Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

June 2026

Table of Contents **Page**

1. Ethos statement 3
2. Introduction 3
3. Statutory framework 4
4. Key roles and responsibilities 4
   - The Trust Board
   - Designated Safeguarding Lead
   - Academy Head
   - All Staff
5. Training 8
6. Recognising concerns – signs and indicators of abuse 8
   - Abuse
   - Physical abuse
   - Emotional abuse
   - Sexual abuse
   - Neglect
7. Specific safeguarding issues 10
   - Child criminal exploitation
   - Child sexual exploitation
   - Child on child abuse
   - So-called Honour or faith-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)
   - Mental Health
   - Serious violence
8. Children potentially at greater risk of harm 13
   - Children who need a social worker (Child in need & child protection plans)
   - Children absent from education (Children missing from education)
   - Effective Home Education
   - Children requiring mental health support
   - Looked after and previously looked after children
   - Children with SEN and disabilities, and/or physical health issues
9. Curriculum 20
10. Online safety and use of AI statement 20
11. Procedures 22
12. Information sharing, record keeping and confidentiality 24
13. Managing allegations made against teachers, including Supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors 26
14. Use of school premises for non-school activities 27
15. Whistleblowing 27
16. Useful contacts and links 27
17. Appendix A – further information on specific safeguarding issues 29
18. Appendix B – recording form for safeguarding concerns 46
19. Appendix C – body map 48
20. Appendix D – flow chart 52
21. Role of the DSL 53
22. Role of the Trust Head of Virtual School/Designated Teacher 54

School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Framework
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. Children includes anyone under the age of 18.

NB. Although some of the pupils in our schools are classed as adults (aged of 18 or 19) this policy and everything set out within it, applies to how we will safeguard the vulnerable adults in our care alongside the Children.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, always, what is in the **best interests** of the child.
(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026)

1. Ethos statement

We recognise the moral and statutory responsibility placed on all staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment, underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, are able to raise concerns and believe they are being listened to, and that appropriate action will be taken to keep them safe.

2. Introduction

The Trust Board recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation and this policy has regard to statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Board and Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

This policy will be reviewed annually, as a minimum, and will be made available to the public via the Trust and school website or on request.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children 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.

This policy is for all staff, Trustees, parents, Locality Committee members, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the child protection and safeguarding arrangements for our Trust and is one of a suite of policies and procedures, which encompass the safeguarding responsibilities of the Schools. In particular, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy,
- Online Safety Policy (including Staff Acceptable Use)
- Anti-Bullying Policy,
- Department for Education (DfE) guidance Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide staff with a framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people, and ensure that they understand and meet their statutory responsibilities;
- Ensure consistent good practice across the Trust.

The Trust expects that all staff will know and understand this Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and their responsibility to implement it. Staff working directly with children must, as a minimum, have read and understood Part One of KCSIE 2026. The Trust Safeguarding Lead will ensure that Academy Heads and senior leaders have read and understood Parts One and Two of KCSIE 2026. Academy Heads and DSL will ensure all staff will have **at least** read Part One in full and that the staff quick reference is available for staff to refer to, for example on staff notice boards. The Academy Heads and DSL will ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children will read Keeping children safe in education: Part one – staff quick referenceThe Trust will ensure that arrangements are in place for all staff members, Trustees and Locality Committee representatives to receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated.

Compliance with the policy will be monitored by The Consortium Trust, Academy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

3. Statutory framework

Section 157 of the Education Act and the Education (Independent Schools) Regulations 2014 for independent schools (including academies and free schools), and the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 for post 16 education providers, place a statutory duty on Trustees and proprietors to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, who are pupils of the school which must have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State.

In accordance with statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, local safeguarding arrangements must be established for every local authority area by the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups). All three partners have equal and joint responsibility for a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. In Suffolk, all schools have been named by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP)/ Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership as relevant agencies, this means staff in schools must work in accordance with the multi-agency procedures developed by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) /Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership, which can be found on their websites at: https://suffolksp.org.uk/. https://www.norfolklscb.org/

4. Key roles and responsibilities

Trust Board

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all Trustees and Locality Committee Members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole

Trustees and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Trust Board has a strategic leadership responsibility for all schools safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that all Trust schools comply with their duties under legislation. The Trust Board has a legal responsibility to make sure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place, which have regard to statutory guidance, in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare. The Trust Board will also ensure that the policy is made available to parents and carers by publishing this on the Trust and schools' website or in hard copy if requested.

The Trust Board will ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy

development, and that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

The Trust Board will ensure that where there is a safeguarding concern school leaders will make sure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems will be in place that are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

The Trust Board will ensure that all schools contribute to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and that the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place.

The Trust Board will ensure that policies for special educational needs and disability, and supporting pupils in school with medical conditions, are in place and are reflective of safeguarding as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Academy Head, DSL and Office Manager to ensure that staff and volunteers are properly vetted to make sure they are safe to work with the pupils who attend our schools and that the schools have procedures for appropriately managing allegations of abuse made against members of staff (including the Academy Head, supply teachers, contractors, and volunteer helpers).

The Trust Board will ensure that there is a named a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, and a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are in Care (CiC), or Previously Looked After (PLAC), and will ensure that these people have the appropriate training.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role-holder's job description. (The broad areas of responsibility and activities related to the role of the DSL are set out in Annex B of KCSiE).

The DSL will have the appropriate status, authority, and time to carry out the duties of the post.

The DSL and any Deputy DSLs should liaise with the Local Authority and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

During term time, the DSL and/or a Deputy should always be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL will make arrangements for adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term time activities.

The Designated and Alternate safeguarding leads will receive Level 3 DSL Training every 2 years and supplementary/legislative updates via the Trust DSL Network meetings held each half term.

Academy Head
The Academy Head will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Trust are fully implemented and that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

All staff
All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All staff working directly with children must read and ensure they understand at least Part One of KCSIE 2026. Those staff that do not work directly with children must read and ensure they understand Keeping children safe in education: Part one – staff quick reference.

All staff must ensure they are familiar with the systems within school, which support safeguarding, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct policy, the behaviour policy, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education (CME), and the role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any Alternate DSL(s).

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened, this could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, neglected or exploited, and/or is otherwise at risk of involvement in criminal activity, such as knife crime, or involved in county lines drug dealing.

All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 that may follow a referral, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments. In the case of vulnerable adults Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (f they suspect an adult with care and support needs is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect).

All staff should be aware of the Family Help offer and understand their role within it under Community-based early help (the collective support offered by schools, colleges, health visitors, early years settings or community groups) or Targeted Early Help (the more focused approach based partnership-based support developed in local areas). This includes providing support as soon as a problem emerges, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals in order to support early identification and assessment, focussing on providing interventions to avoid escalation of worries and needs (see Section 12: Information Sharing). In some cases, staff may be asked to act as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

Community-based Early Help
If children do not require the support of statutory children's services, the designated safeguarding lead (or a 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 carrying out this assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for Family Help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse. Alternatively, qualified lead practitioners (i.e. not a social worker) who may lead assessments before statutory intervention can continue to lead work with families up to and including Section 17.

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

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

Knowing what to look out for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or Alternate). If in exceptional circumstances the DSL (or Deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the Trust Safeguarding Lead, senior leadership team and/or take advice from children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL as soon as is practically possible.

Who to contact at school:

Role:	**Name and contact details:**
Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Alternate Safeguarding Leads	

Who to contact at Trust level:

Role:	**Name and contact details:**
Trust Safeguarding Lead	Jo Lawrence j.lawrence@consortiumtrust.org.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	Sue Child - s.child@consortiumtrust.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Leads	Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne a.aalders-dunthorne@consortiumtrust.org.uk Lisa Jones – l.jones@consortiumtrust.org.uk Debbie Thomas – d.thomas@consortiumtrust.org.uk
(Lead Designated Teacher) for Children in Care and children previously in care (CiC)	Appointed at school/setting level

5. Training

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction

The Trust Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with legislation. In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and up to date knowledge of emerging and evolving safeguarding issues to safeguard children effectively.

All new staff members will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This will include training on the Trust child protection and safeguarding policy, online safety, the code of conduct, the behaviour policy, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, and the role of the designated safeguarding lead. Copies of the school's policies, procedures and Keeping children safe in education: Part one – staff quick reference for those staff who do not work directly with children)[1] will be provided to new staff at induction.

All staff will undergo online Prevent Training annually to maintain their knowledge base regarding pupils that may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism and staff should also be aware that any referral requires the individual's consent.

The Trust Safeguarding Lead will ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

The DSL will ensure that an accurate record of safeguarding training undertaken by all staff is maintained and updated regularly.

In considering safeguarding training arrangements, the Trust Safeguarding Lead will also have regard to the Teachers' Standards, which set out the expectation that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment, and require teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

6. Recognising concerns - signs and indicators of abuse.

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect, and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with their DSL.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

The link to the Consortium Trust Online Safety Policy can be found here..

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images, self-generated intimate images/and or videos and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk (deepfakes).

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of this environment. All staff, but especially the DSL (and Deputy), should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.

Indicators of abuse and neglect

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

The following indicators listed under the categories of abuse are not an exhaustive list:

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

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

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
(Source Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026)

7. Specific safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as of drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery, and further information is available in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance. In accordance with this guidance, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however staff should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network13 and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing.

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

So-called Honour or faith-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)
Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

So-called Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA. Any form of marriage for someone under 18 is illegal, even where violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used.

Mental Health All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately, trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

The changes in behaviour could include:

- significant changes in behaviour
- ongoing difficulty sleeping
- withdrawing from social situations
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key

that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, education staff are well placed to identify these and other potential warning signs. In doing so they can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention.

Staff can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies. More information can be found in the mental health and behaviour in school's guidance.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the school's policy, and speaking to the DSL or a Deputy.

If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or take them to A&E immediately. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

Child on child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (also referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

- Victims of this abuse will likely find the experience distressing, which can affect their progress in school, this can be made worse if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. (We distinguish between the two parties involved and therefore use the terms of victim and perpetrator are used. It is clear that unless the child is over the age of 10 years then no crime has been committed. We will work together with all involved on a case-by-case basis.)

