



Safeguarding Policy

Written by Pilar Canal - 19 December 2022

Next Review Date: December 2023

Aim

The purpose of this policy is to inform members of staff, parents, volunteers and Senior leadership team about the School's responsibilities for safeguarding children. It also aims to enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

This policy has been developed in line with government publications including: *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018), *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022), *Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* (2019), *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (2019) and *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused* (2015).

Ley 6/1995, de 28 de marzo, de Garantías de los Derechos de la Infancia y la Adolescencia.

La Ley Orgánica 1/1996, de 15 de enero, de Protección Jurídica del Menor

Ley Orgánica 8/2015, de 22 de julio, de modificación del Sistema de Protección a la Infancia y la Adolescencia

Ley 26/2015, de 28 de julio, de modificación del Sistema de Protección a la Infancia y la Adolescencia.

El Estatuto de Autonomía de la Comunidad de Madrid, approved by Ley Orgánica 3/1983, de 25 de febrero (art. 26.1.24)

The policy and its procedures apply wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even where this is away from the school, for example on an educational visit.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This is everyone's responsibility and the School expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and to consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health and/or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (*Working Together to Safeguard Children*, DfE, 2018, pg.6)

Safeguarding children means:

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

Every child without exception should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Abuse can be:

- physical abuse, for example beating or punching;
- emotional abuse, for example rejection and denial of affection;
- sexual abuse, for example sexual assault or encouraging a child to view pornographic material; and

- neglect, for example failure to provide appropriate care including warmth or medical attention.

Where a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, action will be taken to protect that child. Action will also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not in immediate danger or at risk of harm. No child or group of children should be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs.

The School will take all reasonable measures to:

- ensure that the School practices safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including members of the governing body and staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance given in Part 3 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022).
- ensure that where staff from another organisation are working with our pupils on another site, the School has received assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to those staff;
- ensure that all staff have read and understood Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022), and that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to discharge their roles and responsibilities as set out in that guidance;
- ensure that all teaching staff, and those members of non-teaching staff who work directly with pupils, have read Annex B to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022);
- listen to children and be aware that some pupils may be in need of early help or additional support, even if they are not in immediate danger or at risk of harm
- have clear systems and processes to identify mental health needs and to consider when they become a safeguarding concern;
- ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the need to identify concerns early and provide support for children as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life to prevent concerns from escalating;
- be alert to indicators of abuse and neglect both in the School and from outside and aim to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil.
- deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse and to support children who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan;
- design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
- ensure that where children are engaged in close one-to-one teaching, appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions and the additional vulnerability of children with special educational needs or disabilities;
- ensure that children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including keeping safe online, through the curriculum and PSHE, with particular regard to how children can adjust their behaviours to reduce risks and build resilience, including to radicalization, particularly through the safe use of electronic equipment and the internet.

- ensure that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material by ensuring appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place (and their effectiveness is regularly reviewed) and that there are clear rules regarding access to 3G/4G on school premises.
- take all practicable steps to ensure that School premises are as secure as circumstances permit;
- ensure that, where necessary, an appropriately trained and informed teacher is appointed to promote the educational achievement of any child who is 'looked after';
- have regard to guidance issued by the Subdirección general de protección de infancia of the comunidad de Madrid and associated regulators.

Keeping Children Safe in Education provides that the inspection of independent schools will ensure that the Independent School standard which covers the welfare, health and safety of children is met.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DSL')

- The School has appointed a member of the School's leadership team to be the DSL responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare, including online safety.
- Anyone who has concerns about the welfare of any child in the School may approach the DSL. If preferred, parents may discuss concerns in private with the child's form teacher, Principal of Year, Principal of Section, the Principal, who will notify the DSL in accordance with these procedures.
- The main responsibilities of the DSL are as set out in this document.
- If the DSL is unavailable his / her duties will be carried out by the school. Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, the DSL or the Principal will be available during school hours to discuss concerns.
- The DSL and the School Principal have undertaken appropriate child protection training and training in inter-agency working, and will attend refresher training at two-yearly intervals in line with advice from the LSCP.

