the LADO if required and all staff are informed of their own right to contact the LADO should they not be in agreement with the Chair of Governors or Headteacher in any allegation.

Information Sharing

- Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes
- It is important that governing bodies and proprietors 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.

In our school this means that:

- *School and college staff should be 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 local authority children's social care.*
- *Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.*
- *This includes:*
 - *being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and should be 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. It would be legitimate to share information without consent where: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; and, if to gain consent would place a child at risk, and*
 - *for schools, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harm 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 schools should seek independent legal advice.*

Alternative Provision

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

The cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings 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:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision> - DFE statutory guidance and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school> - DFE statutory guidance

We are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to.

The DSL will ensure that written confirmation by means of a letter of assurance has been obtained by any alternative provision used by the school.

Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and college approach to online safety empowers a school or college 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. 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, and extremism.

contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention 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 nonconsensual 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/>).

In our school this means that:

- *School will have robust online safety policies that are read and adhered to by all staff and a condensed version given to all visitors and contractors as they enter the building*
- *School will have robust monitoring and filtering systems monitored independently and clear records of outcomes of any concerns raised.*

The following should be read in conjunction with the school Safeguarding Policy:

- *Online safety policy*
- *IT Acceptable user policy*
- *IT Social media staff guidance and protocol*
- *Mobile Phone policy*

Concerns or allegations about another staff member.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure there are procedures in place as described in paragraph 69 – 71 of KCSIE 2025 to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold, about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors). 'Low-level' concerns should be addressed as set out in Section two of Part four of KCSIE 2025

See also part 4

In our school this means that:

- *All staff will have training and will have read the Low Level concerns policy*
- *All staff will have read the WCF Allegations of Abuse against staff policy*
- *All staff will have clear understanding of the procedures*
- *Whistleblowing policy*

Part Three Safer Recruitment

Safer recruitment and selection

The school should follow part 3 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSiE) and pay full regard to 'Safer Recruitment' requirements including but not limited to:

- verifying candidates' identity and academic or vocational qualifications
- online searches for short listed candidates
- obtaining professional and character references
- checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job,
- UK Right to Work
- clear enhanced DBS check
- any further checks as appropriate to gain all the relevant information to enable checks on suitability to work with children.

Evidence of these checks must be recorded on the Single Central Record.

All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils.

This means that in our school:

The following school staff have undertaken Safer Recruitment training:

Helen Hadley, Katy Hurst and Mark Pickford

The following members of the governing body have also been trained:

Meryl Roberts and Mark Wild

One of these will be involved in all staff recruitment processes and sit on the recruitment panel.

Induction /Onboarding

All staff, especially newly recruited staff, must be aware of systems within their setting which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction / onboarding.

Staff support

- Regular safeguarding supervision will be offered to the Lead DSL within school via the WCC Safeguarding SLA
- DSLs and DDSLs will be supported to access training as appropriate including training in behaviour and mental health.

Our staff induction / onboarding process will cover:

- *The Safeguarding & Child Protection policy*
- *The Behaviour Policy*
- *The Staff Code of Conduct*

- *Whistleblowing Policy*
- *The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education*
- *The role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies)*

Copies of policies and a copy of part one of KSCIE is provided to staff at induction. Access to all policies will be available through the Staff Handbook online.

We recognise the importance of practice oversight and multiple perspectives in safeguarding and child protection work. We will support staff by providing opportunities for reflective practice including opportunity to talk through all aspects of safeguarding work within education with the DSL and to seek further support as appropriate.

Single Central Register

Schools and colleges must maintain a single central record of pre-appointment checks, referred to in the Regulations as “the register” and more commonly known as “the single central record”.

The single central record must cover the following people:

- for schools, all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff, even if they work for one day

The minimum information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried routes) is set out below.

For agency and third-party supply staff, schools and colleges must include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, the date this confirmation was received and whether details of any enhanced DBS certificate have been provided in respect of the member of staff

This means that in our school:

The Single Central Record (SCR) will indicate whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed or certificate obtained:

- *an identity check (identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website);*
- *a standalone children's barred list check;*
- *an enhanced DBS check (including a children's barred list check where appropriate);*
- *a prohibition from teaching check;*
- *further checks on individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK;*
- *a check of professional qualifications, where required; and*
- *a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.*

The school maintains and monitors its own Single Central Record in line with statutory requirements. The Single Central Record is regularly reviewed by the Headteacher and other designated senior leaders to ensure that all required recruitment and vetting checks have been completed and accurately recorded. In addition, the Governing Body will undertake periodic monitoring of the Single Central Record as part of its safeguarding oversight and assurance responsibilities.

Part four: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

Schools must manage cases of concerns/allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college.

Where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for persons under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates 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.