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening. It may be the case that abuse is not being reported. As such it is important that when staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse (whether these concerns are thought to have taken place on or off-site) they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As part of this, schools should also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example immediately after school).

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

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school or college should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

All staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.

As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, all staff should know that child-on-child abuse is preventable. As well as knowing how to recognise behaviours and indicators of risk early, staff should know that timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes1upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

All staff should be clear about the Trust policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Serious violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), who will assess the risk and take appropriate action. Where relevant this will include any action needed to de-escalate peer conflict.

Schools play a key role in protecting children from violence, safeguarding victims, as well as those who may be at risk of, or are involved in violence (who may also be victims themselves). Staff should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence. These risks are higher for children with disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending. Schools should also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example immediately after school).

Early, evidence-based support for those considered at risk, as well as in 'teachable moments' when issues emerge is vital. This includes access to trusted adults, social and emotional skill support, and, where available, targeted interventions such as mentoring or therapeutic support.

Advice for schools is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance

8. Children potentially at greater risk of harm

The Trust Board recognise that whilst all children should be protected there are some groups of children who are potentially at greater risk of harm and, in some cases, these children may find it difficult to communicate what is happening to them.

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect.

The Trust Board will have regard to the following statutory guidance:
Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – DfE Statutory Guidance

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

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

The Trust Board expects that the Local Authority will share the fact a child has a social worker, and the DSL will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both LAs and school to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

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

Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for **prolonged periods** and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

- Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.
- further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges.
- general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's Missing Children and Adults Strategy.

(Source Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026)

Elective Home Education

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

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will work together with the LA and other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible.

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

Children requiring mental health support

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The Trust Board will ensure there is a clear system and process in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate, and a clear referral and accountability system.

Staff can access further advice in a DfE guidance documents, Preventing and tackling bullying and Mental health and behaviour in schools which set out how staff can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of pupils.

The school's senior mental health lead will be a member of, or be supported by, the senior leadership team.

Looked after children and previously looked after children.

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. The Trust Board will ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

The Trust Board will ensure there are arrangements in place so that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

The Lead Designated Teacher will be responsible for maintaining required personal knowledge levels, attending any relevant training and updating school/hub Designated Teachers accordingly.
Appropriate staff will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the Virtual School Head in the authority that looks after the child.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. The Trust Board recognises that when dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is
important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

Children with SEN and disabilities, and/or physical health issues can face additional safeguarding challenges, both in terms of their vulnerability and also in terms of being able to report abuse both online and offline.

Staff should avoid making assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury may relate to the child's disability or medical condition without further exploration.

Staff should also be aware that these children may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. Similarly, staff should be aware of the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing signs or being able to communicate how they are feeling.

Further information can be found in the departments:

- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.

And from specialist organisations such as:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: Find your local IAS service (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)
- Mencap - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm.
In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. Schools and colleges should consider how to address vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying and take steps to prevent it, including putting appropriate sanctions in place. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

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

LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

Children who are questioning their gender

In recent years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of children who are questioning the way they feel about being a boy or a girl, including the physical attributes of their sex and the related ways in which they fit into society.

It is not for schools and colleges to initiate any action in this area; this guidance is focused on circumstances where a child or their parent has raised a request relating to social transition to which a school or college is responding.

Schools and colleges should keep in mind that it is common for children to engage in activities that are less typically associated with their sex. For example, at primary school age, girls may play with trucks, or boys may dress in clothes that are perceived as feminine. Sometimes young children also go through a period of questioning their gender but for the majority this will not continue into adulthood, while a small proportion may continue to question their gender and this feeling may intensify into puberty.
Schools and colleges should take time to understand the thoughts and feelings of children who are questioning their gender and should be appropriately professionally curious about the full range of the

child's experiences. Schools and colleges should remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying.

Schools and colleges should consider adopting policies across school and college life that maintain flexibility and avoid rigid rules based on gender stereotypes.

Considering requests for support with social transition

Schools and colleges should not initiate any action regarding social transition; this guidance applies where a child or their parent has made a request. Members of staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by a school or college in consultation with parents or carers Schools and colleges should consider whether pupils would be best supported by a policy on social transition which explains the steps that a school or college will go through when a child requests support. When considering any request for support with social transition, schools and colleges should ensure that their decision-making process is documented and records are kept.

In making decisions about supporting social transition, schools and colleges must comply with their distinct but interacting obligations under safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by their evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children.

Schools and colleges should make decisions in line with the following principles and ensure that their decision-making process is documented and records are kept: Schools and colleges have statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Schools and colleges have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. They should consider how best to fulfil that duty towards a child who is questioning their gender, as well as their peers, ensuring that any agreed course of action takes account of the impact on all of those affected. This means that the first step when considering a child's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child's wishes.

As below, in the vast majority of cases we would expect the school or college to work with parents to determine what is in the best interests of the child as well as considering any clinical evidence or advice and seeking any additional nonclinical professional advice where relevant (for example the SENCO), including involving the DSL. Schools and colleges should consider everything that could be affecting a child, including whether they have any wider health issues or neurodiversity. In considering the best interests of children, schools and colleges should also take into account the principle below on taking a careful approach.

Schools should be particularly conscious of safeguarding concerns relating to primary aged children. For example, the Cass Review noted evidence that children who socially transition before puberty – and those who transition prior to receiving clinical advice – are more likely to proceed to a medical pathway than those who do not. Schools should also keep in mind that some children who socially transition before puberty will be "living in stealth" meaning other pupils and/or staff may be unaware of their biological sex, and schools should be aware of related safeguarding concerns as in the section below on living in stealth.

Schools should keep in mind the emphasis in the Cass Review on early clinical involvement when families are considering social transition for pre-pubertal children, including how to support their children in a non-directive way, whilst also keeping options open and flexible. The Cass Review emphasised that clinical involvement in the decision-making process should include advising on the risks and benefits of social transition as a planned intervention, referencing best available evidence. This is not a role that can be undertaken by staff without appropriate clinical training.

Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance
Parents and carers have the leading role in the lives of their children, and this area should be no exception. Therefore, where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from a school or college, schools and colleges should engage parents/carers as a matter of priority and treat their views with importance. The Cass Review is clear that outcomes for children and adolescents are best if they have a supportive relationship with their families and, in the vast majority of cases, we would expect schools/colleges and parents/carers to work together to establish what is best for the child. Involving a child's parents/carers will enable schools and colleges to promote a child's wellbeing and protect them from harm.

Schools and colleges should explore how best to support these conversations, including offering a staff member to be present or to speak to parents or carers on the child's behalf. However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the school or college should involve their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to determine what action is needed to safeguard the child, before the parents are contacted or any decisions are taken. The advice above applies in cases where a child has requested support with social transition. In cases where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school or college to make changes to how they are treated, there is no reason to break any confidence unless there is a related safeguarding risk.

Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so schools and colleges should take a very careful approach
Schools and colleges should take a very careful approach in relation to social transition. The Cass Review acknowledged that there is a lack of good evidence on the long-term impact of social transition on young people, but it is clear that social transition should be viewed as an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child or young person in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes. Primary schools should exercise particular caution, and we would expect support for full social transition to be agreed very rarely.
The Cass Review acknowledges that older children will generally have greater agency to make their own decisions. Maintaining flexibility and keeping children's options open will help to avoid a child feeling they are under pressure to commit to a potentially irrevocable pathway when they are young.

Schools and colleges should comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition
As well as complying with their safeguarding obligations as above, schools and colleges must also comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

In line with the responsibilities of schools and colleges to adhere to the highest standards of safeguarding for the children and young people in their care, alongside obligations under the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, schools must not allow pupils into toilets, changing rooms, or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex, with no exceptions. Similarly, where schools have implemented single-sex sports as being necessary for safety reasons, there should be no exceptions and pupils must not be allowed to participate in sports designated for the opposite sex. Colleges should follow the same principles.

In relation to other policies, the school or college will need to consider whether the policy will place a child who is questioning their gender (and other gender-questioning children) at a disadvantage relative to other children.

Schools and colleges should consider this both when developing the policy itself and when considering requests to be exempt from such policies. Where the rule or policy does place a gender-questioning child (and other gender-questioning children) at a disadvantage, the school or college should consider the following:

(1) What are the aims of the policy?
(2) Is there another way of achieving the same aim? Might a policy be adopted or an exception made that still achieves that aim?
(3) What is the impact of the rule, or of making an exception (or not making an exception) on the child themselves and anyone else affected? The school or college should balance the impact of agreeing the child's request against the impact of refusing their request, taking into account all the relevant factors. This will include taking into account the school or college's judgment about whether supporting social transition is in the child's best interests and the best interests of other children, as above.

Discussing constraints
When discussing requests with children, schools and colleges should take time to sensitively explain that supporting any degree of social transition will not include allowing access to toilets, changing rooms or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex, and will not include allowing children to join PE classes designated for the opposite sex where there are safety reasons for single-sex PE. The school or college should also make sure that children and their families are aware that while the school or college will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, the school or college must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or belief. However, schools and colleges supporting social transition might consider discussing options with pupils and staff such as using names instead of pronouns.

Reviews
The circumstances of a case and/or the needs of a child may change over time. For example, it may become known that there are safeguarding issues that were not previously apparent (including where a young child is 'living in stealth' - see below), or that a decision has placed an unsustainable pressure on a school or college's resources. In such cases, the school or college may need to review their original decision taking into account the factors set out above, including involving the child's parents. In deciding whether to review a decision, the school or college should involve their DSL immediately.

We expect that as well as revisiting decisions at appropriate points, schools and colleges will in particular want to consider whether previous decisions taken prior to this guidance coming into force remain appropriate, taking into account the impact of making any changes on the child in question and considering the principle above about involving parents.

Correct information
Having the correct information about a child is important in the context of schools and colleges fulfilling their safeguarding duties, and they should make sure all relevant staff are aware of a child's biological sex in all cases. Schools and colleges are legally required to record a child's biological sex accurately wherever it is recorded.

Children living in stealth
Schools and colleges should be particularly conscious of the vulnerabilities of children who have fully socially transitioned from an early age and may be living in stealth (that is, school or college friends/staff may be unaware of their biological sex). The Cass Review emphasised that these children are likely to approach puberty in a fearful and anxious state. Schools and colleges should involve the DSL in these cases.

