



# **Christchurch Junior School**

A member of Twynham Learning

## **Child protection and safeguarding procedures**

To be read in conjunction with the Twynham Learning Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

**Last amended 08.09.2022 by Sam Fuller, Headteacher and  
Designated Safeguarding Lead**

**Reviewed by Jenny Cowling, Pastoral Careworker**

**Ratified by Local Advisory Board 29.09.22**

**Next review date September 2023**

*This policy has been reviewed in line with the 8 principles set out in the Single Equality Policy and an initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.*

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## Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Sam Fuller	01202 485579 <a href="mailto:Sam.fuller@cjsdorset.org">Sam.fuller@cjsdorset.org</a>
Deputy DSL	Ben Croton Jenny Cowling Kate Byles	01202 485579 <a href="mailto:Ben.croton@cjsdorset.org">Ben.croton@cjsdorset.org</a> <a href="mailto:Jenny.cowling@cjsdorset.org">Jenny.cowling@cjsdorset.org</a> <a href="mailto:kate.byles@cjsdorset.org">kate.byles@cjsdorset.org</a>
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Laura Baldwin	01202 456708/07884 731548 Telephone: <a href="tel:01202817600">01202 817 600</a> Email: <a href="mailto:LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk">LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Chair of Local Advisory Board	Ian Mayhew	01202 485579 <a href="mailto:Chair.governors@cjsdorset.org">Chair.governors@cjsdorset.org</a>
Safeguarding LAB Members	Ian Mayhew Maggie Fiddler	01202 485579 maggie.fidler@tlgovernance.com and ian.mayhew@tlgovernance.com
Channel helpline	Dorset Prevent Lead – Mike Hall	020 7340 7264 <a href="mailto:PreventReferrals@Dorset.pnn.police.uk">PreventReferrals@Dorset.pnn.police.uk</a> 01305 458240

## 1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate and proportionate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding and understand the requirement to actively engage in promoting a safeguarding culture within school including but not limited to whistleblowing and demonstrating tenacity in challenging agencies and established procedures
- Leaders and designated leads have robust procedures for the design, implementation and monitoring of safeguarding policies and related practice
- Staff are properly trained in recognizing and reporting safeguarding issues. This includes being 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. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers.
- The belief that... 'It could happen here' ethos – therefore prepared to take action as well as to prevent incidents.
- We work with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and implement recommendations from Serious Case Reviews to improve the way in which the school works to protect children

- It raises the awareness of all school staff of the importance of child protection and safeguarding pupils and of their responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare
- Pupils and parents are aware that the school takes the safeguarding agenda seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare and for dealing with allegations against staff confidentially and robustly
- We promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the protection of all pupils
- We integrate a safeguarding curriculum within the existing curriculum allowing for continuity and progress through all key stages
- We take account of and inform policy in related areas such as discipline, bullying, staff and pupil behaviour policies, Online-Safety and the preventing extremism agenda

There are three main elements to the school's safeguarding policy and procedures:

1. **PREVENTION** (positive and safe school environment, careful and vigilant teaching, accessible pastoral care, support to pupils, good adult role models).
2. **PROTECTION** (agreed procedures are followed, staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns).
3. **SUPPORT** (to pupils, who may have been at risk of significant harm and the way staff respond to their concerns and any work that may be required and to those in need of early help services).

Schools do not operate in isolation. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working or volunteering with children. The school aims to help protect the children in its care by working consistently and appropriately with all agencies to reduce risk and promote the welfare of children. All practitioners work within the same child protection/safeguarding procedures.

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school

[The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

[Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

[The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

[Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism

The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\)](#)

[\(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#) (referred to in this policy as the “2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations”) and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. Definitions

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

Protecting children from maltreatment

Preventing impairment of children’s health or development

Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sexting** (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children.

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

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

The local authority (LA)

A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA

The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

### 4. Mental Health

All staff should also 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. 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.

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.

#### **Children requiring mental health support**

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

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.