This means that in our school:

- *The Headteacher, senior leaders and all staff will follow Worcestershire County Council procedures and statutory guidance relating to managing allegations against staff, including Keeping Children Safe in Education and local safeguarding partnership procedures.*
- *All staff will read and understand the school's **Managing Allegations Against Staff** policy and procedures.*
- *Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, the **Headteacher** will act in accordance with the school's procedures and seek advice from the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** where appropriate.*
- *Where an allegation is made against the **Headteacher**, the matter will be referred to the **Chair of Governors**, who will liaise with the LADO and Worcestershire County Council as required.*
- *The Headteacher or Chair of Governors (as appropriate) will contact the **Worcestershire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** for advice and guidance on **01905 846221**.*
- *Advice and support will be sought from **Worcestershire County Council Human Resources** where required.*
- *All staff will receive safeguarding training and will read and understand the school's **Low-Level Concerns Policy**.*
- *All staff will read and understand the school's **Whistleblowing Policy** and will feel confident in raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice.*
- *All staff will have a clear understanding of the procedures for reporting concerns, allegations, low-level concerns and safeguarding issues.*

Initial response to an allegation

- Where the school identifies that a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, they should contact local authority children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately

This means that in our school:

The designated safeguarding lead or deputy is responsible for ensuring the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority.

The school will

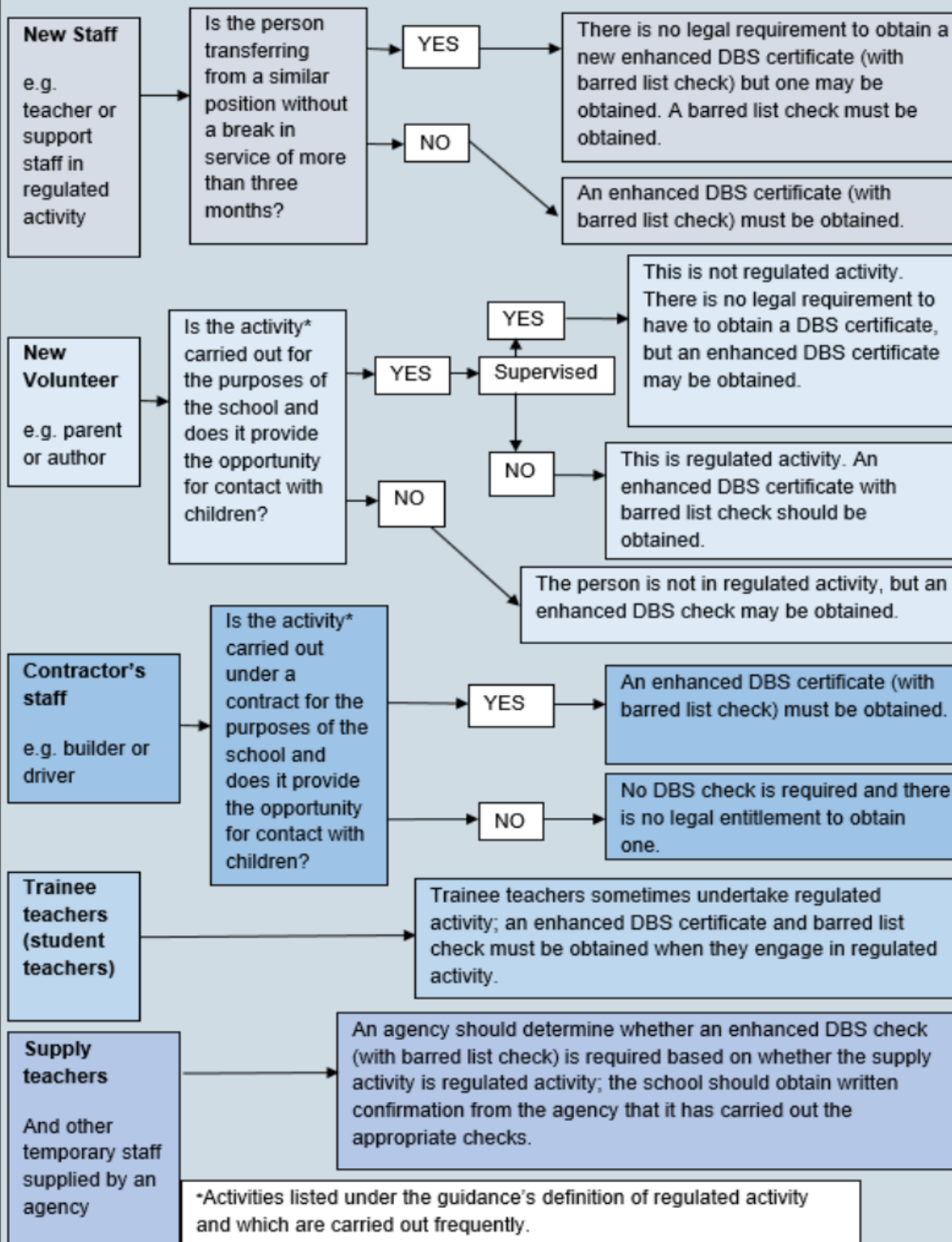
- *apply common sense and judgement*
- *deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently, and provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.*

Confidentiality and information sharing

In an allegations management meeting or during the initial assessment of the case, the agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2011 amended the Education Act 2002, to introduce reporting restrictions. These provisions made it an offence (except in the limited circumstance expressly permitted by the legislation), for any person to publish any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a child from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation).