Support for children who wish to detransition
There may be circumstances where a child wants to fully or partially reverse a request that has previously been agreed. The Cass Review highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility and keeping options open for children who have socially transitioned and recommended that support should be provided to children who wish to de-transition. Schools and colleges should work closely with parents and relevant experts to ensure that children in this position are supported.

9. Curriculum

The Trust Board will ensure that children and young people are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This is in order to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to. Staff recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding may include covering relevant issues through Relationships Education *(primary schools)* and Relationships and Sex Education (also known as Sex and Relationship Education).

The Trust Board will also ensure there is a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety issues, enabling children and young people and their parents to learn about the risks of new technologies, communication and social media and how to use these responsibly.

The Trust Board will ensure that there are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children and young people from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

10. Online safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation and technology often provides the platform that facilitates such harm.

The Trust Board has had due regard to the additional information and support set out in KCSIE 2026 and ensures that the school has a whole school approach to online safety and has a clear policy on use of communications technology in school. Online safety will be a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected in all relevant policies and whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role of the DSL and any parental engagement.

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The Trust Board adopts a whole school approach to online safety to protect and educate pupils and staff in their use of technology, and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns as appropriate.

Online safety and the school or college's approach to it should be reflected in the child protection policy which, amongst other things, should include appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks. Considering the 4Cs will provide the basis of an effective online policy. The school or college should have a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology, which will also reflect the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school or college, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Schools and colleges should carefully consider how this is managed on their premises and reflect this in their mobile and smart technology policy and their child protection policy.

Schools and colleges are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems schools and colleges use to filter and monitor online use. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will ask to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They should ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks

The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published filtering and monitoring standards which set out that schools and colleges should:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

Governing bodies and proprietors should review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.

Online safety issues can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, or radicalisation or extremism;
- Contact: being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images, and online bullying); and
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams. If staff feel that either they or pupils are at risk this should be reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (https://apwg.org/).

The Trust Board will ensure that an annual review is undertaken of the school's approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks pupils face online.

The following resources, plus many more listed in Annex B, may also help schools and colleges understand and teach about safeguarding:

- DfE advice for schools: teaching online safety in schools
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance: Education for a connected
- UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- The UKCIS external visitors guidance will help schools and colleges to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme: Thinkuknow
- Public Health England: Every Mind Matters

- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.

Guidance on e-security is available from the National Education Network. In addition, schools and colleges should consider meeting the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK. Broader guidance on cyber security including considerations for governors and trustees can be found at Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Safeguarding

The Trust recognises the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to using such technologies responsibly, ethically, and in line with our statutory safeguarding duties. AI tools may be used to support teaching, learning, administration, and safeguarding processes; however, their use will always prioritise the safety, privacy, and wellbeing of pupils, staff, and the wider school community.

When AI systems are used—for example, to assist in monitoring online activity, managing data, or identifying potential safeguarding concerns—the school will ensure that:

- Human oversight is maintained at all times; decisions relating to pupil welfare will never be made solely by an automated system.
- Data protection laws (including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) are strictly observed, ensuring that personal data is collected, processed, and stored securely and transparently.
- Bias and fairness are considered in the evaluation and use of AI tools to prevent discrimination or inequitable treatment of any individual or group.
- Staff are trained in the appropriate and ethical use of AI technologies, understanding both their potential benefits and limitations.
- Pupils and parents are informed, where appropriate, about how AI may be used to support safeguarding and educational outcomes.

The Trust will regularly review the use of AI systems as part of its safeguarding and data protection audits to ensure continued compliance with legal and ethical standards. Any concerns arising from the use of AI will be addressed in line with the Trust's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Mobile phone policy

All schools in the Trust are mobile-free environments. Children and vulnerable young people will not have access access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Understanding is given to children, and vulnerable young people may have access to their mobile phones on their way to and from school. Individual schools or settings will implement a system to ensure that these are handed in and secured safely during the school day.

11. Procedures

The Trust uses an online system to record, investigate and monitor all aspects of Safeguarding within Trust schools. This online system is called MyConcern (or CPOMS) and all school staff have received training and have appropriate access to this system.

All concerns should be recorded as soon as possible after a disclosure (by 5pm same day is best practice).

Should any disclosures relate to ANY Trust DSLs, these concerns should not be recorded onto Confide but should be emailed directly to Senior Trust DSLs Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne and Jo Lawrence to avoid any familial conflicts of interest.

If Supply staff or visitors notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child or young person may be experiencing a safeguarding issue they should record their concerns on a school recording form for safeguarding concerns and pass it to the DSL without delay.

A suggested recording form is included at Appendix B for all those staff who may not have access to the MyConcern (or CPOMS)/Confide system (Supply staff or Visitors) or in the event of malfunction

What to do if you are concerned.
Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully;
- Accept what is being said;
- Allow the child/young person to talk freely – do not interrupt or put words in the child/young person's mouth;
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify, do not investigate or ask leading questions;
- Reassure the child, but don't make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- Do not promise confidentiality;
- Emphasise that it was the right thing to tell someone;
- Reassure them that what has happened is not their fault;
- Do not criticise the perpetrator;
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told;
- Make a written record, which should be signed and include the time, date and your position in school;
- Do not include your opinion without stating it is your opinion;
- Pass the information to the DSL or alternate without delay
- Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL as dealing with a disclosure can be distressing.
- Understand the importance of intra familial harms and consider any necessary support for siblings following incidents;

When a record of a safeguarding concern is passed to the DSL, the DSL will record the time and date the record of concern was received. The DSL will assess the concern and, taking into account any other safeguarding information known about the child/young person, consider whether it suggests that the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm, has been reached. If the DSL is unsure whether the threshold has been met, they will contact:

In the case of familial conflicts, the senior Trust DSLs will be responsible for triaging and processing the concern as required.

DSLs must also consider where it is known that a pupil has siblings in other schools within the Trust or local area and if this concern needs to be shared or further information gathered. The School DSL will make every reasonable effort to share and work with DSLs in other schools to take actions to support the contextual safeguarding that may sit within a whole family.

If the Senior DSLs/School DSL is unsure whether the threshold has been met, they will contact:

- Where the DSL believes that a child or young person may be at imminent danger and at significant harm risk of harm, they should immediately contact the relevant service below:
- Customer First on 0808 800 4005 (follow this by completing a referral on the Suffolk/Norfolk portal)

- Professionals can contact the Children's Advice and Duty and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021 (NB they do not accept paper)

Where there are any safeguarding concerns, the safeguarding lead will inform the school/other commissioners without delay

The full process and procedure for raising a concern in Norfolk can be found on the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership website: https://norfolklscp.org.uk/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern

The full process and procedure for raising a concern in Suffolk can be found on the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership website or Suffolk County Council's website:

https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/concerned
https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/keeping-children-safe/reporting-a-child-at-risk-of-harm-abuse-or-neglect-safeguarding

It is important that any consultation should not delay a referral to Customer First or CADS.

Where a safeguarding concern does not meet the threshold for completion of a referral, the DSL should record how this decision has been reached and should consider whether additional needs of the child have been identified that might be met by a coordinated offer of early help.

School staff might be required to contribute to multi-agency plans to provide additional support to children. This might include attendance at child protection conferences or core group meetings. The school is committed to providing as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible, including submitting reports for child protection conferences in advance of any meeting in accordance with procedures and timescales.

Where reasonably possible, the school is committed to obtaining more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

School staff must ensure that they are aware of the procedure to follow when a child goes missing from education. Further information can be found in Appendix A.(see below)

All staff will understand that they should follow our safeguarding procedures for reporting a concern if they are worried about peer-on-peer abuse. The DSL will respond to any concerns related to child-on-child sexual abuse and violence in line with guidance outlined in Part five of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*'. We will ensure that all concerns, discussions, and decisions reached are clearly recorded and any identified actions are followed up.

12. Information sharing, record keeping and confidentiality

Information sharing is vital in safeguarding children by identifying and tacking all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

As part of meeting a child's needs, the school understands that it is critical to recognise the importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies and will contribute to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm.

Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns.

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Staff will have regard to the Government guidance: Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers which supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL or a Deputy.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded on MyConcern (or CPOMS). If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL.

The school recognises that confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all matters relating to child protection. Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the DSL or Deputy DSL with other relevant members of staff. This will be on a 'need to know' basis and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or pupils) or promise a child to keep a secret which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

As well as allowing for information sharing, in circumstances where it is warranted because it would put a child at risk of serious harm, the DPA 2018 and the GDPR allow schools to withhold information. This may be particularly relevant where a child is affected by domestic abuse perpetuated by a parent or carer.

Ordinarily, the school will always undertake to share its 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, staff will consult with professionals on this point.

Norfolk schools

We are working in partnership with Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Children's Services to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic violence in their household; this scheme is called Operation Encompass. In order to achieve this, Norfolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will share police information of all domestic incidents where one of our pupils has been present with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s). On receipt of any information, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide on the appropriate support the child requires, this could be silent or overt. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the '*Norfolk Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse – Notifications to Schools*'. We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

The school will have regard to guidance for schools on maintaining and transferring pupil safeguarding/child protection records. Where a child leaves the school, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term). The file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

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

The school will follow the Local Authority arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work with Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust if an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust.

The appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer. They may advise to complete a written referral:

Email on LADO@suffolk.gov.uk or LADO central telephone number 0300 123 2044	Email on LADO@norfolk.gov.uk

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff /volunteer may have:

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

This applies to any child the member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor has contact with in their personal, professional or community life. It also applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in our school.

If any member of staff has concerns that a colleague, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor might pose a risk to children, it is their duty to report these via Confide or to the Academy Head. Where the concerns or allegations are about the Academy Head, these should be referred to the Trust office namely the CEO.

If the allegation is related to a Trust central team member, this should be reported to the CEO, The CEO/Academy Head should report the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer and if advised by LADO, we will refer to DBS or Teachers services to indicate potential prohibition from teaching. If the allegation is against the CEO then this should be reported to the Chair of the Trustees.

