



**SAFEGUARDING AND  
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

146-148 Park View Road  
Welling  
Greater London  
DA16 1SR

# **Child protection and safeguarding policy**

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## Reviewed by:

Designated Safeguarding Lead .....  
Date:.....

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) .....  
Date:.....

Headteacher .....  
Date:.....

Nominated Executive Board Member .....  
Date:.....

### **Policy statement and principles**

**The School** provides a service to children and young people and these procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or young person who accesses the services we provide.

This school is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place and to ensure all those involved will be treated with dignity and respect.

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio which also includes, staff code of conduct, safer recruitment, whistleblowing, complaints, managing physical interventions, and online safety. All of these policies can be found on the staff intranet and the school website.

For more information regarding allegations about staff, please refer to the guidance set out in the document Keeping Children safe in Education, part 4.

This policy is available on the school website and is included in the staff handbook and volunteers information pack.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- safer children make more successful learners
- policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

### **Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all learners. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect

and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and our Executive Board and are reflective of local safeguarding guidance.

### **Policy principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Learners and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

### **Policy aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment regarding child protection to learners, parents and other partners

#### **Terminology**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's mental as well as physical health and development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

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

**DSL** refers to the designated safeguarding lead at the school

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

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

### **Safeguarding legislation and guidance**

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 (Independent schools only, including academies and Free Schools)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Independent schools only, including academies and Free Schools)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Teacher Standards 2012

- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- Working Together: Transitional Guidance 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015

## Roles and responsibilities

### Key personnel

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is**

Contact details: email: [julie.woodcock@alpschools.org](mailto:julie.woodcock@alpschools.org) tel: 074476691342 (office and out of hours)

**The deputy designated leads (DDSLs) are** Richard Johnson and Emma Chatzispayridou

Contact details: email: [emma.chatzispayridou@alpschools.org](mailto:emma.chatzispayridou@alpschools.org) tel: 07964413179 (office and out of hours)

Email [richard.johnson@alpschools.org](mailto:richard.johnson@alpschools.org) tel: 07939582567 (office and out of hours)

**The nominated child protection governor is** Janis Warren

Contact details: email: [janis.warren@alpschools.org](mailto:janis.warren@alpschools.org)

**The headteacher is** Richard Johnson

Contact details: email: [richard.johnson@alpschools.org](mailto:richard.johnson@alpschools.org) tel: 07939582567 (office and out of hours)

**The LADO in Bexley is:** Rozelle Uter

**Interim Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

Bexley Council Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7AT

**Tel: 0203 045 3436** (LADO Team)

**Tel: 0203 045 5645** (Business Support)

**Tel: 0203 045 5440** (MASH)

**Email:** [LADO@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@bexley.gov.uk)

**Email:** [childrens.triageteam@bexley.cjsm.net](mailto:childrens.triageteam@bexley.cjsm.net)

All schools should appoint a member of the senior leadership team to coordinate child protection arrangements.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school. The DSL has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, which include:

- ensuring the child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff, reviewed annually and publically available
- advising and supporting staff on child protection and safeguarding matters

- encouraging a culture of listening to children
- managing safeguarding referrals to children’s social care, the police, or other agencies
- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
- liaising with the “case manager” and the designated officer(s) at the local authority where allegations are made against staff
- making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements available through the local safeguarding partner arrangements
- transferring the child protection file to a child’s new school
- undergoing training and receiving regular updates to maintain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role, including Prevent awareness training.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership staff.

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

Is/are trained to the same level as the DSL and supports the DSL with safeguarding matters as appropriate. In the absence of the DSL, the deputy DSL carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of learners. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume the functions above.

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

Good practice includes:

- Treating all learners with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving learners in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among learners
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in learners’ behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding the school’s child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some learners lead to an increased risk of abuse
- Referring all concerns about a learner’s safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children’s social care.

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

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards learners is unacceptable and that their conduct towards learners must be beyond reproach.

Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a learner under 18 may be a criminal offence.

