



# **CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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## **1. Safeguarding Statement**

### **“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”**

At Wexham secondary school, we recognise our moral, professional and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We make every effort to provide an environment in which children and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected. Students should feel confident to speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about themselves or someone else and should believe that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

We recognise that children may experience harm or abuse inside or outside the home, within or outside the school environment, within relationships, in the wider community and online. Children may be vulnerable to more than one form of harm at the same time and that safeguarding concerns may present through changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, relationships, academic engagement or other indicators.

We adopt an “it could happen here” approach to safeguarding and maintain professional curiosity when concerns arise.

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework they need in order to keep children safe in our school in a positive learning environment. The policy also informs parents and carers how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.

## **2. Staff with key responsibilities**

| <b>Role</b>                                   | <b>Staff Name</b>             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead                  | Miss K Sethi                  |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads          | Mrs M Wellspring, Mr P Morgan |
| Child Protector Officer                       | Mrs S Iftekhar                |
| Headteacher                                   | Mr L Smith                    |
| Child Protection & Safeguarding Governor Lead | Ms J Nijher                   |
| Chair of Governors                            | Mrs Hibbert                   |

## **3. Terminology**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is defined as (Working together to safeguard children 2026):

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether the risk of harm comes from within the child’s family and or outside (from the wider community), including online.

- Preventing 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

**Child Protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Family Help** is a coordinated approach to providing support to children and families when additional needs are identified. It brings together targeted early help and support provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, creating a more seamless offer of help for families.

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

**Child(ren)** means everyone under the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to students of our school; however, the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other institutions.

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

**Social Care** refers to Children's Services in the area in which the child is resident, unless a child is a Child Looked After (CLA) then this will be the Children's Services in their home authority.

**Abuse, neglect and exploitation** refer to the understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, inside and outside of home and online. It also refers to the fact that children can also abuse others – friends, family and those online.

#### **4. Introduction and Guidance Documents**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: '**Keeping Children Safe in Education**' (2026), 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026, 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused' 2015.

The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm or at risk of suffering harm.

**Children means everyone under the age of 18.**

Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or at immediate risk.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

The Teachers' Standards, updated 2021, state that all teachers, including the Headteacher, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of the professional duties.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, emotional, spiritual and moral development of the individual child.

**Key statutory guidance, legislation and related documents:**

- Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026
- Working together to safeguard children 2026: statutory guidance ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))
- Slough Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- Children Act 1989, 2004.
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (updated 2019)
- FGM Mandatory Reporting 2020
- The Equality Act 2010
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015
- Teacher Standards 2011 (updated 2021)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (2024).
- Children Missing Education September 2023 ([slough.gov.uk](https://slough.gov.uk))
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- UK GDPR
- Data protection act 2018
- Teachers' standards

**This policy links to:**

- Safer Recruitment
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- Whistleblowing
- Lettings
- Attendance
- Health and safety (pupils')
- Anti-Bullying
- Educational visits
- Child on Child abuse
- E-safety
- Staff Code of conduct

**5. Aims and Purpose**

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued, respected and confident in knowing how to approach adults if they are in difficulties or are worried, believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise the awareness of all staff (including visitors and volunteers) of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with safeguarding partners, children's social care, police, health services and other relevant agencies.
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance), and a central record is kept for audit.

## **6. Safe school, safe staff**

All members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:

- There is a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Leads, will be clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- The school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned.
- A senior leader has Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsibility, the DSLs undertake interagency training and also undertake DSL 'new to role' and an 'update' course every 2 years
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and regular updates thereafter. Safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety, are provided at least annually and additionally as required to reflect emerging safeguarding risks, changes to statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and the needs of the school.
- Any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately
- A member of the Governing Body is, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the LA on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher

- Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection policy is available on the school website or by other means. Parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the website.
- The Governing Body considers how children may be taught about safeguarding. This may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through Personal Social Health and Economic education (PSHE) which includes Relationship and sex education (RSE).
- All members of the Senior Leadership Team who are involved in recruitment and at least one member of the governing body will also complete safer recruitment training to be renewed every 2 years.
- All members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection awareness information at induction, including in their arrival pack, the school safeguarding statement so that they know who to discuss a concern with.
- All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns.
- All other staff and governors, have child protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
- All members of staff, volunteers, and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through appropriate training.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time and will assess the nature of the activity, for example through unannounced checks, to prevent the opportunity to use school facilities to radicalise young people.
- Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.
- We will ensure that child protection type concerns or allegations against any adults, not just our employees, working in the school are referred to the Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO), for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 All Staff will:**

- Have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm.
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- Attend training in order to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' with regards to safeguarding and that 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'.
- Know how to respond to a student who discloses harm or abuse following training of 'Working together to Safeguard Children (2026)', and 'What to do if you are worried a child is being Abused' (2015) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to one of the members of the Child Protection team immediately.
- Be prepared to refer directly to Slough Children First (SCF), and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputies are not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Follow the procedures set out by SCF and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education.
- Provide support for children subject to family help, Child Protection or CLA that is in keeping with their plan.
- Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to "keep a secret".
- Notify a member of the CP team of any child on the school's CP list who has unexplained absence.
- Will identify children who may benefit from Family help (as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026), liaising with the CP team in the first instance. (Options may include managing support for the child internally via the school's pastoral support process or a family help assessment). In some circumstances it may be appropriate for a member of school staff to act as the Lead Professional in family help cases.
- Be alert to behaviour and educational engagement as potential indicators of safeguarding concerns. This includes children who are repeatedly removed from the classroom, experience multiple suspensions, are placed on a part-time or modified timetable, are at risk of permanent exclusion, or demonstrate emerging patterns of harmful, abusive or violent behaviour. Such circumstances should not be considered solely as behavioural matters and should prompt consideration of whether the child may require additional support through school-based provision, community-based early help, Family Help or statutory safeguarding services.
- Liaise with other agencies that support students and provide family help.

- Know who the members of the CP team are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the role of the DSL, the CP team, the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct and procedures relating to the safeguarding response for children who go missing from education (CME).
- Be mindful that the Teachers' Standards state that teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- Assist the Governing Body and Headteacher in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities set out in legislation and statutory guidance.