Within our Special School Settings we have vulnerable adults (18-19 years old). Where an allegation is made that a colleague, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor might pose a risk to children, the same LADO process applies, but in this instance a referral will be made to the team that manages allegations against people in a Position of Trust working with vulnerable adults guidance.

The appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer. They may advise to complete a written referral:

Email on positionoftrust@suffolk.gov.ukor **0300 123 2044**	Email on **mashadultsafeguarding@norfolk.gov.uk**

In the case of either a child or a vulnerable adult being allegedly abused by someone in a position of trust, a referral to CADS, MASH, Adult Social Care will be made.

14.Use of school premises for non-school activities

The Academy Head will ensure that where school facilities/premises are hired or rented out to organisations or individuals, sports associations or service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

The Academy Head will seek assurance that the hiring body concerned has appropriate child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including inspecting these as needed. Arrangements will also be put in place for the body hiring or renting the school facilities or premises to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll or attend the college. The governing body or proprietor should also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place

15. Whistleblowing

It is recognised that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example, pupils in the school or members of the public.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions/inactions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The Trust Board would wish for everyone in the school community to feel able to report any child protection/safeguarding concerns through existing procedures within school, including the whistleblowing procedure adopted by the Trust where necessary. However, for members of staff who do not feel able to raise such concerns internally, there is a NSPCC whistleblowing helpline. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (line available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

16. Useful Contacts:

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Professional Helpline: 0345 606 1499
Customer First (Professional Referral Line) for use in emergencies only: 0345 606 6167
Customer First: 0808 800 4005
Suffolk Reporting Portal for safeguarding concerns about an adult https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/protecting-people-at-risk-of-abuse/report-abuse-of-an-adult
Police (emergency only): 999
Suffolk Police main switchboard: 01473 613500
Suffolk Police Cybercrime Unit: 101
Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership www.suffolksp.org.uk
Suffolk County Council: www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/staying-safe-online/e-safer-suffolk/
Norfolk CADS for Professionals – 0344 800 8021

Norfolk CADS for members of the public- 0344 800 8020
Norfolk Duty Desk 01603 307797
Norfolk County Council Safeguarding Adults https://www.norfolksafeguardingadultsboard.info/protecting-adults/abuse-and-neglect/raising-a-concern
Norfolk Adult LADO **mashadultsafeguarding@norfolk.gov.uk.**
Norfolk Safeguarding Partnership - https://norfolklscb.org/
Norfolk Police Main Switchboard - https://www.norfolk.police.uk/contact-us
Norfolk County Council - https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning

Appendix A

Annex A: Further information
Annex A contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read this Annex.

As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

Contents

Child abduction and community safety incidents
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
County lines
Children and the court system
Children missing from education
Children with family members in prison
Cybercrime
Domestic abuse
Homelessness
Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
Preventing radicalisation
The Prevent duty
Channel
Serious Violence
Honour based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)
FGM
FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers
Forced marriage
Additional advice and support

Child abduction and community safety incidents

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

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

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. All schools are required to teach about personal safety through the RSHE curriculum. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Whatever form it takes, exploitation and modern slavery is child abuse and relevant child protection procedures must be followed if modern slavery or trafficking is suspected, as per the Modern Slavery: statutory guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and non-statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland (accessible version) - GOV.UK

Some children will also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian. Independent child trafficking guardians provide advocacy for children and help to promote and support their recovery.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.
Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, having a physical or learning disability, or being neurodivergent, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions which could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in the DfE guidance: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners.

County lines

As county lines is a form of criminal exploitation, a First Responder who identifies any potential victim of county lines exploitation should complete the relevant child protection and modern slavery referrals as detailed in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house' or 'cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters, and
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office Child exploitation disruption toolkit (accessible) - GOV.UK and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals | The Children's Society.

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.

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 is 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 some parents and carers.

Children who are absent from education

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, honour or faith-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 193,000 children in England and Wales have a parent in prison each year. They are at risk of poor outcomes as a result of poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The Prisoners' Families Helpline offers free, confidential support and advice for families in England and Wales who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

School and college staff should be aware that children who have experienced parental imprisonment are more likely to be absent (or excluded) than their peers, to experience mental ill health and drug and alcohol misuse; they are also less likely to be in education, training or employment in later life. Staff should understand the need for tailored, trauma informed and sensitive support that can help mitigate potential harm and help encourage stability.

Cybercrime

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

Cyber-dependent crime continues to represent one of the most significant and rapidly evolving threats within the United Kingdom's (UK) crime landscape. Offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (CMA) have risen substantially.

Young people across the UK experiment with illegal online activity, often without understanding the legal or ethical implications. The impact of cybercrime extends well beyond immediate financial losses, with scope to cause disruption to national infrastructure.
Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide preventative police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, NSPCC and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

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

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and relevant education settings operating in all police forces across England and Wales. In November 2025, a new statutory duty was placed on the police to notify a child's education setting, and where relevant, local authorities, if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse.[1] This includes all children

connected to a household where they have attended a domestic abuse incident; children who are physically present at the incident, children not physically present during the incident, and situations where a child might reside in another household temporarily or permanently.

Educational settings are often the only consistent support available to some children. The aim of the duty is to support education settings to provide timely, informed support to children affected by domestic abuse, to ensure the school has up to date information about the child's circumstances and enable immediate support to be put in place according to the child's needs. This places no new responsibilities on education settings.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals and applies solely to domestic abuse incidents. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

Forces and educational settings should have an open communication process to determine where a safeguarding referral should be made in accordance with local thresholds. If an officer makes a referral alongside issuing an Operation Encompass notification, they should tell the child's education setting.

The duty applies to all children in education from reception (typically aged 4/5) up to the age of 17, and who are enrolled in registered primary and secondary schools, including independent schools, private schools, alternative provision settings (e.g., Pupil Referral Units), as well as further education colleges or 16 to 19 academies in England or Wales. Police forces must notify the local authority if the child is electively home educated or
missing from education.

More information about the scheme can be found in the statutory guidance for police: Duty on police forces in England and Wales to notify education establishments of domestic abuse incidents: Operation Encompass. This guidance intends to recognise and respond to children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. It does not replace existing statutory guidance, including Keeping children safe in education and Working Together to Safeguard Children in England.

Additional resources for education settings, including Online National Key Adult Training : Operation Encompass can be found on the charity's website Home : Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass notifications

Operation Encompass involves the sharing of personal and sensitive information about children and families. It is vital that all participants comply with the data protection laws.

Police forces and educational settings are responsible for deciding how and where information about incidents and notifications are made. They must ensure it remains confidential, is held securely, and adheres to the requirements of the data protection laws.

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for leading on all safeguarding and child protection matters within an educational setting. They are likely to be the Key Adult for Operation Encompass notifications and are responsible for making safeguarding referrals to appropriate agencies, maintaining up-to-date safeguarding policies and training, overseeing record-keeping, and liaising with families where appropriate. DSLs may wish to use a central safeguarding inbox to ensure they have oversight over all Operation Encompass notifications.

The notification should include:

- the name, date of birth and protected characteristics (e.g., disability, race, religion etc.) of any child from that education setting who is related to any adult involved in the incident, whether the adult is the alleged perpetrator or non-abusive relative
- the relationship of the child to the victim and to the perpetrator
- the police reference number
- the location, time and date of the incident
- if the child was present, and if so, where they were. (Notifications should be shared even if the child was not present at this particular incident), and
- the voice of the child, such as what they are saying and how they are behaving.

The notification should not include:

- information or reference to sexual offences disclosed at the domestic abuse incident. This must not be disclosed in the notification. Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, anonymity for victims of sexual offences must be preserved.

The Operation Encompass charity provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from education settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).[2]

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives
Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
Operation Encompass (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)
The Home Office publish guidance on Controlling or coercive behaviour which provides clear information on what constitutes controlling or coercive behaviour and how to identify the offence.

[2] Section 20 of the Victim and Prisoners Act 2024 introduced a new provision into Part 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 under Section 49A. [Victims and Prisoners Act 2024]

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children, and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: here.

Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses exploitation, including sexual exploitation, criminal financial exploitation, human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information and training for professionals on exploitation and modern slavery is available here - Modern slavery training: resource page - GOV.UK

The National Referral Mechanism is the system used within the UK to support potential victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of exploitation and modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in statutory guidance Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK.

Children who are referred into the NRM in England and Wales may also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG)1. ICTGs provide advocacy for children and help to promote and support their recovery.

Preventing radicalisation

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

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Radicalisation[3] is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.
Terrorism [4] is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern.

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

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard[5] to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism".[6] This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments.

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

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multiagency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse, incidents that may indicate concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours and/or details of those who are

[3] As defined in the Government's Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.
[4] As defined in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000)
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents
[5] Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)

[6] "Terrorism" for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act).

currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office.

Additional support

The Department has published further advice for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

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

Educate Against Hate is a government website designed to support school and college teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation. These resources are regularly updated to ensure they remain relevant and practical. Resources have been developed working closely with education professionals and civil society groups to identify and produce high-quality materials that assist teachers in building pupils' critical thinking skills and resilience to extremist ideologies.

For advice specific to further education, Educate Against Hate hosts a suite of teaching packs and accompanying guidance to meet the specific needs of students and practitioners in further education and training settings. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings to comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

London Grid for Learning has also produced useful resources on Prevent (Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net).

Serious violence

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved in serious violence. These may include:

- increased absence from school or college
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in educational performance
    - signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and
    - unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male
- having been suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school, and
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.
Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school and can concentrate in particular places. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence. It is important that schools and colleges try to understand where these places are, with a view to working with partners to promote safety for children. Listening to children and consulting with staff can help establish when and where they feel unsafe. Working with wider partners can also help build understanding of the local context beyond the school or college and help co-ordinate a collective safeguarding response around the school day.
Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) (the "what works" centre for preventing violence) has produced practical guidance for schools and colleges and an accompanying self-assessment tool to help introduce evidenced practice for preventing children becoming involved in violence.