FLOWCHART OF DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS AND BARRED LIST CHECKS



Annex A taken from KCSIE 2025

Annex C: Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school or college leadership team, is appointed to the role of 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 should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

The designated safeguarding lead should have the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively. Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding leads. Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable. It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

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

Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
 - act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
-

- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.
- as required, liaise with the “case manager” (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college and senior mental health leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.

This includes:

- ensuring that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
- supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

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

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

Records should include:

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

We recognise that in some settings there may be a different strategic lead for promoting the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker, particularly in larger schools or colleges. Where this is the case, it is important that the DSL works closely with the lead to provide strategic oversight for the outcomes of these children and young people.

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

Where children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days

of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named person with oversight for SEND in colleges, are aware as required.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Raising awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

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

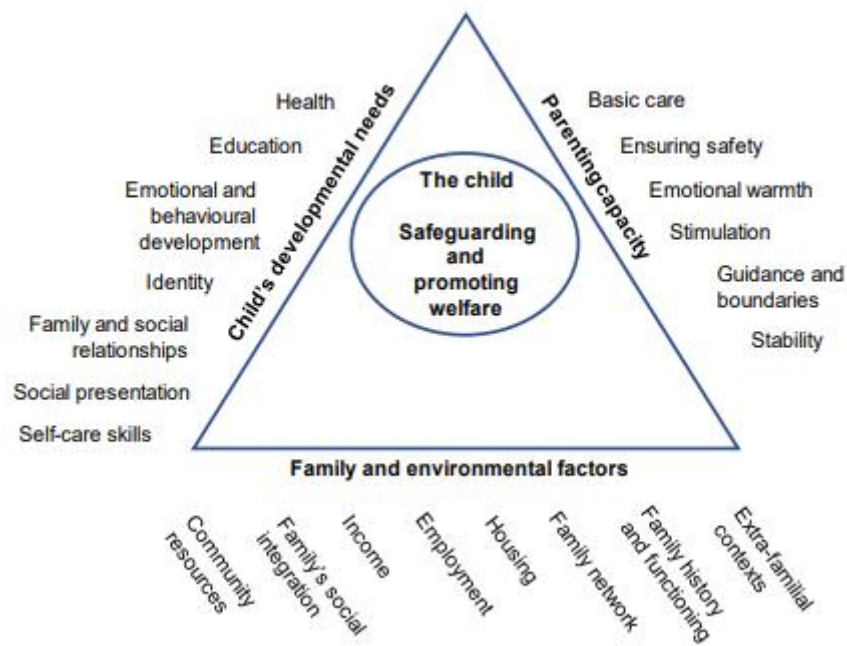
Training, knowledge and skills

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should also undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements
 - have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
 - understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
 - are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
 - understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
-

- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation

Figure 1. Assessment framework when making a referral (*Working together to safeguard children 2023*)



Child-on-child abuse

What is it?

Child on Child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to hurt others physically, sexually or emotionally.

As a school we adopt 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

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- Children can abuse other children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.
- Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

Why should we be concerned?

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

What to look out for?

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
 - Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
 - All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
 - Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
-

- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery?
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-child-on-child-abuse/>

Private Fostering

What is it?

When someone other than a parent or close relative becomes responsible for the day-to-day care and accommodation of a child under 16 (or 18, if the child has disabilities). A private foster carer could be:

- A friend of the family
- Someone previously unknown to the family who is willing to care for the child
- A member of the extended family (grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and step-parents **don't** count as private foster carers)
- The arrangement is private fostering if it will last for 28 days or more, and the parent(s) or private foster carer(s) must notify the local authority so it can make sure the child will stay safe and well.

Why should we be concerned?

Children who are privately fostered are more likely to potentially need early help. They may also be 'hidden' if the arrangement isn't reported to the local authority, and could be living in unsafe arrangements, or be at risk of abuse.

One high-profile example is Victoria Climbié, who was privately fostered and tragically murdered in 2000 after being abused in her private fostering arrangement.

What should I look out for?

- A new arrival, particularly from abroad, or a child moving without a given reason
- A child mentioning living with someone other than their family
- A child being dropped off or picked up by different adults
- Carers who are vague about the child's routines, needs and education

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, have an immediate discussion with the school DSL or DDSL who can contact the Family Front Door or contact the police if appropriate

Further reading

[Private fostering: better information, better understanding, GOV.UK - Ofsted](#)

[Children Act 1989: private fostering](#)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

What is it?

CSE is the process where a child, male or female under the age of 18, is exploited for sexual purposes. They may be knowingly or unknowingly coerced into sexual activity inappropriate for their age. It is a form of child abuse where the child receives something e.g. affection, gifts, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, money or accommodation as a result of performing, and or allowing others to perform on them, sexual activities.

In the UK, the law defines a child as a person under the age of 18. Even though the legal age of consent to sexual activity is age 16, due to the abusive nature, CSE applies to all children up to the age of 18. Sexual activity is a broad term but includes watching sexual acts, inciting sexual activity and penetrative sexual acts. Sexual activity which involves children under the age of 16 is unlawful. However, a court will take in account the circumstances of child-to-child sexual activity. Sexual activity which involves children under the age of 13 is unlawful as they are deemed not to have legal capacity to consent to such activity.