## **7.2 The Headteacher**

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the Headteacher will ensure that:

- The school fully contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 guidance.
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- All staff are aware of the role of the DSL team and the Lead DSL.
- Sufficient time, training, support, funding, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the CP team to carry out their role effectively, including the provision of advice and support to school staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions/meetings and other inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so; and to contribute to the assessment of children.
- Provide opportunities for a co-ordinated offer of family help when additional needs of children are identified.
- Ensure the CP team are trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role is explicit in their job description.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate cover arrangements are in place for any out of hours/out of term activities.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Child-centred systems and processes are in place for children to express their views and give feedback.
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle-blowing procedures.
- That students are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.

- Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff, volunteers, trainee teachers, contractors and other adults working with children are dealt with in accordance with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), Slough Children First (SCF) and KCSIE 2026.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are met to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and additionally in the case of teaching staff the Teacher Regulation Agency where they think an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

### **7.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:**

- Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to Slough Children First, or the relevant local authority where the child resides, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in writing using the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF), alongside a telephone call where necessary.
- The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should liaise with safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. NSPCC- When to call the police should help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.
- Keeping records of concern about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. These should include the rationale for the decision.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept up to date, confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school or college. The files should be transferred within 5 days of an in-year transfer or within 5 days of the start of term.
- Will ensure that all appropriate staff members have a working knowledge and understanding of their role in case conferences, core groups and other multi-agency planning meetings, to ensure that they attend and are able to effectively contribute when required to do so; where a report is required, this should be shared with the parents prior to the meeting.
- Ensuring that any student currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
- Ensuring all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction, regularly thereafter, and receive updates as required to keep their knowledge and skills current.
- Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children open to social care (anonymised).
- Will ensure that when a student transfers school, their child protection file is passed to the new school as soon as possible, and within statutory timescales (separately from the main student file and ensuring secure transit) and that confirmation of receipt is received.
- However, where safeguarding records indicate that a pupil has previously carried, threatened with or used a knife or other weapon, the DSL will ensure the relevant information is shared with the receiving school as early as reasonably practicable. The receiving school should assess the risk, and where appropriate put in place a safety and support plan prior to the child starting at school.
- If the transit method requires that a copy of the Child Protection file is retained until such a time that the new school acknowledges receipt of the original file, the copy should be securely destroyed on confirmation of receipt.

- Will ensure that in collaboration with the school leadership and governors, the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is available publicly and that parents are aware that referrals about suspected harm and abuse will be made and the role of the school in this.
- Will ensure that the names and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are clearly displayed and communicated to staff, pupils and parents.
- Meet all other responsibilities as set out for DSLs in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

#### **7.4 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for:**

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the Deputy DSL will:

- Be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the role is explicit in their job description.
- Provide support and capacity to the DSL in carrying out delegated activities of the DSL; however, the lead responsibility of the DSL cannot be delegated.
- In the absence of the DSL, carries out the activities necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

#### **7.5 All members of The Governing Body understand and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that:**

- The school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures including a Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, a Staff Code of Conduct policy, a Behaviour Policy and a response to Children who go Missing from Education policy. Ensure policies are consistent with Slough Children First (SCF) and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is available on the school website.
- SCF is informed in line with local requirements about the discharge of duties via the annual safeguarding audit.
- That the school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training, if there is not a panel conducting interviews then the individual will have completed the safer recruitment training.
- At least one member of the governing body has completed safer recruitment training to be repeated every three years and any member of the Governing Body that will sit on a recruitment and selection panel.
- All staff are provided with and required to read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Staff who do not work directly with children will also be provided with Part One and supported to understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Mechanisms are in place to assist all staff in understanding and discharging their safeguarding responsibilities.
- All staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and Staff Code of Conduct policy.
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including the Headteacher), trainee teachers, volunteers and against other children and that a referral is

made to the DBS and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (as applicable) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned.

- A nominated governor for safeguarding is identified.
- A member of the senior leadership team has been appointed by the Governing Body as the Strategic lead for safeguarding. This is Mr Smith, Headteacher.
- On appointment, the DSL and deputies undertake interagency training and DSL 'New to Role' training every two years as well as attending DSL network events, to refresh knowledge and skills.
- Children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationship and sex education (RSE).
- The school will comply with DfE and **Children Missing Education September 2023 (slough.gov.uk)**.
- The school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Local Authority, regarding all students, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- Enhanced DBS checks (without barred list checks, unless the governor is also a volunteer at the school) are in place for all Governors.
- Any weaknesses in Safeguarding are remedied immediately.

## **8 School Procedures**

### **8.1: Confidentiality, sharing and withdrawing information**

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or safeguarding team will share information with staff on a strict need-to-know basis in order to safeguard and support the child.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces a new information-sharing duty intended to support timely and effective sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The school will comply with the statutory information-sharing duty, associated statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.

Staff should be proactive in sharing relevant information as early as possible where this may help identify, assess or respond to concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Information shared must be relevant, necessary, proportionate and appropriately contextualised. Staff should use professional judgement and should not allow uncertainty about information-sharing to prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

Information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis to do so and where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child. The Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and other data protection legislation do not prevent appropriate information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

Where there is uncertainty about whether information should be shared, staff should seek advice from the DSL or deputy. Where necessary, the school will seek advice from the relevant safeguarding partner, children's social care, police or other appropriate agency.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **8.2: Child Protection Procedures**

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the school and will be covered by training to enable staff to understand their role and responsibility.

The aim of our procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed, abused or is at risk of harm or abuse.

The prime concern at all stages must be the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

Staff should be aware that children with disabilities, special educational needs, communication difficulties or language barriers may communicate concerns through behaviour rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in children who have limited mobility.

If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

1. Make an initial record of the information related to the concern (on CPOMS).
2. Report it to the DSL and/or the CP team immediately.
3. The DSL and safeguarding team will consider whether immediate medical attention or emergency services are required.
4. The concern must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable and without unnecessary delay. Records should be clear, accurate, factual and contemporaneous wherever possible and should include the concern, the child's own words where relevant, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions and the outcome.
  - Dates and times of their observations
  - Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved.
  - Any injuries
  - Explanations given by the child / adult
  - Rationale for decision making and action taken
  - Any actual words or phrases used by the child
5. In the absence of the DSL or their Deputies staff must be prepared to refer directly to Slough Children first or relevant local authority (and the police if appropriate) if there is the potential for immediate significant harm.