Home Office funded Violence Reduction Units (VRU) operate in the 20 police force areas across England and Wales that have the highest volumes of serious violence, as measured by hospital admissions for injury with a sharp object. A list of these locations can be found here. As the strategic co-ordinators for local violence prevention, each VRU is mandated to include at least one local education representative within their Core Membership group, which is responsible for setting the direction for VRU activity. Schools and educational partners within these areas are encouraged to reach out to their local VRU, either directly or via their education Core Member, to better ingrain partnership working to tackle serious violence across local areas and ensure a joined-up approach to young people across the risk spectrum.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a new Serious Violence Duty (Statutory Guidance) on a range of specified authorities, such as the police, local government, youth offending teams, health and probation services, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. Educational authorities and prisons/youth custody authorities will be under a separate duty to co-operate with core duty holders when asked, and there will be a requirement for the partnership to consult with all such institutions in their area.

The Duty **does not** replace or duplicate existing safeguarding duties.

Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)

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

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers**[7] that requires a different approach (see below).

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

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

Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.[8] Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college's designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: FGM Fact Sheet.

Further information can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and the FGM resource pack particularly section 13.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (chapter 8 provides guidance on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at The right to choose:

[7] Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

[8] Section 5B(6) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 states teachers need not report a case to the police if they have reason to believe that another teacher has already reported the case.

government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

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

Additional advice and support

There is a wealth of information available to support schools and colleges. The following list is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:

Abuse

Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse has introduced new resources to help education professionals identify and respond to concerns of child sexual abuse and abusive behaviours.
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – DfE advice
Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance – Home Office advice
Faith based abuse: National Action Plan – DfE advice
Forced marriage resource pack
Disrespect NoBody campaign – GOV.UK – Home Office website
Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy – Home Office policy paper
Together we can stop child sexual abuse – HM Government campaign

Bullying

Preventing bullying including cyberbullying – DfE advice

Children missing from education, home or care

Children missing education – DfE statutory guidance
Children who run away or go missing from home or care – DfE statutory guidance
Missing Children and Adults strategy – Home Office strategy

Children with family members in prison

The Prisoners' Families Helpline offers free, confidential support and advice for families in England and Wales who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

Child exploitation

Modern Slavery: statutory guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and non-statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland (accessible version) - GOV.UK –

Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance.
Interim guidance for ICTGs - Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service guidance
Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked – DfE and Home Office guidance
Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery – DfE statutory guidance
Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims – Home Office statutory guidance
Child exploitation disruption toolkit – Home Office guidance
Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation – The Children's Society and Home Office
County Lines Toolkit For Professionals – The Children's Society in partnership with

Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council
Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm – non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support

Programme, funded by the Department for Education and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice

What is county lines and child criminal exploitation? - Missing People advice
SafeCall - Missing People - SafeCall is a national free, confidential and anonymous helpline and support service for young people and family members that are affected by missing, county lines and criminal exploitation. Confidential support and webinars are also available to professionals.
County Lines Support and Rescue | Catch22 - A specialist support and rescue service for young people and their families who are criminally exploited through county lines. (The service currently operates from London, Merseyside, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.)

Confidentiality
Gillick competency Fraser guidelines – Guidelines to help with balancing children's rights along with safeguarding responsibilities.

Drugs
From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives – Home Office strategy
Honest information about drugs – Talk to Frank website
Drug and Alcohol education – teacher guidance & evidence review – PSHE Association

Honour or faith-based abuse, including FGM and forced marriage
Female genital mutilation: information and resources – Home Office guidance
Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance – DfE, Department for Health, and Home Office
Forced marriage – Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) resources
Forced marriage – Government multi-agency practice guidelines and multi-agency statutory guidance
FGM resource pack – HM Government guidance

Health and well-being
Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience – Public Health England
Supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions – DfE statutory guidance
Mental health and behaviour in schools – DfE advice
Overview - Fabricated or induced illness – NHS advice

Homelessness
Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance

Information sharing
Government information sharing advice – Guidance on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.
Information Commissioner's Office: Data sharing information hub – Information to help schools and colleges comply with UK data protection legislation including UK GDPR.

Online safety advice
Childnet – Provides guidance for schools on cyberbullying
Educateagainsthate – Provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation
London Grid for Learning – Provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements
NSPCC E-safety for schools – Provides advice, templates, and tools on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements

Safer recruitment consortium – 'Guidance for safe working practice', which may help ensure staff behaviour policies are robust and effective
Searching screening and confiscation – Departmental advice for schools on searching children and confiscating items such as mobile phones
South West Grid for Learning – Provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements
Online Safety Audit Tool – From UK Council for Internet Safety to help mentors of trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers induct mentees and provide ongoing support, development and monitoring
Online safety guidance if you own or manage an online platform – DCMS advice

A business guide for protecting children on your online platform – DCMS advice

UK Safer Internet Centre – Provides tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online
Understanding and responding to AI-generated child sexual abuse material: guidance from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education programme in collaboration with the Internet Watch Foundation.
Financially motivated sexual extortion (FMSE): guidance for education settings on FMSE from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education programme.

Online safety relating to remote education, virtual lessons and live streaming
Guidance Get help with remote education – Resources and support for teachers and school leaders on educating pupils and students
Departmental guidance on safeguarding and remote education – Including planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely
London Grid for Learning – Guidance, including platform-specific advice
National Cyber Security Centre – Guidance on choosing, configuring and deploying video conferencing
UK Safer Internet Centre – Guidance on safe remote learning

Online safety – support for children
Childline – For free and confidential advice
UK Safer Internet Centre – To report and remove harmful online content
CEOP Safety Centre – to report online child sexual abuse

Online safety - parental support
Childnet – Offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, and to find out where to get more help and support
Commonsensemedia – Provides independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents
Government advice – About protecting children from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
Internet Matters – Provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls, and practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world How Can I Help My Child? – Marie Collins Foundation – Sexual abuse online
London Grid for Learning – Provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
Stopitnow resource from The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – Can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)
CEOP Education – Provides information, guidance and resources for support for parents and carers, helping them to protect their child(ren) from online sexual abuse
Parentzone – Provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe online

Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents – This is the Children's Commissioner's parental guide on talking to their children about online sexual harassment
2019 UK CMOSs' advice - UK CMO commentary on screen time and social media map of reviews - GOV.UK

Private fostering
Private fostering: local authorities – DfE statutory guidance

Radicalisation
Prevent duty guidance – Home Office guidance
The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - DfE advice
Educate Against Hate website – DfE and Home Office guidance
Prevent for FE and Training – Education and Training Foundation (ETF)
Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Resources – Resources by London Grid for Learning
Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting – DfE advice

Serious violence
Serious violence strategy – Home Office strategy
Factors linked to serious violence and how these factors can be used to identify individuals for intervention – Home Office
Youth Endowment Fund – Home Office
Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges – Home Office advice
Tackling and girls strategy – Home Office strategy
Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims – Home Office guidance

Sexual violence and sexual harassment
Specialist organisations
Barnardo's – UK charity caring for and supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people through their range of services.
Lucy Faithfull Foundation – UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with families affected by sexual abuse and also run the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline.
Marie Collins Foundation – Charity that, amongst other things, works directly with children, young people, and families to enable their recovery following sexual abuse.
NSPCC – Children's charity specialising in child protection with statutory powers enabling them to take action and safeguard children at risk of abuse.
Rape Crisis – National charity and the umbrella body for their network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres.
UK Safer Internet Centre – Provides https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-andresources to children, young people, parents, carers and schools about staying safe online.

Harmful sexual behaviour
Rape Crisis (England & Wales) or The Survivors Trust – For information, advice, and details of local specialist sexual violence organisations.
NICE guidance – Contains information on, amongst other things: developing interventions; working with families and carers; and multi-agency working.
HSB toolkit – The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – designed for parents, carers, family members and professionals, to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe. It has links to useful information, resources, and support as well as practical tips to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and provide safe environments for families.
The Lucy Faithfull Foundation also run shorespace.org.uk which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support to prevent harmful sexual behaviours.

NSPCC Learning: Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour and NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework – Free and independent advice about HSB.
Contextual Safeguarding Network – Beyond Referrals (Schools) – Provides a school selfassessment toolkit and guidance for addressing HSB in schools.
Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now – Provides a guide for parents, carers and professionals to help everyone do their part in keeping children safe, they also run a free confidential helpline.

Support for victims

Anti-Bullying Alliance – Detailed information for anyone being bullied, along with advice for parents and schools. Signposts to various helplines and websites for further support.
Rape Crisis – Provides and signposts to a range of services to support people who have experienced rape, child abuse or any kind of sexual violence.
The Survivors Trust – UK-wide national umbrella agency with resources and support dedicated to survivors of rape, sexual violence and child sex abuse.
Victim Support – Supporting children and young people who have been affected by crime. Also provides support to parents and professionals who work with children and young people – regardless of whether a crime has been reported or how long ago it was.
Childline – Provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.

Toolkits

NSPCC – Online Self-assessment tool to ensure organisations are doing everything they can to safeguard children.
NSPCC – Resources which help adults respond to children disclosing abuse.
NSPCC also provide free and independent advice about HSB: NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework
Safeguarding Unit, Farrer and Co. and Carlene Firmin, MBE, University of Bedfordshire – Peer-on-Peer Abuse toolkit provides practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse.
Contextual Safeguarding Network – Self-assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB and levers for addressing HSB in schools.
Childnet - STAR SEND Toolkit – Equips, enables and empowers educators with the knowledge to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
Childnet - Just a joke? – Provides lesson plans, activities, a quiz and teaching guide designed to explore problematic online sexual behaviour with 9-12 year olds.
Childnet - Step Up, Speak Up – A practical campaign toolkit that addresses the issue of online sexual harassment amongst young people aged 13-17 years old.
NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework – An evidence-informed framework for children and young people displaying HSB.
Farrer & Co: Addressing child on child abuse: a resource for schools and colleges – This resource provides practical guidance for schools and colleges on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse.

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

London Grid for Learning-collection of advice – Various information and resources dealing with the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people – Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos.