**The school’s Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.**

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

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that our learners receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Living transient lifestyles
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

### **Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

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

Staff are trained to manage these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

### **Children missing education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation or mental health problems. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are also aware that where children have



suffered adverse childhood experiences those experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL or a deputy.

### **Whistleblowing if you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a learner are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistleblowing code is available to all staff and learners and available on the website enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the headteacher. Complaints about the headteacher should be reported to the chair of the Executive Board or proprietor.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

### **Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff (including volunteers and agency/supply staff), our set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2020)* Part 4 and in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff policy and procedures.

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

Please refer to the National Police Chief's Council (NPPC) document 'When to call the police' for further guidance.

### **Staff training**

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and Executive Board Members will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection policy and staff Code of Conduct, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff, including the DSL, headteacher (unless the headteacher is the DSL) and Executive Board Members will receive training that is regularly updated. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, website access and staff meetings throughout the year.

### **Safer recruitment**

Our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2019) and the local safeguarding partner arrangements by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. The school's Safer Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full and can be found on the school website and via the staff intranet. At least one member of each recruitment panel

will have attended safer recruitment training.

The school does not currently run any before or after school care for children under eight, however should this become a factor all staff would be made aware of the disqualification from childcare legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the school by raising awareness within their safeguarding training.

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

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

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

### **TRANSFERABLE RISK**

The legal duty to make a safeguarding referral to the DBS for regulated activity providers will be triggered when a person is removed from regulated activity because they have been cautioned or convicted of an automatic barring offence, engaged in conduct or the harm test is satisfied.

A person satisfies the Harm Test if they MAY harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm. In other words, something a person may do to cause or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

A person's conduct endangers a child if they:

- Harm a child
- Cause a child to be harmed
- Put a child at risk of harm
- Attempt to harm a child
- Incite another to harm a child

A person satisfies the Harm Test in relation to children if they:

- Harm a child
- Cause a child to be harmed
- Put a child at risk of harm
- Attempt to harm a child
- Incite another to harm a child
- Relevant conduct in relation to their behaviour with adults (eg conduct at home)

Please refer to the document 'DBS Referrals guide: Harm, relevant conduct and risk of harm.' for more information.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers, including Executive Board Members will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with learners and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

## **Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

## **Site security**

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents or carers who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## **Extended school and off-site arrangements**

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

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

## **Staff/learner online relationships**

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has an online safety policy for learners and rigorous IT policies for staff to refer to. There are strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with learners. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

## **Child protection procedures**

### **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our learners are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2019) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

### **Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed

through our tackling-bullying procedures which can be accessed via the schools 'Anti Bullying' policy.

### **Taking action**

**Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here".** Key points for staff to remember for acting are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child (including calling 999)
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

### **If you are concerned about a learner's welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a learner may be at risk. The learner's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the learner the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **Safeguarding Concern form** to record these early concerns. If the learner does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the learner, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

### **If a Learner discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a learner talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the learner know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL.** The point at which they tell the learner this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the learners, staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not be afraid of silences
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the learner's mother think about it
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong

- tell the learner what will happen next
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- complete the **safeguarding concern form** and hand it to the DSL as soon as possible
- seek support if they feel distressed.

### **Notifying parents and carers**

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

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the learner. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying a parent/carer could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before they are contacted.

### **Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, headteacher or chair of the Executive Board (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Following several cases where senior leaders in schools had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with our Retention Schedule which is linked to the Data Protection Policy.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and where:

- it is necessary and proportionate to do so; and
- the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Data protection law is not a barrier, but it is a system of checks and balances to bear in mind when recording, sharing, and retaining vital but sensitive data.

Safeguarding concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the learner's school file. The information will be held in a secure file and individually labelled.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the learner and/or parents/carer to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

If any member of staff receives a request from a learner or parent/carer to see child

protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer and/or DSL.

The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's Data Protection Policy is available to parents, carers and learners on request and can also be found on the school's website.