### **Following a report of concern the DSL must:**

1. In consultation with the SCF [Threshold document](#) decide whether or not there are reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm in

which case a MARF (Multi-agency referral form) must be made to SCF and a referral to the police if it is appropriate.

2. Normally the school should try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and where possible to seek their agreement before making a referral to SCF. However, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could impact a police investigation. The child's views should also be taken into account.
3. If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm or abuse the DSL must contact SCF, if the child is a resident of Slough.

By sending a MARF by secure email to: [sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](mailto:sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk) or contact SCF directly on 01753 875 362 (out of hours 01344 351999) to discuss the concerns.

If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the Police (dial 999) must be called. The DSL must also notify SCF of the occurrence and what action has been taken.

If the child does not reside in Slough then the relevant local authority needs to be contacted. Where there is uncertainty regarding threshold, the DSL/DDSL should consult Children's Social Care for advice and record the outcome of that discussion.

4. If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL/DDSLs will either actively monitor the situation or consider Community based Early Help, or a family help assessment.
5. Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the DSL/DDSLs should clarify with SCF or the police whether the parents should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation.
6. When a student is in need of urgent medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse the DSL/DDSLs should take the child to A+E at the closest hospital. DSL/DDSLs should seek advice about what action SCF will take and about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention.
7. Consider appropriate Early Help or Family Help support where the threshold for statutory intervention is not met. The DSL/DDSL should ensure that the child and family receive support proportionate to their needs and that concerns continue to be monitored and reviewed.

#### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) –

FGM is a form of child abuse and is illegal in the UK. All staff must report concerns that a child may be at risk of FGM, or may have experienced FGM, to the DSL or deputy without delay. The DSL will ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed.

There is a specific mandatory reporting duty on teachers. Where a teacher, in the course of their professional work, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must personally report the case to the police. This duty applies where FGM is discovered through disclosure by the victim or through visual evidence. The duty does not apply to cases where a teacher merely suspects that a girl is at risk of FGM or where there is concern

that FGM may be planned; such concerns must be managed through normal safeguarding procedures.

Teachers should inform the DSL or deputy of a mandatory report unless there is good reason not to and should also consider whether a referral to children's social care is required. Staff must never examine a child for signs of FGM.

### **8.3: Dealing with allegations of abuse**

#### **All staff**

A member of staff who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

All staff should know who the DSL is and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. All staff have the right to make a referral to SCF or Police directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, for example, they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

#### **Guiding principles, the seven Rs:**

##### **Receive**

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said and take it seriously.
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable.

##### **Reassure**

- Reassure the student, but only so far as is honest and reliable.
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'.
- Do reassure, for example, you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'.

##### **Respond**

- Respond to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court.
- Do not ask the child why something has happened.

- Do not criticize the alleged perpetrator; the student may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the student to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the student that it will be a senior member of staff

## **Report**

- Share concerns with the DSL immediately.
- If you are not able to contact your DSL or the Deputy DSLs, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact SCF or Police, as appropriate directly.
- If you are dissatisfied with the level of response, you receive following your concerns, you should press for re-consideration.

## **Record**

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible.
- Record the date, time, place, person(s) present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words.
- If appropriate, complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising.
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'.

## **Remember**

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available.
- Appropriate confidentiality is essential. Information should only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard and support the child.
- Get some support for yourself if you need it.

## **Review (led by DSL)**

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required

## **What happens next?**

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened following a report being made. If they do not receive this information, they should seek it out.

If they have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, they might inform the Deputy headteacher, Headteacher or Safeguarding Governor of the school and/or may contact SCF.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff, therefore we would provide an opportunity for a debrief with a member of the CP team about the disclosure. In some cases,

additional counselling might be needed and staff should be encouraged to recognise that disclosures can have an impact on their own emotions.

#### **8.4 Allegations Against a Member of Staff and the role of the LADO**

This procedure applies in all cases where it is alleged that a member of staff, trainee teacher, volunteer, contractor, or any other adult working with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, staff must:

- Report any concern about the conduct of a member of staff, volunteer, trainee teacher, contractor or other adult working with children to the Headteacher immediately.
- If an allegation concerns the Headteacher, the matter must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors. If the Chair of Governors is unavailable, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be contacted directly.
- Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or evidence that a criminal offence may have been committed, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should consider contacting the police without delay.
- Upon receipt of an allegation, the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors where the allegation concerns the Headteacher) will contact the LADO immediately, and before undertaking any investigation or making enquiries beyond establishing the basic facts.
- The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will record the allegation, the actions taken, and the rationale for decisions made, including whether a referral to the LADO was required.
- Following consultation with the LADO, parents/carers will be informed of the allegation unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so.
- The school will follow the local authority procedures for managing allegations against adults who work with children. Under no circumstances will a child be sent home pending an investigation unless this has been agreed following consultation with the LADO or other appropriate safeguarding agencies.
- Suspension of a member of staff against whom an allegation has been made is a neutral act and will be considered only where necessary. The Headteacher will seek advice from the LADO before making any decision regarding suspension.
- In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, any decision regarding suspension will be made by the Chair of Governors, following consultation with the LADO.
- In liaison with the LADO, the school will determine the appropriate course of action. Where necessary, the LADO may advise referral to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- Where the matter is managed internally, the school will follow the procedures set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education and any relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures.

#### **8.5: Acting on concerns based on an adult's behaviour**

If you have any concerns about the behaviour of an adult who is an employee or volunteer towards a child, **do not ignore it**.

- If staff members have concerns about another staff member, then this should be reported to the Headteacher.
- Where there are concerns about the Headteacher this should be referred to Mrs Alison Hibbert, the Chair of Governors.

Further information is available in the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Further advice can be taken from the NSPCC free whistleblowing advice line: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk), telephone 0800 028 0285.