Support for parents/carers

National Crime Agency's CEOP Education Programme – Provides information for parents and carers to help protect their child from online child sexual abuse, including #AskTheAwkward - help to talk with your children about online relationships – Guidance on how to talk to their children about online relationships

APPENDIX B

For use by Supply Staff, Visitors and exceptional circumstances

Record of concern about a child/young person's safety and welfare

Part 1 (for use by any staff – must be handwritten and legible)

Pupil's name:	Date of birth:	Class/Form:
Date & time of incident:	Date & time (of writing):	
Name (print): ..... Job title: Signature:		
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. *(please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.*		
What is the pupil's perspective?		
Any other relevant information. Previous concerns etc. *(distinguish between fact and opinion)*		
Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed and when		

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

Please pass this form to your DSL without delay

Record of concern about a child/young person's safety and welfare

Part 2 (for use by DSL)

<table>
<tr><td>Information received by DSL:</td><td colspan="2">Date:</td><td>Time completed:</td><td colspan="2">From whom:</td></tr>
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<tr><td colspan="5">Advice received:</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Action taken with reasons recorded (e.g. MARF completed, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff, CAF etc)</td><td colspan="2">Date:</td><td>Time completed:</td><td colspan="2">By whom:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Outcome</td><td colspan="2">Date:</td><td>Time completed:</td><td colspan="2">By whom:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Parent/carer informed?</td><td>Y</td><td>Who spoken to:</td><td>Date:</td><td>Time:</td><td>By whom:</td></tr>
<tr><td>N</td><td colspan="4">Detail reason:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Is any additional detail held, if so where?</td><td colspan="5"></td></tr>
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APPENDIX C – Body Map

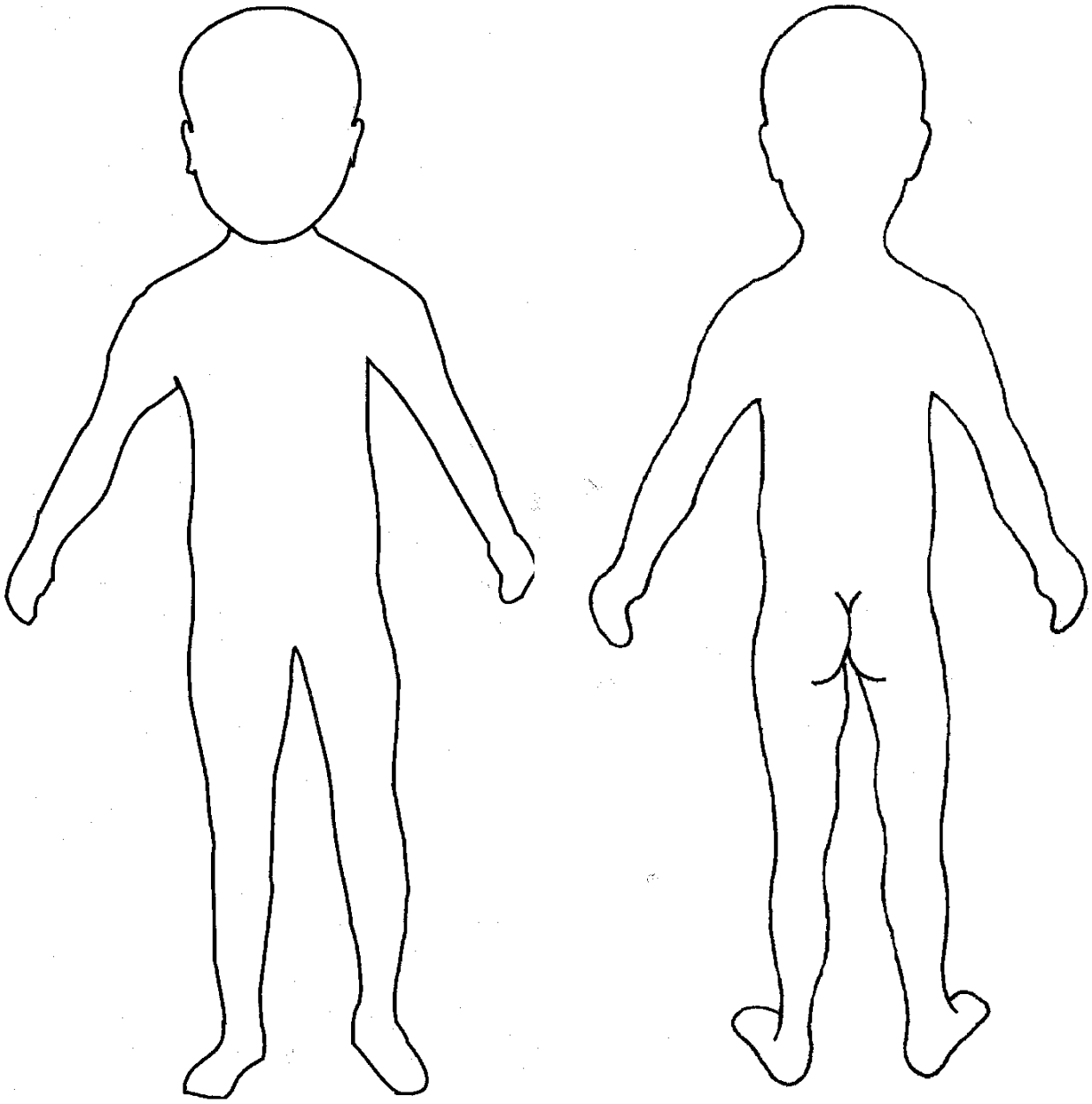
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(This must be completed at time of observation)

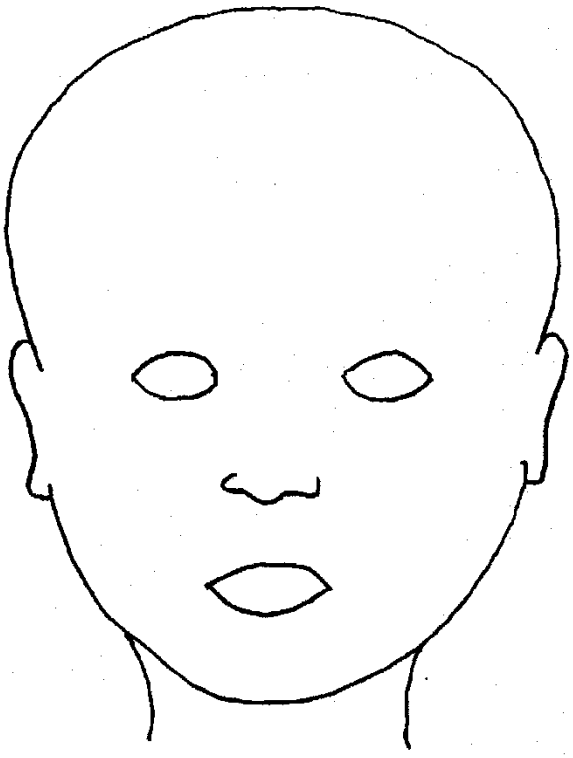
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Name of Staff: ..... Job title: .....

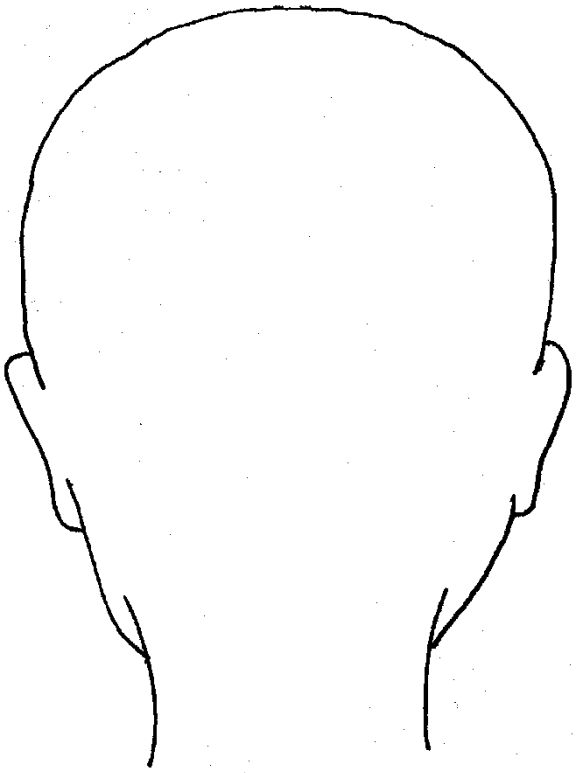
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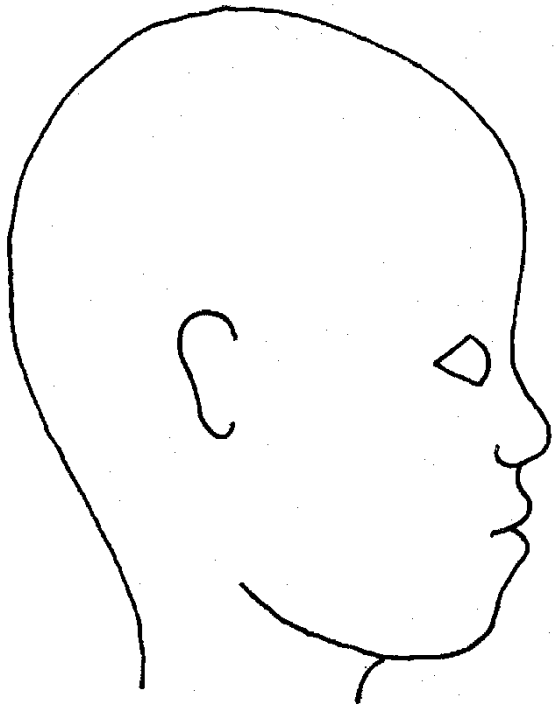
Name of pupil: ..... Date and time of observation: .....