### **Referral to children's social care**

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a learner is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The learner (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents/carer will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

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

### **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy, the headteacher and the chair of the Executive Board are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the learner's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

## **APPENDIX ONE - TYPES OF ABUSE**

### **PEER ON PEER ABUSE**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary.

However, all staff recognise that children can abuse their peers and should be clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- **sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse** such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault or rape
- **sexting** including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content
- **teenage relationship abuse** - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- **upskirting** – taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge
- **initiation/hazing** - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or school groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

At our school, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse.

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Assemblies are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- RE and PSHE are used to reinforce the message through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in school.
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

All allegations of peer on peer abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.

- **Information gathering** – children, staff and witnesses will be spoken with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** – if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children’s social care. The DSL will then work with children’s social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents/carer** - as with other concerns of abuse, the school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a learner with parents/carer. Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the learner and so if the school believes that notifying parents/carer could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before they are contacted.

Where allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made, the school will act in accordance with the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)*.

### **Supporting those involved**

The support required for the learner who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships or some restorative justice work.

Support may also be required for the learner that harmed. We will seek to understand why the learner acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the learner and/or change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

## **ONLINE SAFETY**

As schools increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation.

We have ensured that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to manage the content available to learners, who can contact our learners and the personal conduct of our learners online.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard learners undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise learners on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)*. Please contact our careers advisor specialist Francis Mayor.

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARRASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.**

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 educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk.

Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of: • making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up; • not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and • challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

## **SEXTING**

There is no accepted definition of ‘sexting’ but most professionals agree that it refers to the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs of a person under 18 years of age, via mobiles or over the internet. The [UKCCIS advice document](#) refers to this as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’.

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery will be responded to as follows:



- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. If appropriate, there will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved.
- Parents/Carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put the young person at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately in accordance with this policy.

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the police. Once a report is made to the police, the report must be recorded, and the police will investigate. This may include seizure of devices and interviews with the young people involved.

### **UPSKIRTING**

“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.”

The criminal offence of ‘upskirting’ was created under the Voyeurism Act on 12 April 2019 across England and Wales as it’s already an offence in Scotland. Offenders can now face up to two years in prison and could be placed on the sex offenders register. This could include instances where the offender claims they were doing it ‘for a laugh’ or when paparazzi are caught taking intrusive photographs.

### **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child’s physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSD, SRE and ICT curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn’t recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn’t see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

### **SERIOUS VIOLENCE**

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

### **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) : COUNTY LINES**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
  - can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

### **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE**

‘Honour-based’ violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse.

### **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)**

A person who works in a regulated profession in England and Wales must inform the the DSL and the Police if they are aware of FGM.

A notification should be made if they are informed by the girl involved or they observe the physical signs of FGM taking place and have no reason to believe these physical signs are part of a health related surgical operation and the girl involved is under 18 years of age. Those failing to report such cases may come to face disciplinary actions.

FGM can take place at any age and therefore can be very varied. However the majority of cases take place between the ages of 5 and 8, meaning girls within this age bracket are at a higher risk. Typical cases will see the girl being taken away at the start of the summer holidays so that they have time to recover from the procedure and return to school as normal.

### **Indicators in the child that show FGM is about to or already has taken place:**

- A girl may have frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- There may be prolonged or repeated absences from school/college
- Noticeable behaviour changes such as withdrawal/depression
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- A girl may ask for help but be too embarrassed to explain
- A girl may make comments about pain or discomfort between her legs
- Difficulty in walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- A girl may spend longer than usual in the bathroom/toilet
- A girl makes comments about attending a special procedure or occasion to become a woman

- A girl may talk about a family elder coming to stay or a prolonged holiday to her country of origin or other country where the practice is prevalent.

#### **Indicators in the family that show FGM is about to or already has taken place:**

- Parents/carer state that the or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period
- Parents/carer withdraw the girl from any classes involving them learning about FGM or any personal, social and health education
- The girls mother and or sister or other extended members of the family have undergone the procedure
- The family itself is not as integrated within UK society as other families from similar backgrounds

#### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead's Responsibilities with regards to Extremism**

Ultimately, if you are worried about a child under 18 who may be at risk of FGM you have a legal responsibility to share this information with the DSL or with social care/the police.

Please also refer to Multi Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation  
See pages 42-44 for advice for schools and colleges.