### **8.6: Whistleblowing**

- We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- All staff are made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the safety of a child or the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) following the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Whistle-blowing regarding the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Governors, Alison Hibbert, [[AHibbert@wexham.slough.sch.uk](mailto:AHibbert@wexham.slough.sch.uk)]

### **8.7: Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect.

The school recognises that children looked after and children previously looked after may have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, separation and loss, and may therefore be at increased risk of safeguarding concerns. The school will ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to promote the welfare, achievement and safety of these children.

Appropriate staff will have access to information regarding a child's legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to carers by the local authority and any arrangements relating to contact with parents or those who hold parental responsibility.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After will undertake appropriate training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

The Designated Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will maintain appropriate contact details for the child's social worker, relevant local authority personnel and the Virtual School.

The Designated Teacher will work in partnership with the Virtual School and other relevant professionals to promote the educational achievement, attendance, progress and wellbeing of

children looked after. This will include supporting and contributing to the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and ensuring that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used effectively to meet identified needs.

The school will maintain a record of children who are looked after and those who are known to have been previously looked after. Their educational progress, attendance, wellbeing and safeguarding needs will be monitored regularly, and appropriate support will be provided where required.

### **8.8: Children with SEND**

We recognise that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are over three times more likely to be abused than non-SEND students (Jones et al, 2012). Staff working more closely with our SEND students on a 1:1 basis give particular attention to ensuring that each child can communicate what they would like to say and understand what the adult is trying to say to them. Consideration for extra pastoral support and attention alongside considering support for communication will be considered where necessary on a case-by-case basis.

We understand that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- Being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children.
- Being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting worries and challenges.

### **8.9: Young Carers**

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputies) to keep a record of those students who play the part of a major carer for a family member. However, such families do not often publicise their situation for fear of social care involvement. We offer a support package to these students appropriate to their individual situation. This package would contain elements of the support offered to students looked after by the local authority.

### **8.10: Private Fostering Arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 years old or 18 years old if the child is disabled.

Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in residential schools, children's homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered.

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

The school recognise that most privately fostered children remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that the child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's social care as soon as possible. However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a student may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the DSL will notify SCF.

### **8.11: Children missing education (CME)**

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

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Where possible the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each student.

The school will ensure that there is a record of joiners and leavers as defined in The Education (Student Registration) (England) 2006.

When removing a child's name, the school will notify the Local Authority of: (a) the full name of the child, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the child normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the child's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the child's name is to be removed from the school register.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the child's name from the school register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f) (iii) and (h) (iii) of The Education (Student Registration) (England) 2006.

#### **The school will:**

- Enter students on the admissions register on the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the student will attend the school.
- Notify the Local Authority within five days of adding a child's name to the admission register. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new student.
- Monitor each child's attendance through their daily register and follow DFE guidelines in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Will only remove a child's name from the admissions register if instructed to do so by Slough Borough Council or we have received notification they have started in another school.
- The school will notify the Local Authority when they are about to remove a child's name from the school register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations, no later than the date that the child's name is due to be removed.
- Where parents notify the school, in writing, of their intention to electively home educate; the school will forward a copy of the letter to the Elective Home Education Team/Education Welfare. Where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated and no letter has been received, the school will not remove the child from roll and will notify Education Welfare at the earliest opportunity.

### **8.12: Children absent from education**

The vast majority of children engage positively with school and attend regularly; however, some may have unexplainable or persistent absences from education. The school must, and will work with children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns (Working together to improve school attendance, 2024)

In order to flourish, some children require an alternative education offer or may require a modified timetable to support a return to full time education provision. It is recognised that children accessing alternative provision or a reduced or modified timetable may have additional vulnerabilities.

The school will gain consent (if required in statute) from parents to put in place alternative provision and/or a reduced or modified timetable.

The school will ensure that parents (and the local authority where the student has an EHCP) are given clear information about alternative provision placements and reduced or modified timetables: why, when, where, and how they will be reviewed;

The school will keep the placement and timetable under review and involve parents in the review. Reviews will be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education and/or modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the student is benefitting from it;

The school will monitor, track and be responsible for the safeguarding of children attending alternative provision to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the child.

The school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Local Authority, regarding all students, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable.

The school leadership will report to governors of any formal direction of a student to alternative provision to improve behaviour.

The school leadership will report to governor's information regarding the use and effectiveness of the use of alternative provision and modified timetables.

### **8.13: School Attendance and Behaviour**

Additional policies and procedures are in place regarding school attendance and behaviour.

The school recognises that absence from school and exclusion from school may be indicators of abuse and neglect, including the exploitation of children. The DSL will regularly liaise with members of school staff with responsibility for behaviour and attendance to ensure risk is identified and appropriate intervention is in place to protect children from harm.

The school will work in partnership with Thames Valley Police and other partners for reporting children that go missing from the school site during the school day. Staff will be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### **8.14: Restrictive Physical Intervention**

We acknowledge that there are limited circumstances where it is appropriate to use 'reasonable force'. Staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is or at immediate risk of harming him/herself or others. Reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, to prevent injury to another person. Such events should be fully recorded and signed by a witness.

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

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

When applying disciplinary measures such as physical intervention or isolation for children with SEND, the school will consider the risks, given the additional vulnerabilities of these children.

### **8.15: Children and the court system**

We recognise that sometimes children are required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. The school will use the guidance recommended in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) to support the child.

## **Appendix 1 – Child Abuse**

### **What is child abuse?**

The following definitions are taken from keeping children safe in education 2026. Staff should understand that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns are rarely standalone events. Children may experience more than one form of harm simultaneously, and concerns may overlap or change over time. Staff should therefore consider the wider context of a child's experiences rather than viewing concerns through a single category of abuse.

Children may be at risk of harm within or outside the family, within or outside the school environment, in their own relationships, within the wider community and online. Technology may facilitate abuse that takes place offline, and online and offline harms may occur concurrently.

The school will consider both familial and extra-familial sources of harm and will remain professionally curious where there are changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, relationships.

In addition to these definitions, it should be understood that children can also be abused by being sexually exploited, honour or faith-based violence, forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

### **What is abuse and neglect?**

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

Additionally, children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as a child to parent or care giver abuse.

Children may cause harm to parents, carers or other family members. This may include physical, emotional, psychological, financial or other forms of abuse. Such behaviour may be an indicator of unmet need, trauma, exposure to violence, exploitation, mental health difficulties or other safeguarding concerns.