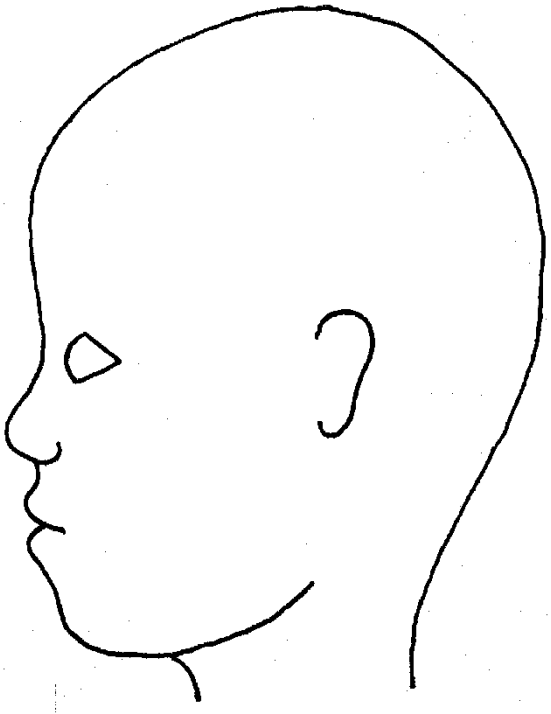
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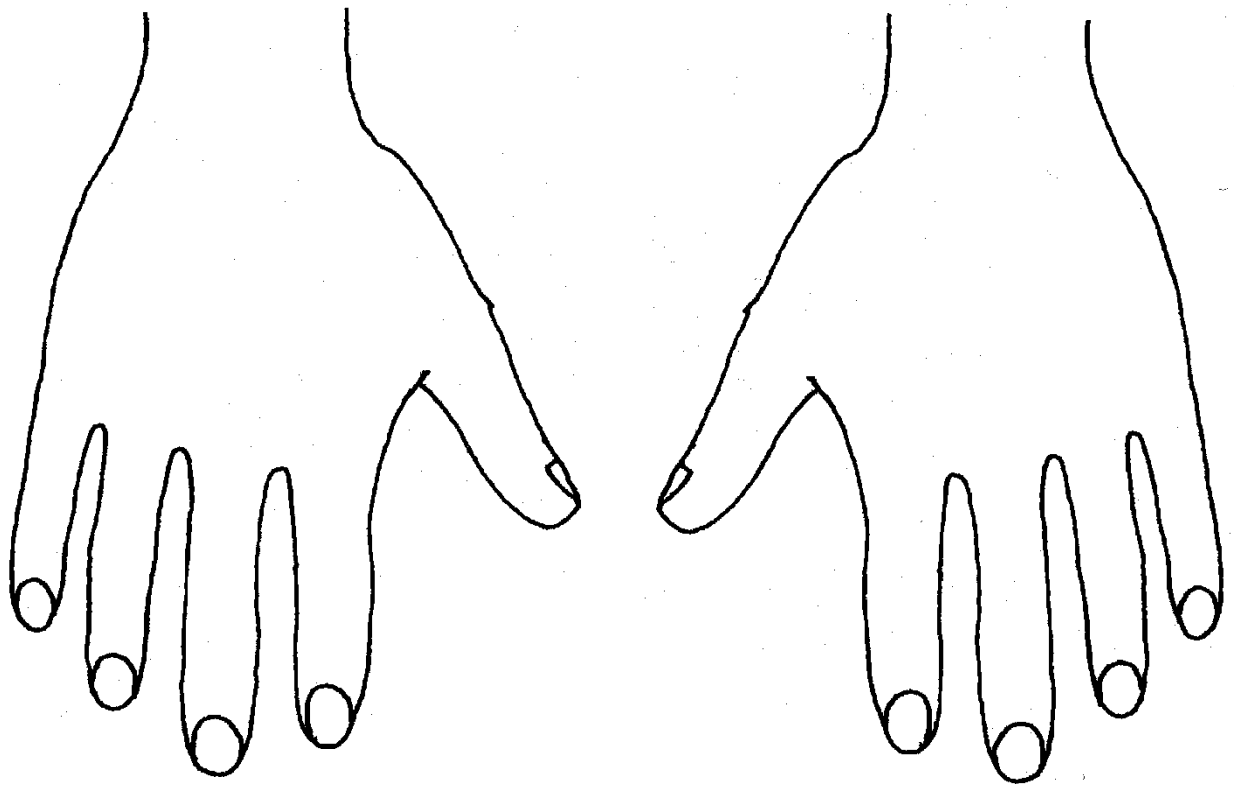
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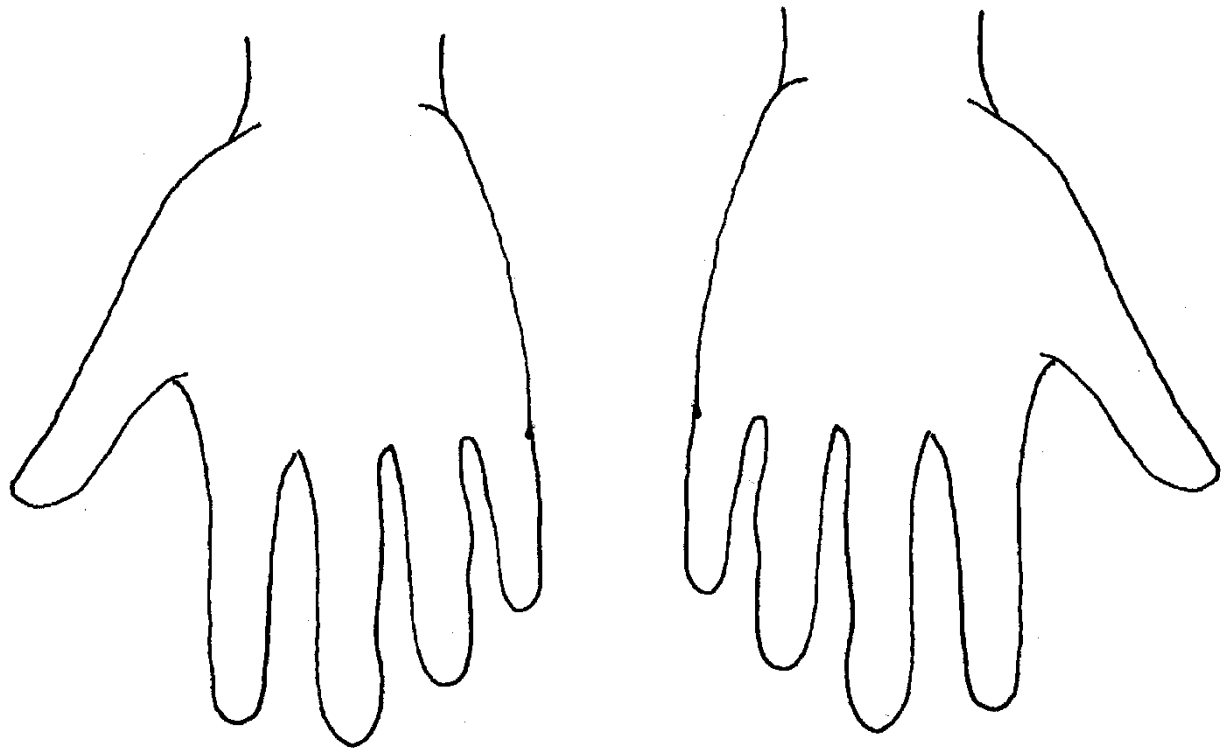
Name of pupil: .....

Date and time of observation: .....



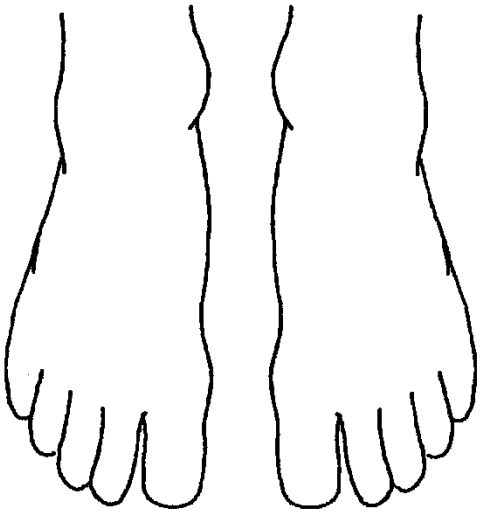
R L

BACK

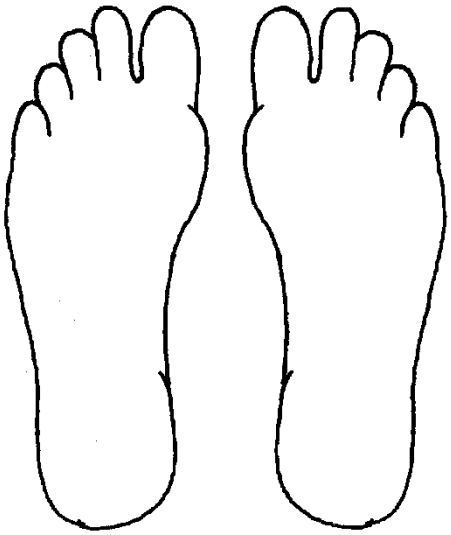


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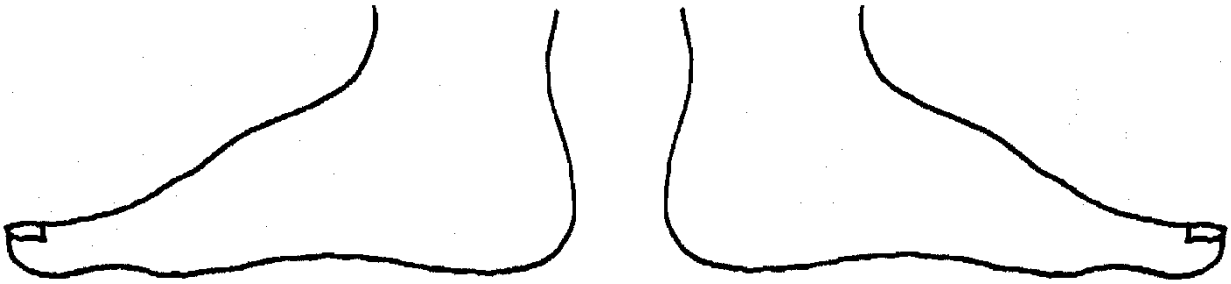
Date and time of observation: .....