Why should we be concerned?

Data gathered from Freedom of Information requests has shown that in the last six years, 34,000 online grooming offences were recorded by UK police forces, a quarter of which were victims under the age of 12. In cases where gender was known, 83% of victims were girls. Where the method of these communications was recorded, 47% of cases involved the use of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp and 26% involved use of Snapchat. A total of 6,350 crimes related to sexual communication were recorded in the year to the end of March 2023, representing an 82% rise since the offence was introduced in 2017.

What should I look out for?

In CSE, the term grooming describes the process abusers use to manipulate a child. This includes physical and mental manipulation in order for the perpetrator to take advantage of the child sexually. Such perpetrators are often patient and develop the grooming process over a long period of time to achieve their aim.

Typical grooming tactics are:

- Making the child feel special;
 - Pretending to feel like or have similar experiences of the child;
 - Careful construction of the relationship to get to know all about the child;
 - Pretending the relationship is friendship or support, non-sexual;
 - Giving the child things they need or want;
 - A gradual increasing physical contact or pressuring for exploitative activity;
-

- Construction of the need for secrecy;
- Using other children or young people to help groom.

As with other forms of child abuse there are no definitive indicators that will make a child susceptible to CSE but the following should be considered:

- Chaotic dysfunctional home life;
- Poor or problematic parenting, including parental mental health issues;
- A history of abuse or neglect;
- Domestic violence in the home;
- Bereavement;
- Low self-esteem or self-worth;
- SEND;
- Uncertainty of sexual orientation;
- Association with children who are or have been sexually exploited;
- Homelessness or living in residential care;
- Where the child is a young carer;
- Gang association, including 'county lines'

Indicators that a child may be already exposed to CSE may include:

- Absence from education;
- Reduced contact with friends and or family;
- Frequently going missing from home or care;
- Association with gangs;
- Self-harming;
- Poor mental health;
- Physical injury;
- Sexually transmitted infections;
- Pregnancy and terminations;
- Substance misuse;
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts;
- Having unexplained items or possessions;
- Sexual activity with someone of an older age;
- Inappropriate relationships on social media
- Encouraging others into exploitative relationships/situations.

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, have an immediate discussion with the school DSL or DDSL who can contact the Family Front Door or contact the police if appropriate

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/child-abuse-and-harm/child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation>

Online Safety

What is it?

In line with Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) and the Online Safety Act, all educational settings have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children and young people and this includes all aspects of e-safety.

To fulfil this they have a dual responsibility:

- To ensure the setting has e-safety measures in place and that they are effective. This includes organisational e-safety procedures together with measures to protect data management and storage;
- To educate pupils about all aspects of e-safety, particularly online safety. This includes usage within the setting, whilst on educational visits e.g. cameras and other smart devices and safe private use
- 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, and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention 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 nonconsensual 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/>).

Why should we be concerned?

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and college approach to online safety empowers a school or college 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.

Harmful content:

- Sexual content – from suggestive to images and violent pornography
 - Violent or distressing content
 - Online hate content – prejudiced or hateful content
-

- Harmful online challenges and hoaxes – involving dangerous acts, self harm and suicide hoaxes
- Value-based content – terror and extremist content
- Radicalisation online – see Prevent
- Biased content – fake news, normalizing harmful behaviours such as self harm, eating disorders and suicide
- Misinformation and disinformation – information designed to mislead or disinform

Harmful behaviours:

- Cyberbullying
- Trolling – anti social behaviour deliberately to cause conflict or hostility to others
- Sexual content – Children under the age of 13 cannot legally consent to any form of offline or online sexual activity
- Pornography
- Sexting – sending sexual messages, photos or videos
- Nude and Semi-nude image sharing – If an intimate image is shared with the intent to cause alarm, distress, or humiliation, perpetrators could face a maximum of two years imprisonment. In addition, sharing an intimate image without consent, or a reasonable belief of consent, to obtain sexual gratification could result in the perpetrator also being made subject to the sex offenders register.

Monitoring and Filtering:

The Department for Education's filtering and monitoring standards set out that schools and colleges 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
- We use Securix monitoring system to meet the legal and moral requirements of online safety in our school.

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, have an immediate discussion with the school DSL or DDSL who can contact the Family Front Door or contact the police if appropriate

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools/teaching-online-safety-in-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

What is it?

FGM is a form of child abuse that can lead to extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls. The term FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. In general, girls undergo female genital cutting around the age of 3, though this may vary depending on the type of ritual/custom of the local village, region or belief system.

Why should we be concerned?

The immediate health consequences of FGM may include:

- Fatality as a result of shock, haemorrhage or septicaemia;
 - Infection due to insanitary conditions;
 - Transmission of the HIV virus which can cause AIDS;
 - Extreme levels of pain, fear, anxiety and discomfort.
-
- FGM has many long-term physiological, sexual and psychological effects some of which include:
 - Kidney and or recurrent urinary retention/infection;
 - Genital malformation, cysts, keloid scar formation; • Delayed menarche (first menstrual cycle);
 - Chronic pelvic complications;
 - Sexual frigidity, pain during sex, lack of pleasurable sensation;
 - Obstetric complications;
 - Mental health difficulties, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

What should I look out for?