Duty of employees, Senior Leadership Team and volunteers

- Every employee of the School as well as every volunteer who assists the School is under a general legal duty:
 - to provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn;
 - to be alert to the circumstances that may mean a child is in need of early help and to the indicators of abuse, neglect and to question the behaviour of children and parents so that they are able to identify cases of pupils who may be in need of help or protection;
 - to protect pupils identified as in need of early help or who are in immediate danger or at risk of harm and not to assume that a colleague will take action or share information that might be critical in keeping children safe;
 - to be aware of the School's child protection procedures and to follow them;
 - to know how to access and implement the School's child protection procedures, independently if necessary;
 - to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event in accordance with this policy; and

- to listen to children and take appropriate action, taking into account the wishes of the child, and acting in the best interests of the child and in accordance with this policy, including reporting matters of concern to the DSL and working with other services as required.
- The Senior Leadership Team ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are understood and followed by all staff, in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Senior Leadership Team are aware of their duties under the Human Rights Act (1998) and Equality Act (2010)
- The Chair of Senior Leadership Team, at the request of the Governing Body, takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements, including the management of child protection incidents on behalf of the Governing Body as a whole, liaison with external agencies where this is required and monitoring the effective operation of this policy and the School's safeguarding procedures through the annual review of safeguarding.
- Senior Leadership Team receive safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction and regularly during their term of office. This training is designed to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the School's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.
- The School recognises the expertise of staff in safeguarding matters. All staff are encouraged to contribute to the development of this Safeguarding Policy, and related procedures, either through direct discussion with the DSL or via the School's Safeguarding Committee which meets termly and which all staff are invited to attend.

Training

- Induction training on the School's child protection procedures will be provided to all staff, including temporary staff, and volunteers newly appointed. The training will include: general safeguarding and child protection training, including in online safety; this policy (which also includes the School's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education and the policy and procedures to deal with child on child abuse); the School's Code of Conduct for Staff; the Acceptable Use of ICT for Staff policy; the Behaviour policy (for pupils) which must be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying policy; the role and identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL; a copy of Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022).
- The School will ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding updates via email, in staff meetings or through online training sessions. These will take place at least annually.
- The child protection training provided to staff considers the circumstances that suggest a child may be in need of early help and also the types and signs of abuse of which staff should be aware.
- All staff receiving induction training and/or child protection training will be required to confirm that they have received and understood the information covered in the training.

Procedures

Concerns about a Child

- If staff members have any safeguarding concerns about a child, they should act immediately by following this policy and raising these concerns as soon as possible with the School's DSL. They must not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information. If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL and School Principal are both unavailable, staff should contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or take advice from children's social care in the local authority where the child is resident (and share any action with the DSL as soon as possible).

- Staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Staff should still exercise professional curiosity and report any concerns to the DSL.
- If a member of staff receives a report of abuse, the procedures set out in this document must also be followed.
- Parents, or those outside the School, may contact the DSL directly or, if preferred, discuss their concerns in private with a member of the School's pastoral team or the Principal who will notify the DSL in accordance with these procedures.
- Every concern raised about a child and every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will be taken seriously and action taken in accordance with this policy. In deciding whether to make a referral to children's social care or early help services, the DSL or staff member must always act in the best interests of the child and should also take into account the wishes of the child and the local authority thresholds for referral.
- **If, at any point, a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made immediately to the children's social care services department in the local authority where the child is resident. A referral would normally be made by the DSL but anybody can make a referral in exceptional circumstances, such as an emergency or where there is a genuine concern that appropriate action is not being taken. If a member of staff makes a referral directly, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible thereafter.**
- Where a concern does not meet the threshold for immediate referral to children's social care, consideration should still be given as to whether a referral to children's social care for statutory assessment is appropriate or whether early help or other support, including additional pastoral support within school, would benefit the child. Use may be made of available local processes, such as an early help inter-agency assessment, the 'Common Assessment Framework' or 'Team around the Child' approaches, to ensure that the child receives that additional support. Staff may be required to support the DSL or other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment or following a referral to the local authority children's social care services department.
- Following a referral, or after early help or other internal pastoral support has been put in place, the child's case will be kept under constant review. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the DSL, or the member of staff with concerns, should press for re-consideration, including a referral if this has not already been made, to ensure their concerns have been addressed. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

Additional procedures for specific safeguarding issues

- ***Children missing education:*** A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Teachers are required to report absences. If the Principal of Section cannot explain the absence, then the Senior Deputy Principal (Pastoral) will be notified and a search will be conducted in school and parents and/or the police contacted as appropriate. Persistent or unexplained absence must be reported by form staff or Principals of Year to the relevant Principal of Section who will discuss the pattern of absence with the Senior Deputy Principal (Pastoral). The Senior Deputy Principal (Pastoral) will decide, in consultation with the DSL as appropriate, whether the absence gives rise to safeguarding concerns.
- ***Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery):*** This can be defined as the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums or via offline sharing (e.g., Apple Airdrop). This must be reported to the DSL immediately. Staff must never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery themselves, or ask a child to share or download it, as this is illegal (if the image is viewed by accident this must be reported immediately

to the DSL). Staff should not investigate the incident themselves or delete, or ask the child to delete, the image. The child should not be blamed or shamed but should be told that the incident will need to be reported to the DSL and that they will receive support and help. Action will be taken in accordance with this safeguarding policy, taking into account guidance published by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety: 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' which covers the creation and sharing of sexual imagery of those under 18 with others who are also under 18. For the avoidance of doubt, the creation or sharing of sexual imagery of children under the age of 18 by those over the age of 18 constitutes child sexual abuse and in these circumstances, in addition to following the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy, the School will also inform the police.