R **TOP** **L**

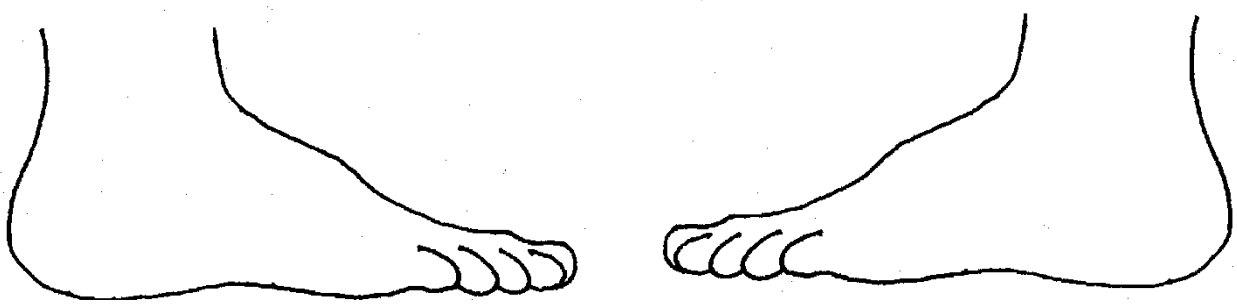


R **BOTTOM** **L**



R **L**

INNER

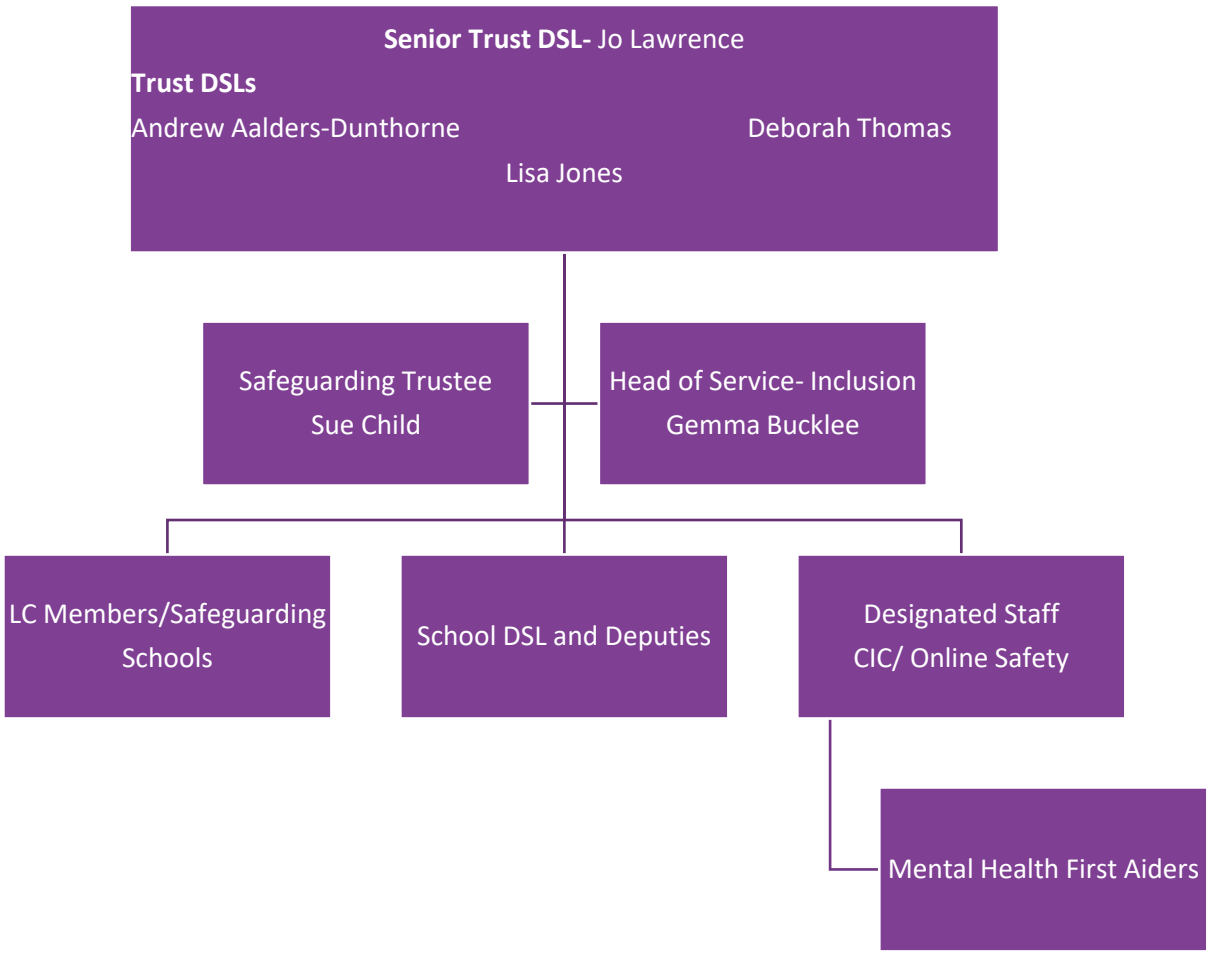


R **L**

OUTER

Printed Name, Signature and Job title of staff: .....

APPENDIX D
Flowchart



Role of the DSL

The Consortium Trust
Role of the Designated and Alternate Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Trust Board at the Consortium Trust ensures that the school designates an appropriate senior member of staff from SLT to take lead responsibility for child protection. These people should have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.

Central Trust DSLs are Jo Lawrence, Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne, Lisa Jones and Debbie Thomas.

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated and alternate safeguarding leads are:

- The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description
- Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child; and/or
- Police (cases where a crime may have been committed)
- Liaise with the Academy Head and The Trust's DSLs to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- Managing Referrals - Refer all cases of suspected abuse to the Local Authority children's social care

Training:
The designated and deputy safeguarding leads should receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order to:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments
- Have a working knowledge of how Local Authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school Safeguarding Policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need and those with special educational needs and young carers
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concern and referrals
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wished and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them

Raising Awareness;
The designated and deputy safeguarding leads should ensure the school policies are known and used appropriately:

- Ensure the Trust and local Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated regularly, and work with governing bodies regarding this.
- Ensure the Child Protection Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this
- Link with the local LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding
- Where children leave the school, ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt should be obtained

Date: 1st September 2025

The Role of the Designated Teacher for CIC

The Consortium Trust
Role of the Designated Teacher for Children In Care (CIC)

The Trust Board at the Consortium Trust ensures that the school designates appropriate senior member of staff to take lead responsibility for Children in Care and children Post-Care. These people should have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.

The role of the Designated Teacher for CIC in each school:

The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child on the school's roll. The role should make a positive difference by promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.

The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how looked after children learn and achieve. Everyone involved in helping looked after children achieve should:

- have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but the teacher should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- understand how important it is to see looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, virtual school heads (or equivalent) in local authorities and
  how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care and planning duties of the authority which looks after the child
- ensure the PEP is completed by the DT, or the teacher in school who knows the child well, within the deadline given by the LA Virtual School. The PEP is a working document that is completed 'live' and regularly updated. The DT will also attend PEP meetings, which are arranged by the social worker (along with the class teacher if applicable).

Date : 12th January 2026

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V2	31/07/2017	Principal/CEO	Annual review
V3	19/03/2018	Principal/CEO	Reviewed against updated SCC Policy
V4	20/10/2018	HoS WISA	Review to include KCSIE(2018) and other guidance updates
V5	03/10/2019	HoS WISA	Review to include KCSIE(2019) and other guidance updates
V6.1	01/09/2020	HoS WISA	Review to include KCSIE(2020) and other guidance updates. Include Covid 19 information
V6.2	26/03/2021	HoS WISA	Updated page numbers and Governors changed to LC members
V7	27/09/2021	HoS WISA	Updated in line with KCSIE 2021
V8	25/01/2023	Principal/CEO	Pagination added
V9	14/07/2023	Principal/CEO	Updated in line with KCSIE 2024
V10	05/09/2023	Principal / KLloyd	Updated section 11 Procedures to reflect familiar conflicts
V11	19/10/2023	Principal/K Lloyd	Updated to amend safeguarding Trustee to Mark Kemp effective immediately
V12	TBC	K Lloyd	Updated in line with KCSiE 2024 and link to Consortium Trust Online Safety Policy added.
V12.1	23/08/2023	K Lloyd	Updated to include Sue Child as Safeguarding Trustee.
V12.2	16/10/2023	K Lloyd	Update as typo on page 14.
V12.3	06/11/2023	K Lloyd	Update as Viv Procter added as Head of Virtual School and Lead CIC
V13	09/01/2024	K Lloyd	Working Together to Safeguard Children amended to new 2024 date. Appendix D flowchart updated. Role of DSL notice updated. Name and Contact Details updated.
V14	14/05/2024	K Lloyd	Updated with information relating to Norfolk Removal of out of date guidance
V15	31/08/2024	K Lloyd	Updated in line with KCSiE 2024
V15.1	02/08/2024	K Lloyd	Operational updates
V16	01/09/2025	Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Annual Update
V16.1	11/11/2025	Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Trust Board requested AI paragraph to be added to section 10.
V16.2	12/01/2026	Jo Lawrence	Operational Updates

V17	17/04/2026	Jo Lawrence	Annual Update based on KCSIE 2026 Consultation- will need further amendments for Sept 2026 in case other changes in consultation
V17.1	23/06/2026	Jo Lawrence	Amendments to meet Norfolk Commissioning criteria.

Approval

Name	Job Title	Signed	Date
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	29/12/2016
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	29/12/2016
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	07/10/2021
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	07/10/2021
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	26/01/2023
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	14/07/2023
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	14/07/2023
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	08/08/2023
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	19/10/2022
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	13/07/2023
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	13/07/2023
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	CEO	Electronic signature	15/02/2024
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	15/02/2024
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	CEO	Electronic signature	23/05/2024
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	23/05/2024
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	CEO	Electronic signature	11/07/2024
Steve Martin	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	11/07/2024
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	CEO	Electronic signature	23/10/2025
Steve Martin	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	23/10/2025
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	CEO	Electronic signature	13/01/2026
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	CEO	Electronic signature	09/07/2026
Steve Martin	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	09/07/2026

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Service- Culture, Attendance and Safeguarding (CAS) or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the full Trust Board.

The policy was last approved by the Trust Board on 14/05/2026.

END OF DOCUMENT