#### **FORCED MARRIAGE**

In a forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the arrangement of the marriage and some elements of duress are involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced Marriage is an abuse of human rights and, where a child is involved, an abuse of the rights of the child.

Warning signs that a child or young person may be at risk of forced marriage or may have been forced to marry may include:

- History of siblings leaving education early to marry;
- Extended absences from school/college, truancy, drop in performance, low motivation, excessive parental/carer restriction and control of movements;
- A child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about, fears that they will be taken out of education and kept abroad;
- Evidence of self-harm, treatment for depression, attempted suicide, social isolation, eating disorders or substance abuse;
- Evidence of family disputes/conflict, domestic violence/abuse or running away from home;
- Unreasonable restrictions such as being kept at home by their parents/carer ('house arrest') or being unable to complete their education;
- A child being in conflict with their parents/carer;
- A child going missing/running away;
- A child always being accompanied including to school and doctors' appointments;
- A child directly disclosing that s/he are worried s/he will be forced to marry.

Anyone threatened with forced marriage or forced to marry against their will can apply for a Forced Marriage Protection Order. Third parties, such as relatives, friends, voluntary workers and police officers, can also apply for a protection order with the leave of the court. Fifteen county courts deal with applications and make orders to prevent forced marriages. Local authorities can seek a protection order for Adults at Risk and children without leave of the court. Guidance published by the Ministry of Justice explains how local authorities can

apply for protection orders and provides information for other agencies. (This is available at the Justice website).

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence, with effect from 16 June 2014, to force someone to marry. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place);
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental Capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not).

Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order is also now a criminal offence. The civil remedy of obtaining a Forced Marriage Protection Order through the family courts, as set out above, continues to exist alongside the criminal offence, so victims can choose how they wish to be assisted.

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

Disobeying a Forced Marriage Protection Order can result in a sentence of up to 5 years in prison.

Where the concerns about the welfare and safety of the child or young person are such that a referral to Children's social care should be made the Referrals Procedure must be followed.

Involving families in cases of forced marriage is dangerous:

- It may increase the risk of serious harm to the victim. Experience shows that the family may punish them for seeking help;
- Involving the family includes visiting the family to ask them whether they are intending to force their child to marry or writing a letter to the family requesting a meeting about their child's allegation that they are being forced to marry;
- Relatives, friends, community leaders and neighbours should not be used as interpreters - despite any reassurances from this known person.

All professionals working with victims of forced marriage need to be aware there may be only one chance to speak to a victim. If the victim is allowed to leave without the offer of support, the one chance to intervene may be lost.

The risk of significant harm may be increased if it becomes known that the young person has sought assistance. If forced marriage seems to be an issue:

- Do not notify the young person's family (or other members of their community) that you intend to refer the matter to the police or children's social care;
- Do not attempt to mediate.

Professionals should always consider the need for immediate protection, as disclosure of the forced marriage may be the direct consequence of the impending event. Children's social care will liaise with the police to ensure the safety of the victim and any other family members.

## **RADICALISM AND EXTREMISM**

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

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

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable learners to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

## **APPENDIX TWO - SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent, or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

<http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Private-fostering-better-information-better-understanding.pdf>

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a learner may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

### **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

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

### **CHILDREN WHO HAVE A SOCIAL WORKER**

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities will share this information with us, and the DSL will hold and use this information to inform decisions about safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.

### **CHILDREN STAYING WITH HOST FAMILIES**

The school may arrange for learners to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. Some overseas learners may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

It is not possible for schools to obtain criminal record information from the DBS about adults abroad. Where learners stay with families abroad, we will agree with partner schools a shared understanding of the arrangements in place. Staff will use their professional judgement to satisfy themselves that the arrangements are appropriate to safeguard the

learners, which will include ensuring learners understand who to contact should an emergency occur, or a situation arise which makes them feel uncomfortable. We will also make parents/carers aware of these arrangements.

The school follows the guidance in Annex E of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)* to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

### **THE PROVISION OF EARLY HELP**

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

### **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. See Pierview Academy, Attendance Policy for further guidance.