Staff should report concerns to the DSL where a child is experiencing, witnessing or causing significant harm within the family, so that the wider context and support needs can be considered.

## **Different kinds of abuse**

### **Physical abuse**

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

### **The nature of physical abuse**

Most children collect cuts and bruises quite routinely as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Clearly, it is not necessary to be concerned about most of these minor injuries. But accidental injuries normally occur on the *bony prominences* – e.g. knees, shins.

Injuries on the *soft* areas of the body are more likely to be inflicted intentionally and should therefore make us more alert to other concerning factors that may be present. A body map can assist in the clear recording and reporting of observed injuries. The body map should only be used to record observed injuries and no child should be asked to remove clothing by a member of staff of the school.

### **Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern**

- Multiple bruising or bruises and scratches (especially on the head and face)
- Clusters of bruises – e.g., fingertip bruising (caused by being grasped)
- Bruises around the neck and behind the ears
- Bruises on the back, chest, buttocks, or on the inside of the thighs
- Marks indicating injury by an instrument – e.g., linear bruising (stick), parallel bruising (belt), marks of a buckle
- Bite marks
- Deliberate burning may also be indicated by the pattern of an instrument or object – e.g., electric fire, cooker, cigarette
- Scalds with upward splash marks or *tide marks*
- Untreated injuries
- Recurrent injuries or burns
- Bald patches.

In the context of the school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is generally light-hearted and detailed. So, most of all, concern should be increased when:

- the explanation given does not match the injury
- the explanation uses words or phrases that do not match the vocabulary of the child (adults' words)
- no explanation is forthcoming
- the child (or the parent/carer) is secretive or evasive
- the injury is accompanied by allegations of abuse or assault

You should be concerned if a child:

- is reluctant to have parents/carers contacted
- runs away or shows fear of going home

- is aggressive towards themselves or others
- flinches when approached or touched
- is reluctant to undress to change clothing for sport
- wears long sleeves during hot weather
- is unnaturally compliant in the presence of parents/carers.
- has a fear of medical help or attention
- admits to a punishment that appears excessive.

### **Emotional abuse**

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

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include verbal abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling, deliberately silencing a child or preventing them from expressing their views, and making fun of what they say or how they communicate.

It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, including interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse may include seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person, including domestic abuse. It may include serious bullying, including cyberbullying, causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, as well as exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### **The nature of emotional abuse:**

Emotional abuse is difficult to define, identify/recognise and/or prove.

Emotional abuse is chronic and cumulative and has a long-term impact.

All kinds of abuse and neglect have emotional effects although emotional abuse can occur by itself.

Children can be harmed by witnessing someone harming another person – as in domestic abuse.

It is sometimes possible to spot emotionally abusive behaviour from parents and carers to their children, by the way that the adults are speaking to, or behaving towards children. An appropriate challenge or intervention could affect positive change and prevent more intensive work being carried out later on.

### **Indicators of emotional abuse**

Developmental issues

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Poor school performance
- Speech disorders, particularly sudden disorders or changes.

#### Behaviour

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Acting out
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late

#### Social issues

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Insecure, clinging behaviour
- Poor social relationships

#### Emotional responses

- Extreme fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations (“I deserve this”)

- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-disgust
- Low self-esteem
- Unusually fearful with adults
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

## **Neglect**

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

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Poverty, housing difficulties, lack of access to services and other socioeconomic factors may affect a family's circumstances and capacity to meet a child's needs. These factors should be understood within the wider context and should not, in themselves, be treated as evidence of neglect.

Far more children are registered to the category of neglect on Child in Need and Child Protection plans than to the other categories. As with abuse, the number of children experiencing neglect is likely to be much higher than the numbers on the plans.

Neglect can include parents or carers failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision or stimulation.
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

NSPCC research has highlighted the following examples of the neglect of children under 12 years old:

- Frequently going hungry.
- Frequently having to go to school in dirty clothes.

- Persistent tiredness or appearing regularly exhausted.
- Regularly having to look after themselves because of parents being away or having problems such as drug or alcohol misuse.
- Being abandoned or deserted.
- Living at home in dangerous physical conditions.
- Not being taken to the doctor when ill.
- Not receiving dental care.

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often seen as less serious than other categories. It is, however, very damaging: children who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and may find it hard to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Neglect can be difficult to recognise and may develop over time. Early identification and appropriate support can prevent concerns escalating. Staff should remain professionally curious and consider the child's circumstances in the context of their family and wider environment. Any concerns should be discussed promptly with the DSL or deputy.

### **Indicators of neglect**

The following is a summary of some of the indicators that may suggest a child is being abused or is at risk of harm.

It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is being abused. Each child should be seen in the context of their family and wider community and a proper assessment carried out by appropriate persons. What is important to keep in mind is that if you feel unsure or concerned, do something about it. Don't keep it to yourself.

#### **Physical indicators of neglect**

- Constant hunger and stealing food
- Poor personal hygiene - unkempt, dirty or smelly
- Underweight
- Dress unsuitable for weather
- Poor state of clothing
- Illness or injury untreated

#### **Behavioural indicators of neglect**

- Constant tiredness
- Frequent absence from school or lateness
- Missing medical appointments
- Isolated among peers

- Frequently unsupervised
- Stealing or scavenging, especially food
- Destructive tendencies

## **Sexual abuse**

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

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration by an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online).

Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children and can occur within or outside the family, in relationships, in the wider community and online.

### **The nature of sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is often perpetrated by people who are known and trusted by the child – e.g., relatives, family friends, neighbours, babysitters, and people working with the child in school, faith settings, clubs or activities. Children can also be subject to child sexual exploitation.

### **Important considerations when recognising sexual abuse**

- The person responsible may be known and trusted by the child.
- Abuse may involve grooming and manipulation.
- Grooming may involve the child, their family or wider network and may take place online.
- A child may not recognise their experience as abuse.
- A child may believe that they are in a consensual relationship with someone who is exploiting them.
- Sexual abuse may occur as a single incident or over a prolonged period.
- Sexual abuse may occur online, offline or through a combination of both.
- Children may be sexually abused by adults or by other children.