Mandatory direct reporting to the police is required if the professional has:

"visually confirmed FGM has taken place and there is no reason to believe the act was carried out in relation to physical or mental health purposes or connected to labour or birth;"

or

"directly experienced a verbal disclosure that FGM has been carried out."

There are no circumstances in which teachers or social workers should examine a girl. It is possible however that an educator may see something which appears to show that FGM may have taken place e.g. changing a nappy, assisting toileting, SEND

intimate care needs. In such circumstances, the teacher must make a report under the duty, but should not conduct any further examination of the child

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- It is important to note that professionals are not required to report directly to the Police in relation to at-risk or suspected cases, or where the woman is over 18. In these cases, you should follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures and reporting protocols. However, as with all aspects of Child Protection, where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police.

FGM – Making a report to the police

- Reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, best practice being by the close of the next working day. The legislation requires you to make a report to the police force area within which the girl resides. Reports can be made in writing or orally by calling the single non-emergency number 101. You will be required to share the following information:
- An explanation of why you are making a report under FGM duty;
- Your details – name, place of work, role, contact details and availability;
- Contact details of your organisation's safeguarding lead;
- The girl's details – name, age, date of birth and address.

The Police will issue a reference number which should be recorded in the safeguarding record. The record should include details of the discussion and any decisions made.

Further reading

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Forced marriage and honour based abuse

What is it?

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage. It is also when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse.

Forced marriage is illegal in the UK. It is a form of domestic abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

- physical: for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence
- emotional and psychological: for example, making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family

Financial abuse, for example taking someone's wages, may also be a factor. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The terms 'honour' crime, '**honour'-based abuse** and 'honour'-based violence relate to a variety of offences (mainly but not exclusively against women and girls), including emotional abuse, controlling and coercive behaviour, physical assault, imprisonment and murder, with the victim often being punished by their family or community for undermining what the family or community perceives to be the correct code of behaviour. Such behaviour is also likely to amount to domestic abuse and may comprise psychological, emotional and financial abuse, as well as physical abuse.

In transgressing what is perceived to be the correct code of behaviour in the eyes of the family or the community, the victim shows that they have not followed their family's and/or community's rules of behaviour and this is said to be to the 'shame' or 'dishonour' of the family and/or community.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqYPlzXq8NE> 7 minute video

What can I do?

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Home Office unit which leads on the government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals).

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to:

- victims and potential victims of forced marriage
- professionals dealing with cases

The FMU public helpline can help with:

- safety advice
- providing assistance when an unwanted spouse is due to move to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases)
- where possible, assistance in repatriation of victims held against their will overseas

The FMU undertakes an extensive training and awareness programme targeting both professionals and potential victims and carries out a range of work to raise awareness.

What should I look out for?

- All professionals working with suspected or actual victims of forced marriage and 'honour'-based abuse need to be aware of the "one chance" rule. That is, they may only have one opportunity to speak to a victim or potential victim and may possibly only have one chance to save a life. As a result, all professionals working within statutory agencies need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they are faced with forced marriage cases. If the victim is allowed to leave without the appropriate support and advice being offered, that one chance might be wasted.
- Whatever someone's circumstances, they have rights that should always be respected such as their personal safety and the right to receive accurate information about their rights and choices. Professionals should listen to the victim and respect their wishes whenever possible.
- However, there may be times when someone wants to take a course of action that may place them at risk. On these occasions, professionals should explain all the risks and adopt the necessary child or adult protection precautions.
- Young people, especially those aged 16 and 17, can present specific difficulties to agencies as there may be occasions when it is appropriate to use both child and adult protection frameworks. For example, some 16 and 17 year olds may not wish to enter the care system but prefer to access refuge accommodation. Whatever the case, professionals should be led by the wishes of the victim.
- Disclosures of forced marriage should not be dismissed as merely a 'family matter'. For many people, seeking help from an agency is a last resort and therefore all disclosures of forced marriage must be taken seriously.

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- Involving families in cases of forced marriage (i.e. visiting the family to ask them whether they are intending to force their child to marry or writing a letter to the family requesting a meeting about their child's allegation) is dangerous and should NOT be a course of action.

Do not:

- Use family members, friends, neighbours or those with influence in the community as interpreters – people may feel embarrassed to discuss personal
-

issues in front of them and sensitive information may be passed on to others and place the person in danger.

- Furthermore, such an interpreter may deliberately mislead professionals and/or encourage the person to drop the complaint and submit to their family's wishes.

Further reading

The FMU is always happy to talk to frontline professionals handling cases of forced marriage at any stage in a case. It can offer further information and advice on the wide range of tools available to tackle forced marriage, including legal remedies, overseas assistance, and how to approach victims. FMU staff can also speak at conferences or run training workshops for teams of frontline practitioners.

Resources, including downloadable leaflets in a range of languages, and posters, can be found at: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage.