- **Special educational needs:** Children with special educational needs and/or, disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and vulnerability, including to child-on-child abuse both online and offline. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, including:
 - assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
 - being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
 - the disproportionate impact, without any outward signs, upon children with special educational needs and/or disabilities by behaviours such as bullying;
 - communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers; and
 - cognitive understanding such as being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school (and the consequences of doing so).

Members of staff should never assume that an indicator of a safeguarding concern is caused by a child's individual learning needs and should always discuss any such indicators with the DSL who will liaise with the School's Individual Needs Coordinator as appropriate.

- **Radicalisation and extremism:** If staff become aware of changes in a child's behaviour which could indicate that they are at risk of radicalisation or are exposed to extremism, this should be reported to the DSL as a safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the level of risk to identify the most appropriate referral, which could include a referral to the local Channel Panel, children's social care, the local safeguarding children partnership or the police.
- **Mental health concerns:** These can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem but all staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Pastoral concerns relating to mental health should be referred to the student's form tutor in the first instance. If the concern is also a safeguarding concern this should be referred to the DSL immediately in accordance with this policy.
- **LGBT:** The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are, or who are perceived to be, LGBT can be targeted by other children. Staff should try to reduce the additional barriers faced by children who are LGBT, who may not have trusted adult with whom they can be open, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns.

Allegations against, or concerns about, staff (including supply staff, contractors and volunteers)

- **Allegations:** Any allegation that might indicate that a person working in the school would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work with children **must be reported to the Principal**. In the Principal's absence, a report should be made to the DSL. An allegation about the Principal should be reported to the Vice principal.
- A report must be made, as above, if it is alleged that anyone working in the School 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 (including behaviour outside school).

- If 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, children's social care and/or the police should be contacted immediately.
- **Low-level concerns:** There may be occasions when a member of staff has doubts about the behaviour of another adult towards a pupil or another child, or concerns about how their own behaviour might be misinterpreted, but these concerns do not amount to an 'allegation'. Any such concern (no matter how small) **must** be reported to the DSL or, if preferred or if the report is about the DSL, to the Principal.
- The process for reporting a concern of this nature is called 'Neutral Notification' (other institutions may use the term 'low-level concern'). The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold of harm. It would include any concern (no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt') that an adult working in or on behalf of the School may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the School's Code of Conduct for Staff, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- On receipt of a Neutral Notification, the DSL will decide on the most appropriate course of action in line with the guidance set out in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and school procedures. This is likely to involve speaking to the subject of the report and any potential witnesses. All Neutral Notifications and any action taken will be recorded by the DSL and the record kept under review. The Principal will be kept informed and reports of concerns about supply staff and contractors will also be notified to their employers so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Allegations against pupils (child on child abuse)

- The School recognises that children may be harmed by other children, from within or outside their own school community, and has a zero tolerance approach to child on child abuse. The school has a clear Behaviour policy and Anti-Bullying policy, both of which set clear expectations for pupil behaviour and aim to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse at school. The PSHE and form time programmes offer guidance to pupils on behaviour and also on keeping themselves safe, including online at school and at home.
- Staff are aware of the harm that bullying can cause and will use the School's anti-bullying procedures where appropriate. However, there may be occasions when a child's alleged behaviour, or the harm caused to another child by that behaviour, warrants a response under safeguarding as well as, or instead of, anti-bullying procedures. This will always be the case if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Below this threshold, it is more likely to be the case if the allegation: is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil; is of a very serious nature; or raises risk factors for other children within or outside the School.
- Child on child abuse is still abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter'. It is recognised that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. It may include instances of:
 - (a) bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
 - (b) abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (also known as teenage relationship abuse);

- (c) physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
 - (d) sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
 - (e) sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment (standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse);
 - (f) causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
 - (g) upskirting (taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm);
 - (h) consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and seminude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) (see above); or
 - (i) initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- Even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the school this does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. If a member of staff has any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or that bullying, or any other negative or devaluing behaviour may give rise to safeguarding concerns, they should discuss this with the DSL as soon as possible.
 - If a member of staff witnesses abusive behaviour between peers, they must challenge it and then report it to the DSL. If a member of staff hears a complaint of child-on-child abuse from a child, including a report of sexual violence or harassment, the guidance in this document should be followed. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report
 - The School will take advice from children's social care on the investigation of any allegations of child-on-child abuse and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved. In the case of an allegation of sexual violence or harassment, the School will also have regard to Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022). It is likely that all pupils involved, including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse, will be treated as being 'at risk'. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a referral to the local authority children's social care services will be made without delay.
 - If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of children's social care, the pupil's parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult. In the case of pupils whose parents are abroad, the pupil's Education Guardian will be requested to provide support to the pupil.
 - A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's Behaviour Policy and/or Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy will apply.