### **Indicators of sexual abuse**

Physical observations:

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural observations:

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age

- Sexualised behaviour or affection inappropriate for age
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable decline in education progress
- Depression or other sudden apparent changes in personality as becoming insecure
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Overly-compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust or fear concerning significant adults
- Regressive behaviour,
- Onset of wetting, by day or night; nightmares
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation,
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Eating disorders or sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

### **Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Child on child 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.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their education attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and school and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

## **Sexual harassment**

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

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

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual "jokes" or taunting

## **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

The [Brook Traffic Light Tool](#) uses a traffic light system to categorise the sexual behaviours of young people and is designed to help professionals:

- Make decisions about safeguarding children and young people
- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in children and young people
- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from harmful behaviour
- By categorising sexual behaviours, school can work with other agencies to the same standardised criteria when making decisions and can protect children and young people with a multi-agency approach.

The school recognise that it is vital that professionals agree on how behaviours should be categorised regardless of culture, faith, beliefs, and their own experiences or values.

## **Child on Child Abuse and Child on child sexual abuse**

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children. It is a safeguarding concern for both the victim and the perpetrator.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, misogyny and misandry, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (including through AI)

Sexual abuse can occur between children of any age and sex. It may occur within friendships, intimate relationships, peer groups or wider social networks, and may take place in person, online or through a combination of both.

Staff should understand that harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum. The school will consider the individual circumstances of each incident, including the child's age and developmental stage, the nature of the behaviour, consent, coercion, power imbalance, exploitation, frequency, impact and any wider safeguarding concerns.

Child-on-child sexual abuse may include:

- sexual violence, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, including sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment;
- forcing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent;
- unwanted sexual touching;
- non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes;
- consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes where safeguarding concerns arise;
- upskirting;
- sexualised bullying;
- sexual exploitation;
- grooming or coercive behaviour;
- initiation or hazing rituals involving sexualised behaviour, harassment, abuse or humiliation.

**Upskirting** – now a criminal offence (also includes shorts, for example for boys)

‘Upskirting’ typically involves 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. It is now a criminal offence.

Under the Voyeurism Act, upskirting offenders can now be arrested, face up to 2 years in prison and have their name placed on the sex offenders register if caught upskirting.

### **Multiple and overlapping harms**

Children may experience more than one form of abuse, neglect or exploitation at the same time. Safeguarding concerns should therefore not be considered in isolation or categorised too narrowly. A child experiencing neglect may also be vulnerable to criminal exploitation; a child experiencing domestic abuse may also experience emotional abuse or teenage relationship abuse; and a child experiencing sexual harassment may also be at risk of online exploitation, self-generated sexual imagery or serious violence (including carrying a weapon, using a weapon, or expressing an intention to do so).

Staff should consider the whole child and the wider context when identifying safeguarding concerns. This includes the child's family, peer relationships, education, community, online experiences and any other factors that may increase vulnerability.

The school recognises the importance of identifying extra-familial harm, including risks arising from peer groups, intimate relationships, the wider community and online environments.

Where multiple concerns are identified, the DSL will consider whether the child requires additional support through school-based provision, community-based early help, Family Help, children's social care or another safeguarding response.

### **Appendix 2 – Safeguarding themes of focus**

#### **Multiple and extra-familial harm**

The school recognises that children may experience harm from sources outside of the family and their home. This may include harm from peer groups, intimate relationships, wider community, online and organised groups.

Extra-familial harm may include:

- Criminal exploitation
- County lines
- Serious violence including carrying a weapon, using a weapon, or expressing an intention to do so.
- Modern slavery and trafficking
- Online harm
- Sexual exploitation
- Group-based child sexual exploitation
- Child-on-Child abuse
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Coercive control
- Influences of extremism that may lead to radicalisation

Children may experience multiple forms of harm simultaneously. For example, a child that is experiencing neglect may also be vulnerable to criminal exploitation; a child exposed to domestic abuse at home may also be experiencing abuse within their teenage relationship.

Staff should always look at the child holistically and consider the whole context – family, peers, relationship, school, wider community and online experiences.

### **Online Safety and artificial intelligence**

The school recognises that safeguarding incidents and concerns can occur online as well as face-to-face. Technology is a significant aspect of many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and children may be at risk of abuse, exploitation, bullying, harmful content, coercion, criminal exploitation, sexual harassment and other forms of harm through their use of the internet, social media, online gaming, messaging platforms and emerging technologies.

The school adopts a whole-school approach to online safety and recognises that online safety is an essential component of safeguarding. Online risks will be considered across four broad areas:

**Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, including pornography, extreme violence, racism, misogyny, self-harm and suicide content, radicalisation and extremist material, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

**Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or with generative AI applications that simulate human interaction, including peer pressure, grooming, exploitation, coercion, abuse and manipulation.

**Conduct** – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of or causes harm, including cyberbullying, sexual harassment, making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including digitally altered or AI-generated imagery, and other harmful peer behaviour.

**Commerce** – risks including online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, scams, financial exploitation and other forms of online fraud or criminal exploitation.

Artificial intelligence technologies may provide significant educational benefits but also create safeguarding risks. Staff will remain alert to:

- AI-generated misinformation and disinformation;
- deepfake images, audio and video;
- AI-generated or digitally altered nudes and semi-nudes;
- AI-facilitated bullying, harassment and child-on-child abuse;
- impersonation and identity manipulation;
- grooming, exploitation and coercion facilitated by AI;
- harmful interactions with generative AI applications;
- the creation or distribution of harmful or abusive content;
- inappropriate disclosure of personal or sensitive information to AI tools; and
- the use of AI to facilitate criminal activity or exploitation.

The school will ensure that online safety is reflected in safeguarding arrangements, the curriculum, staff training, filtering and monitoring arrangements and relevant policies.

The school maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems designed to protect children from harmful and inappropriate online content. The effectiveness of these systems will be reviewed at least annually and whenever a safeguarding incident, significant technological change or emerging risk indicates that a review is necessary. Staff are expected to understand how filtering and monitoring operate within the school and how concerns identified through these systems are escalated.

### **Anti-Bullying/Cyberbullying**

Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with, and analysed by the governing body. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied/victims of child abuse.

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. If the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will also consider child protection procedures.