Call: 020 7008 0151 (Monday-Friday: 09.00-17.00 [UK time])

Call from abroad: 0044 20 7008 0151

Email: fm@fcdo.gov.uk

Web: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

[DFE Right to Choose](#)

Use of reasonable force in schools.

What is it?

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

Communicating the school's approach:

- Every school is required to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents and pupils. The governing body should notify the headteacher that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force.
- Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.
- Schools should **not** have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.
- It is good practice to ensure staff, where possible, are appropriately trained.
- Parents should be informed of incidents when reasonable force has been used and why it was used.
- Recording of the incident should be in line with the school safeguarding record policy and procedures.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
 - prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
 - prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
 - prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
 - restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
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What about other physical contact with pupils?

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- To give first aid

Further reading

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a819959ed915d74e6233224/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I'm worried that if I use force a pupil or parent could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?

A: Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

Q: How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?

A: The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force.

Q: What about school trips?

A: The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils, and this includes while on school trips.

Q: Can force be used on pupils with SEN or disabilities?

A: Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned.

Prevent

What is it?

The Labour government introduced the Prevent strategy in 2006 as part of the counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. Subsequent UK parties in government office have maintained the Prevent strategy whilst making ongoing revisions to reflect the parameters related to international terrorism threats of the time. In 2011, the Prevent strategy was explicitly changed to deal with all forms of terrorism as well as non-violent extremism.

The statutory guidance was update and came into force in December 2023.

The two key legislative documents for educational settings, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Working Together to Safeguard Children, identify that children may be susceptible to various forms of abuse, including influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. This includes being vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and individuals they come across daily.

All schools, academies and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015), placing wider safeguarding obligations on staff regarding the prevention of and recognition of those at risk of radicalisation in the exercise of their work. This is known as the Prevent duty, and all education providers should consider the needs of children, young people and adult learners at each stage of the safeguarding process. Providers should consider radicalisation concerns in line with their existing safeguarding processes, skills and experience

Why should we be concerned?

The overall counterterrorism strategy called CONTEST has 4 key areas of work known as the '4 P strands':

1. **PREVENT** – stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;
2. **PURSUE** – stop terrorist attacks and prosecute wherever possible;
3. **PROTECT** – strengthen protection against terrorist attacks in the UK and overseas interests;
4. **PREPARE** – mitigate terrorist attacks when they can't be stopped.

The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Prevent's objectives are to:

- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism;
- Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation;
- Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

What should I look out for?

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.
- 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

What should I do if I have concerns?

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, have an immediate discussion with the school DSL or DDSL who can contact the Family Front Door or contact the police if appropriate

The school or college’s designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

How to make a referral to the Prevent Team at West Mercia Police

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/alpha/prevent-referral/>

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation>

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) / County Lines

What is it?

“Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

“County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.”

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft. However, many of the characteristics of county lines exploitation will be present in other forms of child criminal exploitation. Likewise, victims of county lines may also experience other overlapping forms of exploitation, such as sexual, in addition to criminal.

It is important to stress that not all children involved in ‘county lines’ experience dysfunctional home lives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdYq2dhQ3qc> 10 min information video

Why should we be concerned?

Criminal exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults for the supply of drugs, and transportation of the associated money and weapons, has a devastating impact on victims, families and local communities.

What should I look out for?

Any child, young person or vulnerable adult could be a victim of county lines exploitation as exploiters continue to adapt who they target to avoid detection.

Some of the factors that may heighten a person’s vulnerability include:

- having contact with the criminal justice system
 - having experience of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse/exploitation or a lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (including domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or parental criminal involvement) – trauma,
-

including adverse childhood experiences, can negatively impact on an individual's ability to develop trusted relationships or access support services;

- social isolation or social difficulties – the lack of a support network can mean someone is less able to get help;
- economic vulnerability – offers of material possessions or money for victims or their family may be more readily accepted out of a feeling of necessity and lack of legitimate financial alternatives;
- homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- connections with other people in gangs – some individuals are targeted through family or friends who are already involved in criminal activity themselves and sometimes a drug debt owed by them is passed on to peers or family members;
- having a physical or learning disability, or being neurodivergent – victims may be less able to recognise they are being exploited, or less able to communicate it or access support;
- having mental health issues – exploiters may target poor emotional wellbeing or low self-esteem;
- having substance misuse issues – victims are sometimes given substances in lieu of payment;
- being in or leaving care
- being excluded from mainstream education, and/or a pupil at an alternative provision such as a pupil referral unit – factors influencing a child's exclusion may indicate they are exposed to exploitation.
- insecure immigration status – for example, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and refugees may have a number of vulnerability factors that can increase their exposure to exploitation, including social/cultural isolation on arrival to the country and potentially links to organised crime from their journey.

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, have an immediate discussion with the school DSL or DDSL who can contact the Family Front Door or contact the police if appropriate

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning

What is it?

Children and young people may identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or they may be exploring or questioning their sexual orientation or gender. Some children may be questioning their gender and may require sensitive, individualised support which takes account of their wellbeing, safeguarding needs, age, maturity and personal circumstances. Schools and colleges should approach these situations carefully, ensuring that the child's welfare remains paramount. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[familyandc...health.com\]](#)

Why should we be concerned?

Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is **not in itself a risk factor for harm**. However, children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, perceived to be so, or who are questioning their gender can be vulnerable to bullying, harassment, discrimination, prejudice-based behaviours and social isolation. These experiences can have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance and engagement with education. Staff should be alert to any indicators that a child may be experiencing harm, abuse, exploitation or peer-on-peer abuse linked to their actual or perceived identity. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)

What should I look out for?

Remember that any child or young person may be lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender, whether they have disclosed this or not. Practitioners should:

- Create an environment where children feel safe, heard and respected.
- Be aware of the potential impact of bullying, discrimination and exclusion.
- Avoid making assumptions about a child's sexuality, gender identity, family circumstances or experiences.
- Listen carefully to the child's views, wishes and feelings.
- Consider any safeguarding concerns within the context of the child's wider lived experience.
- Record and share concerns appropriately in line with safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where required.

Children who are questioning their gender may require a particularly sensitive response. Staff should ensure that decisions are made in the child's best interests, taking account of safeguarding, wellbeing, parental involvement where appropriate, and any relevant professional advice. [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[familyandc...health.com\]](#)

What can I do?

Schools should promote a culture of inclusion, respect and belonging in which all children feel safe.

You can:

- Challenge discriminatory language, bullying and prejudice-based incidents.
 - Ensure that safeguarding, RSHE and wider curriculum content reflects diversity and different types of families and relationships.
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- Provide opportunities for pupils to discuss worries and seek support from trusted adults.
- Support positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with the DSL and other professionals where a child may be vulnerable or where safeguarding concerns are identified.
- Ensure that any support offered to a child who is questioning their gender is considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, with the child's welfare as the primary consideration.

It is important to create a school culture where children feel able to share concerns, ask questions and access support when needed. Some children may not feel able to discuss these matters at home and may rely on trusted adults in school for support.

[\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[gov.uk\]](#)

Further Reading

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (Department for Education)
[\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#)
 - NSPCC – Supporting LGBT+ Children and Young People
 - Barnardo's – LGBTQ+ Hub and Resources
 - Stonewall – Supporting LGBT+ Young People
 - DfE Guidance on Gender-Questioning Children (once published/updated and linked within KCSIE)
-

Domestic Abuse

What is it?

The term domestic abuse applies to any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Whilst the majority of cases feature abuse by a partner or ex-partner, domestic abuse can also be perpetrated by a family member or carer. Such abuse may occur on a one-off incident or as a pattern of incidents which may include:

- Coercive and controlling behaviour;
- Threatening behaviour;
- Violent behaviour;
- Sexual violence;
- Degrading behaviour where the victim is made to feel worthless;
- Harassment;
- Stalking;
- Teenage relationship abuse, within their own intimate relationships;
- Financial or economic abuse;
- Online/digital abuse.

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship and can continue even after a relationship has ended. Such behaviour is not limited to incidents inside the home and may occur in public situations, via smartphone, social networking and the internet. It is important to remember that both women and men may be victims and perpetrators. Witnessing any form of domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people, this is recognised as a form of child abuse.

Why should we be concerned?

When identifying risk indicators, professionals should always consider the context of the behaviour, who is at risk, the victim's perception of risk and how risk factors interact with each other.

Victims of domestic abuse often tend to underestimate their risk of harm. They are more likely to become repeat victims than any other type of crime and as violence is repeated it gets more serious. Victims who report a domestic sexual assault tend to have a history of domestic abuse whether or not it has been reported previously. There are many factors that can stop a victim leaving an abusive relationship.

This includes:

- Gaining access to safe housing;
 - Being economically dependent on the abuser and having insufficient financial resources to live independently;
 - Being emotionally involved with their abuser;
 - Guilt that they are breaking up the family;
 - Embarrassment or shame;
-

- Religious beliefs.

Statistics indicate that 1 in 5 children in the UK are living with and are exposed to domestic violence and abuse. The impact and risks vary but all are a cause for concern.

What should I look out for?

As educational settings have regular contact with children and young people, staff are well placed to spot the signs and symptoms of a child who may be distressed. Often these settings are one of the only safe havens for children and young people witnessing and experiencing domestic abuse and violence at home. They can also be a place of safety for adult victims to access and receive support.

What can we do?

Protective factors in educational settings include:

- Engagement with the parent/carer as a potential source of help, signposting them to appropriate support;
- Ensuring positive relationships are demonstrated consistently in the setting that are built on trust, safety and security;
- Promote pupil wellbeing and help children talk about worries that might be affecting them;
- Curriculum content which includes a focus on effective problem-solving and resolving disagreements e.g. anti-bullying;
- Staff demonstrating positive relationships, effective conflict management using effective restorative approaches when conflict arises to help children avoid repeating family patterns of behaviour;
- Challenging stereotypes and unhealthy gender power dynamics, helping children form healthy relationships;
- Buddy systems to help induct new pupils who have moved after being affected by domestic violence/abuse;
- Being aware of managing risk e.g. not sending communications home that may put parents and families at risk;
- Ensuring images of children who have fled domestic abuse are not used/shared on the organisation's website or on social media;
- Knowing what support there is locally for parents/carers affected by domestic abuse;
- Running homework clubs where children affected by domestic abuse/violence can safely complete their work;

What should I do if I have concerns?