Listening to children

- The School provides a range of opportunities for pupils to be listened to and for them to report issues, including child on child abuse. All information will be considered.
- Support for any pupils affected by abuse (including child on child abuse), is available in school from all staff but particularly from pastoral staff, the individual learning needs coordinator, the medical team and the school counsellors. The DSL may be involved in coordinating support within school or referring to outside agencies as appropriate and in line with the local authority thresholds for referral.

Informing parents

- Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures to support a child in need or about whom there are concerns relating to radicalisation. However, there may be circumstances when the DSL will need to consult the radicalization Principal, the local authority children's social care services before discussing details with parents.

Secure school premises and visitor procedures

- The School will take all practicable steps to ensure that School premises are as secure as circumstances permit.
- The School has clear visitor procedures which have been communicated to all staff. All visitors who have not been vetted by the School in advance must sign in to the visitors book at Security on arrival and sign out on departure. They must be appropriately supervised whilst on School premises by a member of staff or appropriately vetted volunteer. All visitors will be given a name badge with the title 'Visitor' which must be clearly displayed and worn at all times whilst on the School premises.

Record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing

- Where there are concerns about a child, all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reason for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should include: a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the DSL or principal.
- The School will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The School will cooperate with police and local authority children's social care services to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 in accordance with the requirements of *Working together to Safeguard Children* (2018) and the DfE's non- statutory guidance entitled *Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners* (2018).
- Information about a child will usually be shared with the consent of that child and/or their parent but information may be shared without consent where there is a more appropriate legal basis for sharing or where: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or, if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- Where allegations have been made against staff, the School will consult with the local authorities of the Comunidad de Madrid and, where appropriate, the police and local authority children's social care services to agree the information that should be disclosed and to whom.

Monitoring

- After any serious child protection incidents at the School, consideration will be given to a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School and a report made to the Senior Leadership Team if appropriate. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the local authorities will assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the School's procedures.

- In addition, the DSL will ensure that this policy is reviewed annually or when legislation changes and its procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the Senior Leadership Team as necessary.
- The Senior Leadership Team will undertake an annual review of this policy and its procedures, including good cooperation with local agencies, and of the efficiency with which the relevant duties have been discharged. The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements at any time are remedied without delay.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The main responsibilities of the DSL, or the School Principal, if the DSL is not available, are:

- To take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety, in the School (this lead responsibility cannot be delegated);
- **Manage referrals**
 - Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required and/or support staff who make such referrals;
 - Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and/or support staff who make such referrals;
 - Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
 - Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- **Work with others**
 - Liaise with the Principal to inform 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 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022)) and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member);
 - Liaise with staff (especially pastoral staff, school nurses, the IT Network Manager and the Individual Learning Coordinator) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies; and
 - Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.
- **Undertake training**
 - Undertake training as required for the role, including Prevent awareness training, at least every two years in order to:
 - 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;
 - ensure that each member of staff has access to and understands the School's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
 - be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
 - understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation;
 - understand the importance of information sharing, both within the School and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
 - be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
 - understand and support the School with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
 - understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they

have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school;

- recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident that they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;
 - obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
 - encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the School may put in place to protect them.
 - Refresh knowledge and skills (e.g., via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, in order to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to the role.
- **Raise Awareness**
 - Ensure that the School's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
 - Ensure the School's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Governing Body regarding this;
 - Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the School in this;
 - Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding; and
 - Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and the senior leadership team. For example: ensuring that school staff know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.
 - **Child protection file**
 - Keep child protection records confidential and stored securely and ensure that they include: a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
 - Ensure that when children leave the School (including for in-year transfers) their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible school, 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.
 - In addition to the child protection file, consider whether it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.
 - **Availability**
 - Always be available (during school hours), or ensure that a School Principal is available, for staff in the School to discuss any safeguarding concerns

Types and signs of abuse and neglect

Types of abuse

- All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside their school or home or online. Staff must exercise professional curiosity and know what to look for as set out below.
- Abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.
- Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviour giving rise to concerns can be associated with factors outside the school environment and incidents can occur between children outside the School. All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.
- Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other harms online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse, and other harms, will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.
- **Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill-treatment of others (e.g., domestic abuse). Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.
- A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of