PSHE education regularly provides opportunities for children to understand bullying is wrong, its impact and how to deal with it.

### **Discriminatory Incidents (including racism, homophobia and disability)**

The school is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all children are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

Staff must challenge discriminatory behaviour and language, including racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, misogyny, disability-related discrimination and discrimination based on religion or belief, sex, gender, nationality or other protected or perceived characteristics.

The school recognises that discriminatory incidents can be safeguarding concerns, particularly where behaviour is persistent, targeted, threatening, abusive or causes significant distress or fear.

All discriminatory incidents will be recorded and monitored. Patterns, repeat incidents and serious individual incidents will be considered by the DSL and relevant senior leaders to determine whether further safeguarding action is required.

The school will consider the wider context of discriminatory behaviour, including whether it forms part of bullying, harassment, child-on-child abuse, extremist or radicalising activity, or another pattern of harmful behaviour.

Staff are expected to challenge discriminatory behaviour rather than dismissing it as banter, humour or youthful behaviour.

## **Radicalisation and Extremism**

The school recognises that protecting children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism forms part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Prevent is one of the key strands of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. Its aim is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent duty places a responsibility on specified authorities, including schools, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The school's approach to Prevent is fundamentally a safeguarding approach. As with other safeguarding concerns, the school will seek to identify children who may be vulnerable, understand the factors affecting them and take appropriate action to provide support and reduce the risk of harm.

Radicalisation is the process by which a person may come to support terrorism or extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Radicalisation may occur online or offline and can be influenced by a range of personal, social, environmental and technological factors. There is no single profile of a child who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

All involved with children should remain professionally curious and be alert to significant changes or patterns in a child's behaviour, relationships, language, beliefs, interests, social networks or online activity which may indicate that they are being exposed to, influenced by or increasingly engaging with harmful extremist ideologies or narratives.

Vulnerability to radicalisation may arise from a combination of factors, including personal circumstances, experiences of discrimination or grievance, social isolation, exposure to harmful online content, a desire for belonging or identity, or influence from individuals or groups. No single factor, behaviour or characteristic should be viewed in isolation as evidence that a child is being radicalised.

Extremist influences may arise from a range of ideologies and grievances. These may include Islamist extremism, extreme right-wing ideologies and other forms of ideologically motivated extremism, as well as harmful ideologies or online communities that promote hatred, dehumanisation, violence or the justification of harm towards particular individuals or groups.

The school also recognises the potential safeguarding risks associated with extreme misogyny and harmful online communities, including involuntary celibate ("incel") culture. Some online spaces

may promote hostility, hatred or dehumanisation towards women and girls, alongside narratives of grievance, entitlement, sexual violence or the justification or glorification of violence.

Exposure to harmful, extremist or misogynistic content does not, in itself, mean that a child has been radicalised or will engage in violence. Concerns should instead be considered in the context of patterns of behaviour, vulnerability, relationships, influences and the wider circumstances of the child.

Staff must not make assumptions about a child based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, culture, political views or background. The school will not treat lawful political, religious or ideological expression as evidence of radicalisation. The focus will always be on safeguarding risk, vulnerability and any evidence that a child may be being drawn towards terrorism or extremist violence.

Concerns relating to radicalisation may overlap with other safeguarding issues, including online harm, sexual harassment, misogyny, violence against women and girls, child-on-child abuse, social isolation, exploitation or other forms of violence.

Where staff have concerns that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism, they must report these concerns promptly to the DSL or deputy DSL in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The DSL will consider the information available, the child's individual circumstances and the appropriate response. Where appropriate, the DSL will follow the relevant local Prevent referral procedures and liaise with the appropriate agencies or professionals. This can also include a referral to children's services.

Prevent referrals are safeguarding referrals and do not, in themselves, mean that a child has committed an offence or is involved in criminal activity. The purpose of Prevent is early intervention and safeguarding, with the aim of supporting individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation and preventing them from being drawn into terrorism.

Any further assessment or support following a Prevent referral will be determined through the relevant Prevent and multi-agency processes.

The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

### **Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation**

There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Students may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- Identity Crisis – the student / student is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;

- Personal Crisis – the student / student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student / student's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- Unmet Aspirations – the student / student may have perceptions of injustice or a feeling of failure,
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – students / students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

No single indicator is evidence that a child is being radicalised. Staff should consider patterns, changes and the wider circumstances of the child and discuss concerns with the DSL.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

The Department of Education guidance The Prevent Duty can be accessed via this link Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales (2015) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

## **Domestic Abuse**

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

We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism,

threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. Children can experience significant harm from domestic abuse even where they are not directly assaulted. This may include seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse, living with coercive or controlling behaviour, or being used as part of an abusive pattern.

Staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse.

The school is enrolled onto the Operation Encompass scheme, a joint project between the Police, Local Authority and schools; where every morning our DSL is notified of all domestic abuse incidents that have occurred and been reported to Police in the previous 24 hours which involved a child at this school (72 hours on a Monday morning). It is a statutory duty for police to notify the child's school; and where relevant the local authority. This provides an opportunity for us to ensure the right support is in place at the right time for children who are experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation 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.

CSE may be perpetrated by an individual or by a group. Group-based child sexual exploitation may involve multiple perpetrators, peer groups, organised criminal networks or other individuals exploiting children collectively.

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. All staff are aware of the link between online safety and vulnerability to CSE.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited should be passed immediately to the DSL.

The school is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and CSE. Staff will consider a child to be at potential CSE risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

The DSL will consider the published SCF guidance and advice when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually exploited.

In all cases if the DSL identifies any level of concern the DSL should contact SCF and complete a MARF. If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 999.

The school is aware that a child often is not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. As a consequence, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse. Children also rarely self-report CSE so staff must be particularly vigilant to potential indicators of risk.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE (including RSE) curriculum. Students will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to CSE, including online, and knowing how and where to get help.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation & Gangs (CCE)**

There are a number of areas in which young people are put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in, and as victims of, gang violence which can be in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household.

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect. Children cannot consent to being exploited, abused or trafficked, and they may not recognise that it is happening to them.

The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a gang member or both - in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or poverty, mental health problems or neurodivergence.