- Report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy and make a written record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, have an immediate discussion with the school DSL or DDSL who can contact the Family Front Door or contact the police if appropriate

Support and help networks

- Children's social care;
- The Police;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- Free advice from an Education Psychologist via the OE Teachers' National Helpline
- Other Local Authority departments e.g. housing;
- The National Centre for Domestic Violence (who offer a free emergency injunction service for those who have suffered or been threatened with domestic violence. This enables victims to apply for an emergency court injunction);
- The National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by the charity Refuge. The 24 hour helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence. The website also offers a call service which enables a support call to be booked at a safe time
- Women's aid
- Refuge 0808 2000247

Further reading

[Women's aid](#)

[Refuge](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>

Mental Health

What is it?

One in eight children will experience a mental health problem and half of all lifetime cases of mental health disorders begin by the age of 14. Safeguarding the emotional wellbeing of children and young people should be considered as equally as important as protecting their physical health. Protecting and maintaining mental health allows children and young people to develop resilience, an essential component to help them cope with challenges and to grow into well-rounded, healthy adults. Building resilience is a key factor in offsetting risk. The more resilience we can foster, the better the proposed outcomes for a child will be.

What can I do?

Schools have a statutory duty to promote the health and wellbeing of their pupils which includes preventing the impairment of their health or development and taking action to enable all pupils to achieve the best outcomes possible. Early intervention is a crucial element in achieving this. The role in promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing encompasses four key areas:

- **Prevention** – a whole setting approach which includes:
 - Creating and maintaining a safe and calm environment;
 - Equipping pupils to be resilient and to develop skills to manage normal stressors effectively;
 - Teaching pupils about mental wellbeing and reinforcing the positive ethos of such learning outcomes across the whole setting.
- **Identification** – which involves two key strands:
 - Recognising that certain situations/events may possibly adversely impact on mental health and wellbeing and monitoring for emerging needs;
 - Recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
- **Early support** – helping pupils, and where appropriate their families, to access support and interventions
- **Specialist support** – being aware of, developing robust links with and working effectively with external agencies. This involves referrals and access to specialist support and / or treatment for pupils. This strand also includes obtaining specialist guidance for staff to continue to best support pupils in the setting. It is essential to maintain a consistent approach between support methods used externally and those employed by the setting.

What should I look out for?

It is important to recognise that the stressful, worrying situations that are part of life affect children, even babies as young as three months old can be affected by their parents' moods. Stressors may affect children in different ways. For some children stressors may present as mild, short-term challenges, whilst others may experience

more serious and longer lasting effects to similar situations. Therefore, it is really important not to expect or assume that a mild short-term stressful situation will be reacted to in a certain expected way. For example, feeling nervous, apprehensive and stressed about tests or exams is a normal response which usually dissipates once the test or exam is completed. However, for children experiencing other additional stressors in their lives, this increase in stress and anxiety may impact more severely on their wellbeing and lead to more enduring and persistent mental health difficulties. So, we need to focus on the individual child and be vigilant to how as individuals they are coping. Staff in educational settings are not expected to be mental health professionals and should never attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, due to their frequency of contact with children, staff are well placed to identify behaviours which present as worrying or identify children who may be at risk of developing mental health issues.

There are other risk factors which should be considered in safeguarding pupils over the whole

setting population. This encompasses a complex interplay between risk factors and key protective factors. To promote and secure positive mental health, staff in educational settings must have a good understanding of risk factors and essentially the protective factors which can promote resilience. This is a complex interplay between the risk and protective factors in children's lives which ultimately counterbalance and can build resilience.

The promotion of resilience factors is a vital role of staff in educational settings which can be achieved by ensuring there are opportunities for children to, without prompting, seek out and develop trusting relationships where they feel safe to talk openly with supporting adults. This may also include acknowledging a pupil's experience of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Where behaviour is a concern, reframing conversations can be more effective in determining what may be going on for the pupil. For example, instead of asking 'what is wrong with you?', by asking 'what happened to you?' is far more likely to enable a more meaningful and useful conversation.

It is important to recognise that, much as we would hope, for some children home is not a supportive environment. Many children may not have access to supportive home lives which increases the importance of educational settings being recognised by them as a safe and affirming place, where they can develop a sense of belonging with access to adults they can talk to that they trust. To provide effective support, staff must consider the risks/experiences of pupils and have a good understanding of the protective factors that can provide resilience. In essence, these protective factors counterbalance the impact of social disadvantage and stressful life events. The table on the next page details the risk and key protective factors associated with positive mental health outcomes.

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/getting-started/primary/>

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	• Genetic influences • Low IQ and learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem	• Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the family	• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship	• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the school	• Bullying including online (cyber) • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Child-on-child abuse • Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences

		• Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
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