- children. Emotional abuse may also involve serious bullying by a child's peers (including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones). Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse:** involves any sexual activity with a child, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child understands what is happening or that it is wrong. Many children who are the victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. The sexual activity may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.
- **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children:** 'sexual violence' as used in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (i.e., rape, assault by penetration or a sexual assault). Sexual harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline (e.g., sexual comments or 'jokes', physical behaviour such as interfering with clothing or online sexual harassment such as the non-consensual sharing of sexual images). It is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.
- **Child criminal exploitation (CCE):** CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.
- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE):** CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- **Serious violence:** children may be at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime. Risk factors include increased absence from school; a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups; a significant decline in performance; signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing; or signs of assault or unexplained

injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. See Appendix 7 for links to further guidance including 'Preventing youth violence and gang involvement' and 'Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines.

- **Domestic abuse:** this can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (see below). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. The School is part of Operation Encompass, a national scheme that operates jointly between schools and police forces. Operation Encompass is the reporting to schools, prior to the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has experienced domestic abuse. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has been trained in the Operation Encompass procedures as the Key Adult allowing us to then use the information that has been shared, in confidence, to support the child or children in our care.
- **Domestic abuse in teenage relationships:** young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships (sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'). Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Signs of abuse

- Abused children may be afraid to tell anybody about the abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion, particularly if the abuser is a parent, caregiver or other close family member or friend. Anyone working with children or young people needs to be vigilant to the signs listed below.
- Whether or not a child's behaviour or appearance is concerning depends on their age or stage of development. Children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities or health-related issues may be at a different developmental stage to most of their peers. However, children who have experienced abuse or neglect from a young age may also display developmental delays compared to children their own age. In such cases, the lack of a clear medical explanation for these delays may be an indicator of abuse.
- In addition to warning signs that may be specific to a particular category of abuse or neglect, there are a number of general warning indicators which might suggest that a child is being abused or neglected as follows:
 - Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
 - Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
 - Children with consistently poor hygiene;
 - Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
 - Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
 - Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;

- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Physical abuse: It is normal for children to have cuts and bruises on their bodies caused by accidents which happen whilst they are moving about and/or playing. These are marks that have an acceptable and reasonable explanation. Marks or injuries which do not have an acceptable explanation may indicate that a child has been abused. Be vigilant to possible abuse if a child is frequently described as ill by their parent but does not have any symptoms which are obvious to others. In addition, the parent will be unable to provide details of a medical diagnosis for the child's apparent condition.

Signs of physical abuse, as well as the more general indicators listed above, may include:

- Frequent injuries;
- Unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones;
- Unexplained bruises or cuts, burns or scalds or bite marks;
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries;
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather;
- Fear of medical help or examination.

Emotional abuse: It is important to remember that some children are naturally open and affectionate whilst others are quieter and more self-contained. Children also develop at different rates from one another and some may be slightly more or less advanced than other children in their age group. Mood swings and challenging behaviour are also a normal part of growing up for teenagers and children going through puberty. Be alert to behaviours which appear to be out of character for the individual child, such as those listed above and:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold

shoulder’;

- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child;
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example by name-calling or making negative comparisons;
- Physical, mental and emotional development lags;
- Sudden speech disorders;
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc.');
- Overreaction to mistakes;
- Extreme fear of any new situation;
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this');
- Neurotic behaviour, unusual or excessive nervousness (obsessive, compulsive behaviours, rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation);
- Self-harm; and/or
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

Sexual abuse: It is normal for children to show signs of sexual behaviour at each stage in their development. Children also develop at different rates and some may be slightly more or less advanced than other children in their age group. Behaviours which might be concerning depend on the child's age and the situation.

– Normal sexual behaviour for adolescents includes:

- Kisses, hugs, dates others, may have longer term relationships;
- Is interested in and asks questions about body parts, relationships and sexual behaviour. Is aware of the need for privacy;
- Uses sexual language and talks about sexual acts with peers;
- May look at sexual pictures including internet images;
- Masturbates in private; and/or
- Experiments sexually with adolescents of similar age.

In addition to the general indicators listed in 2.3 above, the following are possible signs and indicators of sexual abuse in adolescents:

- Displaying knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Using sexual language or having sexual knowledge that you would not expect them to have;
- Asking others to behave sexually or play sexual games;
- Physical sexual health problems including soreness in the genital or anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy;
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns;

- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating;
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder;
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism;
- Self-harm.

Child Criminal or Sexual Exploitation (CCE and CSE): In addition to the general signs of abuse above and, in the case of CSE, those specific to sexual abuse, some of the following may be indicators of CCE or CSE:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Suffering from changes in emotional well-being;
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol;
- Going missing for periods of time from home or school or regularly getting home late;
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education;
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends (CSE);
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant (CSE).