Criminal exploitation of children is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Key identifying features of involvement in county lines are when children are missing, when the victim may have been trafficked for transporting drugs, a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered with Social Care and Police colleagues as now this is considered modern slavery.

A child who is affected by gang activity, criminal exploitation or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Girls may be particularly at risk of sexual exploitation.

Children who are criminally exploited may not recognise themselves as victims and may appear to be willingly involved in criminal activity. A child's apparent participation does not mean that they have consented to exploitation

CCE may occur alongside CSE, trafficking, modern slavery, serious violence (including carrying a weapon, using a weapon, or expressing an intention to do so), substance misuse, missing episodes and online exploitation.

An additional form of exploitation is that regarding teenage relationship abuse, encompassing physical, sexual emotional abuse and stalking.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being criminally exploited will be passed without delay to the DSL. The school is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school

and exploitation. Staff will consider a child to be at potential risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

A MARF to SCF will be made when any concern of harm to a child as a consequence of gang activity including child criminal exploitation becomes known. Any member of staff who has concerns that a child may be at risk of harm should immediately inform the DSL. The DSL will contact SCF. If there is concern about a child's immediate safety, the Police will be contacted on 999.

### **Making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes, including where generated by AI**

The practice of children sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace. However, this online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of 18 is unlawful.

Sending nudes or semi-nudes refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under the age of 18. The term 'images' includes all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams. Images may be taken by the child themselves (sometimes referred to as 'self-generated imagery') or taken or created by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a safeguarding concern.

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

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving nudes/semi-nudes they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the DSL immediately. The member of staff should confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off. Staff must not view, copy or print the nudes/semi-nudes.

The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate).

Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm.

At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a MARF is sent to SCF or the Police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to Children's Social Care/Police if:

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is good reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special education needs).

- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are violent.
- The imagery involves sexual acts.
- The imagery involves anyone aged 12 or under.
- There is reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

The DSL will consider the circumstances of each incident, including:

- the age and developmental stage of the children involved;
- whether there is a significant age or power imbalance;
- whether there was coercion, pressure or exploitation;
- whether the image was created or shared consensually;
- whether the child depicted knew about or consented to the sharing;
- whether the image has been distributed more widely;
- whether the image has been digitally altered or generated using AI;
- the nature and severity of the imagery;
- the impact on the child;
- whether there are previous incidents or wider safeguarding concerns; and
- whether the child may be vulnerable to further exploitation or harm.

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be referred according to our child protection procedures, including referral to SCF or the Police.

The child depicted will be treated as a child who may be experiencing harm and will not be blamed for the creation or sharing of the image.

The DSL will record all incidents of this nature, including the actions taken, rationale for actions and the outcome.

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

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

The duty applies to all persons in school who is employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether or not they have qualified teacher status.

The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the DSL; however, the DSL should be informed.

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

School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM.

Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported using the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female students about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday.

There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

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

### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

This also includes any form of marriage for someone under 18 being illegal, even where violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. The minimum age to marry in the UK now being 18 when it was raised from 16 in 2022.

Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

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

Staff must not attempt to mediate, negotiate with family members or involve other relatives or community members in an attempt to resolve concerns about forced marriage. Staff should report concerns immediately to the DSL, who will follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from children's social care, the police and/or specialist services as appropriate.

### **Honour or faith - based Violence**

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

Honour or faith-based violence might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage;
- want to get out of a forced marriage

- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture
- It is considered a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse.

Honour or faith - based violence may include physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse, threats, coercion, forced marriage, FGM, restrictions on movement or contact, surveillance, isolation or other forms of control.

It may be perpetrated by one or more family or community members and may involve multiple perpetrators acting collectively.

Staff should not make assumptions about the cultural, religious or family context of a child and must not treat harmful practices as culturally acceptable.

### **One Chance Rule**

All staff are aware of the 'One Chance' Rule' in relation to forced marriage, FGM and HBV. Staff may only have one opportunity to speak safely with a child about their concerns, and how they respond can be critical to the child's safety.

The school are aware that if the victim is not offered support following disclosure that the 'One Chance' opportunity may be lost. Therefore, all staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they become aware of potential forced marriage, FGM and HBV cases.

### **Gender questioning children**

We recognise that some children and young people may question their gender and may require support from trusted adults. We are committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all pupils while fulfilling our safeguarding duties and promoting the welfare of every child.

We will approach all matters relating to children who are questioning their gender in a sensitive, respectful, child-centred and safeguarding-focused manner. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the individual circumstances, wishes, feelings, wellbeing and best interests of the child, alongside the rights, welfare and needs of other pupils.

Children who are questioning their gender may experience vulnerability, distress, anxiety, bullying, peer pressure, social isolation, discrimination, online harms or mental health difficulties. Staff should remain professionally curious and consider whether there are any underlying safeguarding concerns requiring support or intervention.

The school will not initiate social transition. The school's consideration of social transition will only arise where a child or their parent/carer raises a request. Social transition may include requests relating to names, pronouns, appearance or other aspects of social presentation.

Any request will be considered through a structured decision-making process led by the DSL and senior leaders, taking account of safeguarding considerations, the child's best interests, parental

involvement, relevant legal duties and any available professional advice. Decisions will be appropriately recorded and reviewed.

The school recognises that the outcome of any decision may not always align with the child's preferred outcome where safeguarding, welfare or legal considerations indicate an alternative approach is necessary.

### **Appendix 3 – Useful resources**

#### **Safeguarding and child protection:**

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

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

#### **Online safety and digital harm:**

CEOPS Think u know: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Child net International – <http://www.childnet.com/>

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

#### **Mental health and emotional wellbeing:**

Young Minds [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Kooth [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

Samaritans [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

The mix [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

#### **Suicide prevention and crisis support:**

Papyrus [www.papyrus-uk.org/](http://www.papyrus-uk.org/)

SHOUT – Text SHOUT to 85258

#### **Bullying and harmful behaviour:**

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

Child net [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

#### **Domestic abuse and healthy relationships:**

Women's aid [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Refuge [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

Mankind initiative – for male victims [www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk)

Respect – for male victims [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)

Additional safeguarding information:

Rape crisis – [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

Contextual Safeguarding Network <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>