### **CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds available from the Gov.co.uk website.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links are explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for parents and carers.

### **BOARDING SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN'S HOMES**

Research has shown that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings. All boarding schools and residential special schools must comply with the National Minimum Standards for their setting and should be appropriately inspected.

Those schools should be particularly alert to the signs of abuse in such settings and work closely with the host local authority and, where relevant, any local authorities that have placed their children there.

## **APPENDIX THREE - TYPES OF ABUSE**

### **Four categories of abuse**

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

#### **Emotional abuse**

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

#### **Sexual abuse**

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

#### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Indicators of abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons, it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

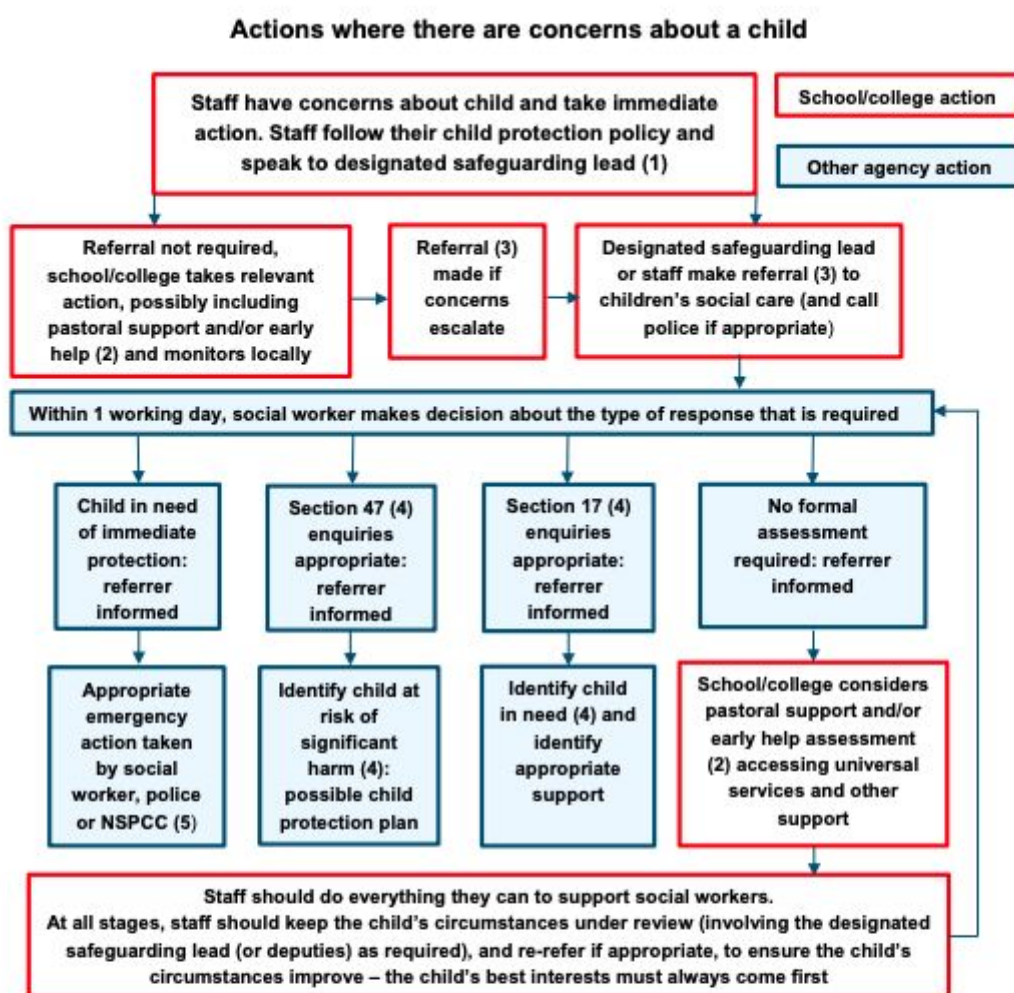
A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSP to decide how to proceed.



## APPENDIX FOUR - CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD DECISION CHART



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

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

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

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

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