Neglect: It is important to remember that some children are very picky eaters whilst others may refuse to wear a coat regardless of how cold it is outside. A child may also appear to be underweight, but is, in fact, naturally thin. Some of the most obvious signs of neglect (e.g., children being thin, dirty or not wearing a coat) are not in themselves indicators of abuse. However, if, over time, it is clear that a child is not receiving an adequate level of care and supervision appropriate to their age, it may indicate that the child is being neglected.

Possible signs of neglect include:

- Hunger, tiredness or poor personal hygiene;
- An indisputably dirty or unsafe home (e.g., around drugs, alcohol or violence);
- Poor state of clothing;
- Emaciation;
- Untreated medical problems;
- No social relationships;
- Compulsive scavenging;
- Destructive tendencies including anger, aggression or self-harm;
- Poor physical development e.g., delayed puberty.

Further guidance for staff

Possible signs of abuse that may become evident in the school environment include, but are not limited to:

- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury, the injury is unusual in kind or location or there have been a number of injuries and there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour, or there is a sudden or significant change in the pupil's behaviour;
- the pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;
- the pupil's development is delayed, the pupil loses or gains weight or there is deterioration in the pupil's general wellbeing;
- the pupil appears neglected, e.g., dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed; and/or
- the pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by her parents or carers.

Children who may benefit from early help

Any child may benefit from early help, but 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 (regardless of whether they have a statutory EHC plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is a privately fostered child; and/or
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day

Guidance for staff on suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse

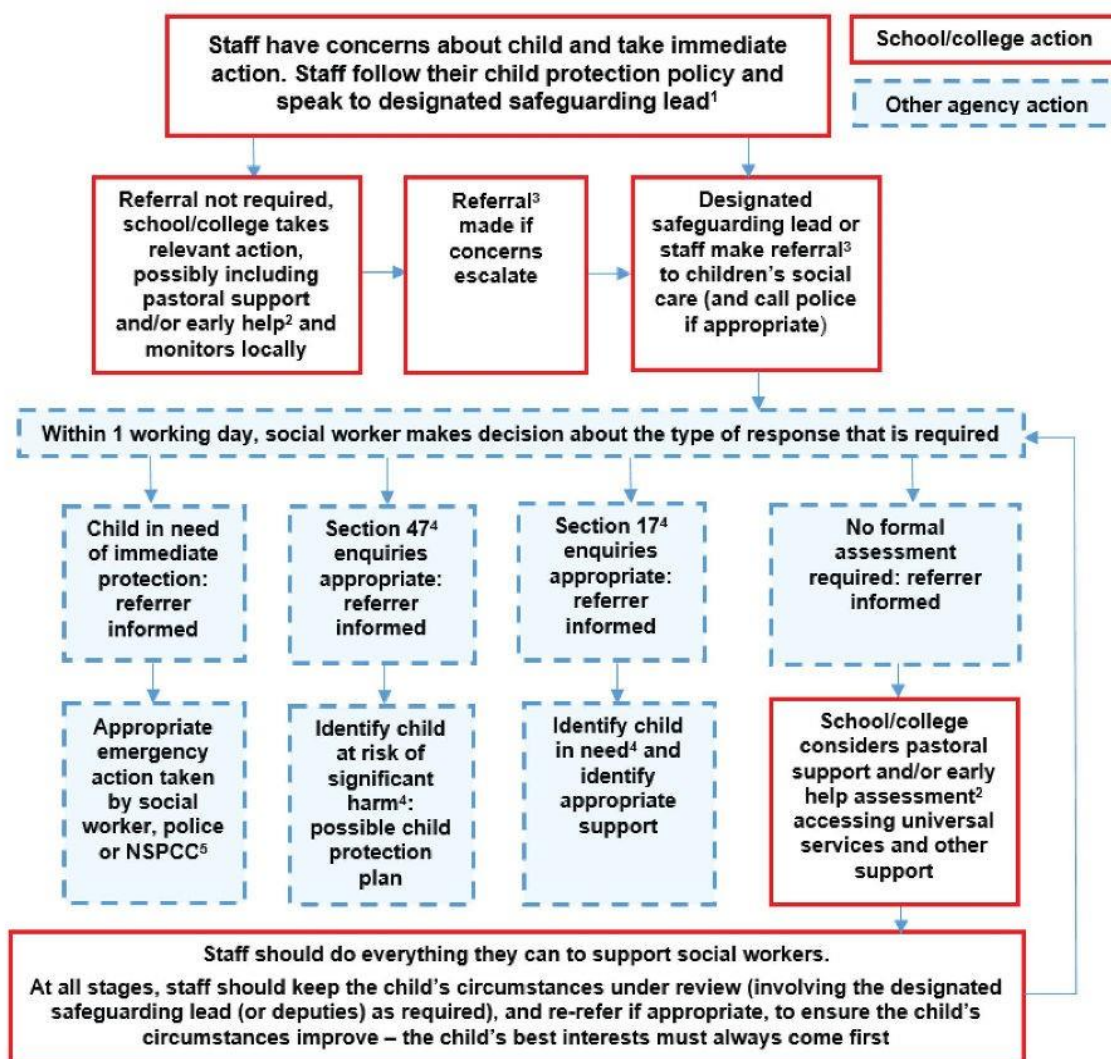
Action staff must take

Any member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse, including a report of child and sexual violence or harassment, must recognise that the child has placed them in a position of trust. The member of staff:

- should be supportive and respectful of the child, listen carefully, be non-judgmental and keep an open mind. The member of staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, i.e., a question which suggests its own answer, and only prompt the child where necessary with open questions;
- must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the DSL who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- must, maintain confidentiality and only involve those who need to be involved such as the DSL or children's social care;
- must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation, only recording the facts as the child presents them. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary but it may be appropriate to take some notes during the conversation, particularly if there are two members of staff present (which is preferable). The record may become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation and should therefore include:
 - the date and time;
 - the place of the conversation; and
 - the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence;
- must record, in writing, all concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.
 - The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the DSL as soon as possible. The record of what was said by the child should as far as possible be in her own words and not in the adult's reinterpretation of those words.
 - All evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing and computers, must be safeguarded and preserved and passed to the DSL. Computers or other devices that might contain relevant evidence should not be searched or accessed by the member of staff hearing the complaint. Staff must not view or forward illegal images of a child.
 - All suspicions or complaints of abuse must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.
 - If, at any point, a child is in immediate danger or there is a risk of harm a referral should be made to the local authority children's social care services immediately. A referral would normally be made by the DSL but anybody can make a referral in exceptional circumstances, such as an emergency or where there is a genuine concern that appropriate action is not being taken. If a member of staff makes a referral directly, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible thereafter.

**Flowchart of action where there are concerns about a child
(from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022) – Part 1)**

Actions where there are concerns about a child



¹ In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of this guidance.

² Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.

³ Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

⁴ Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

⁵ This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

Dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers

Introduction

Allegations of abuse are difficult and distressing for all concerned. It is essential that policies and procedures are in place to manage these cases. Underpinning these procedures are the following principles: looking after the welfare of the child; and investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation.

The School's procedures

- The School's procedures for dealing with allegations made against staff and volunteers will be used where the member of staff, which includes supply staff or a contractor, or volunteer has:
 - 1..1 behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - 1..2 possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
 - 1..3 behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
 - 1..4 behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside school).
- All such allegations must be dealt with as a priority so as to avoid any delay.
- Any allegations not meeting these criteria will be dealt with in accordance with LSCP procedures. Advice from the local authorities will be sought in borderline cases.

Reporting an allegation against staff or volunteer

- Where an allegation or complaint is made against any member of staff (including the DSL) or volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Principal. In his absence, the report should be made to the DSL (unless the allegation involves the DSL) or to the Vice Principal. The Principal will in turn inform the Chair of Senior Leadership Team, and may also consult with the DSL.
- Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Principal, the matter should be reported immediately to the Vice Principal, or in her absence the DSL, without first notifying the Principal.
- **Whenever there is an allegation or concern that meets the threshold above, the LOCAL AUTHORITIES must be contacted immediately (within one working day) before further action is taken.**
- The person taking action in accordance with the procedures in this Appendix (whether the Principal, the DSL or the Vice principal) is known as the 'Case Manager'. Discussions with the LOCAL AUTHORITIES should be recorded in writing and any communication with the subject of the allegation or the parents or a pupil involved should be agreed.

Disclosure of information

- The Case Manager will inform the accused person of the allegation as soon as possible after the LOCAL AUTHORITIES has been consulted.

- The Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They will also be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.

Where the LOCAL AUTHORITIES advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or the local authority's social care services need to be involved, the Case Manager will not inform the accused or the parents or carers until these agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed.

- The reporting restrictions preventing the identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegation in certain circumstances will be observed (see below).

Action to be taken against the accused

- A school has a duty of care towards its employees and as such, it must ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless external agencies object to this. A representative will be appointed to keep him or her informed of the progress of the case and to consider what other support is available for the individual, as appropriate.
- Where an investigation by the police or the local authority children's social care services is unnecessary, the LOCAL AUTHORITIES will discuss the steps to be taken with the Case Manager. The appropriate action will depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and will range from taking no further action to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in the future.
- It may be necessary to undertake a further investigation to determine the appropriate action. If so, the LOCAL AUTHORITIES will discuss with the Case Manager how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. The appropriate person will usually be a senior member of staff, but in some instances, it may be appropriate to appoint an independent investigator.

Suspension

- Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation and will only be considered in a case where:
 - there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the School is or are at risk of significant harm; or
 - the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.
- Suspension will not be automatic and consideration will be given to whether the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements, for example, redeployment either within or outside of the School or providing an assistant when the individual has contact with children. The LOCAL AUTHORITIES will be contacted for advice if necessary.
- A member of staff will only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification will be recorded and the member of staff notified of those reasons in writing within one working day. Appropriate support will be provided for the suspended individual and contact details provided.

Criminal proceedings

- The School will consult with the LOCAL AUTHORITIES following the conclusion of a criminal investigation or prosecution as to whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so, how to proceed. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case, including the result of the police investigation or trial and the standards of proof applicable.

Return to work

- If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, the School will consider how best to facilitate this, for example, arranging a phased return and / or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term. The School will also consider how to manage the contact with the child or children who made the allegation.

Supply staff

- The School must not decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LOCAL AUTHORITIES to determine a suitable outcome. There should be a discussion with the supply agency as to whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the investigation is carried out.
- Supply agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LOCAL AUTHORITIES, police and/or children's social services although the School will usually take the lead. The allegations management meeting often arranged by the LOCAL AUTHORITIES should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the supply agency are taken into account by the School during the investigation.
- Supply teachers should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support.

Confidentiality and publicity

- It is extremely important that when an allegation is made, the School makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while the allegation is being investigated or considered. This includes informing anyone who is aware of the allegations (e.g., parents/senior staff) of the following reporting restrictions. The Education Act 2011 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions also cease to apply if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so, or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so.
- 'Publication' includes 'any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public'. This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site could be in breach of the reporting restrictions. Breach is potentially a criminal offence.

- The Case Manager should take advice from the LOCAL AUTHORITIES, police and children's social care services to agree the following:
 - who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;
 - how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;
 - what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
 - how to manage press interest if and when it should arise.

Ceasing to use staff

- If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff or volunteer because they are unsuitable to work with children, a settlement/compromise agreement will not be used and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made as soon as possible if the criteria are met. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Senior Leadership Team without delay.
- If a member of staff tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the School in accordance with this policy and a referral will be made.
- Where a teacher has been dismissed, or would have been dismissed had he or she not resigned, separate consideration will be given as to whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency should be made in circumstances where a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reason such an order would be considered are: 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or a 'conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'.
- It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible the accused should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. But the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if that cannot be done or the accused does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

Timescales

- All allegations must be dealt with as a priority so as to avoid any delay. Where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, the case should be resolved within one week. It is expected that most cases of allegations of abuse against staff will be resolved within one month with all but the most exceptional cases being completed within 12 months. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Principal should instigate appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, it should be held within 15 working days.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

- Where an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Principal will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.
- Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Principal will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the School on the basis that they have treated the School or a member of staff unreasonably.
- Whether or not the person making the allegation is a pupil or a parent (or other member of the public), the School reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Record keeping

- Details of allegations found to be false or malicious will be removed from personnel records.
- For all other allegations, full details will be recorded on the confidential personnel file of the person accused as follows: a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation; details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved; a note of any action taken and decisions reached; whether the outcome was substantiated, unsubstantiated or unfounded; and whether the information will be referred to in any future reference. A copy will be provided to the person concerned where agreed with children's social care or the police.
- The record will be retained at least until the individual has reached normal retirement age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation, if this is longer.
- An allegation proven to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references. Substantiated allegations should be included in references provided that the information is factual and does not contain opinions.

Further Guidance

Please click on the links or go to www.gov.uk for the documents listed below and more information.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (September 2022) – Part 1
and full document [Working Together to safeguard Children](#) (July 2018)

[What to do if you are worried a child is being abused](#) (March 2015) [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners](#) (July 2018)

Revised [Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales](#) (April 2019) [The Prevent Duty](#) (for schools and childcare providers) (June 2015)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (December 2020)

[Teaching online safety in school](#) (June 2019)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) (March 2015)

[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#) (February 2020) [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#) (February 2017)

[Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (November 2018)

Full local authorities Procedures can be found at:
<https://www.comunidad.madrid/servicios/asuntos-sociales/proteccion-menor>

The Safer Recruitment Consortium has recently updated its Guidance on Safe Working Practice for professionals working in education settings. The revised guidance can be found here:

[Guidance for Safe Working Practice](#) (May 2019)