Schools and colleges 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 schools guidance, colleges may also wish to follow this guidance as best practice. (KCSiE 2022)

## 5. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- Have a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- Are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality (see section 9)
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after

Staff will respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them. The specific convention rights (Human Rights Act 1998) applying to schools are;

- Article 3 – the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8 – the right to respect for private family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14 – requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
- Protocol 1, Article 2 – protects the right to education

Staff are aware that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these children's rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

All staff, senior leaders and LAB Members ensure that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration must be given to the equality implications of pupils with protection characteristics to ensure due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and LAB Members in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

### 6.1 All staff

Staff working directly with children need to read at least Part 1 of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. Staff who do not work directly with children need to read either Part 1 or Annex A and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct and guidelines for safer working practice, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputies, the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), domestic violence, mental health, indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation

Section 14 and appendix 4 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

## 6.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Sam Fuller, Headteacher. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Out of hours the DSL can be contacted on [sam.fuller@cjsdorset.org](mailto:sam.fuller@cjsdorset.org), [dsl@cjsdorset.org](mailto:dsl@cjsdorset.org) or through his personal mobile. All staff at CJS and key BCP colleagues have these contact details.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies – Ben Croton/Deputy Head and Jenny Cowling/Pastoral Care, Kate Byles/Welfare Assistant – will act as cover.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues including children with a social worker, are experiencing or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership (KCSiE Sept 2022)
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Act in an appropriate and timely manner in response to information received through Operation Encompass, and in line with the specific training that DSL/DDSLs have received in relation to Operation Encompass.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly

The DSL will also liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description. The Headteacher will have secure processes of oversight ensuring that appropriate measures are being taken to embed safeguarding within the school and that relevant staff are held to account for their statutory duties.

## 6.3 The Local Advisory Board (LAB)

The LAB will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The LAB will appoint a Lead LAB Member (Maggie Fidler) and Deputy Lead LAB Member (Ian Mayhew) to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the Local Advisory Board. This is always a different person from the DSL.

The Chair of the LAB will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, where appropriate (see appendix 3).

All LAB Members will read Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 or Annex A.

Section 14 has information on how LAB Members are supported to fulfil their role.

## 6.4 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Ensuring that pupils of the school can have their voice heard with reference to all child protection and safeguarding measures, for example, through the Health and Safety Busters forum, PSHE, pastoral support and through trusted adults including class teachers and LSAs

## 7. Confidentiality

Managing child protection and safeguarding procedures requires a high level of professional and confidential conduct from both employees and members of the local advisory board (LAB). All employees of Twynham Learning are reminded that any personal or sensitive information should remain private and should not be diverged verbally to anybody outside the remit of their role. Staff in all categories will have access to large amounts of personal and confidential information. As part of their contract of employment, they are required to be discreet in terms of how such information is used. Information concerning pupils and members of staff should only be used in the effective execution of their professional duties and under no circumstances divulged to people to whom it is not directly applicable.

You should note that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)



- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 13, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

## 8. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and LAB Members must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

### 8.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.** Tell the DSL (see section 6.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

If you are concerned about a child’s welfare or worried they are being abused, you can make a referral to Children’s Social Care in Dorset by contacting;

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Childrens Services First Response Hub: 01202 123334  
[childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) (previously known as MASH)

Dorset – Childrens Advice and Duty Service (ChAD): 01202 228866 (previously known as MASH) In an emergency or out of hours contact:

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Out of Hours Service: 01202 738256 [childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Dorset Out of Hours Service: 01202 228866

Police Non-Emergency: 101

Police Emergency: 999

For information on reporting child abuse to your local council, see the following website; <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

### 8.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them.
- Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions. Use the acronym TED to support this process: Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child’s own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police directly (see 8.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so

### 8.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

The Department for Education’s Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”.

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4.

**Any teacher** who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have good reason not to, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

**Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

[Safeguarding women and girls at risk of FGM - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-women-and-girls-at-risk-of-fgm) - includes Pathway and Risk Assessment tools.

#### **8.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)**

Figure 1 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

### Early help

If school have 'low level concerns' (concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold), these should still be recorded and discussed with DSL/DDSLs as appropriate.

If early help is an option, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an interagency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

### Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see section 8.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

The local [Dorset Threshold Document](#) and the [Bournemouth & Poole Levels of Need & Continuum of Support](#) provides guidance about the criteria for making a referral.

### Escalation Policy

At no time must professional disagreement detract from ensuring a child is safeguarded. The child's welfare and safety must remain paramount throughout. The [Pan-Dorset Escalation Policy](#) identifies a non-exhaustive list of potential areas of disagreement, guidance on preventing disputes and procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved between professionals at front line level.

## 8.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. See DfE guidance Prevent Duty and training [Prevent duty guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above).

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

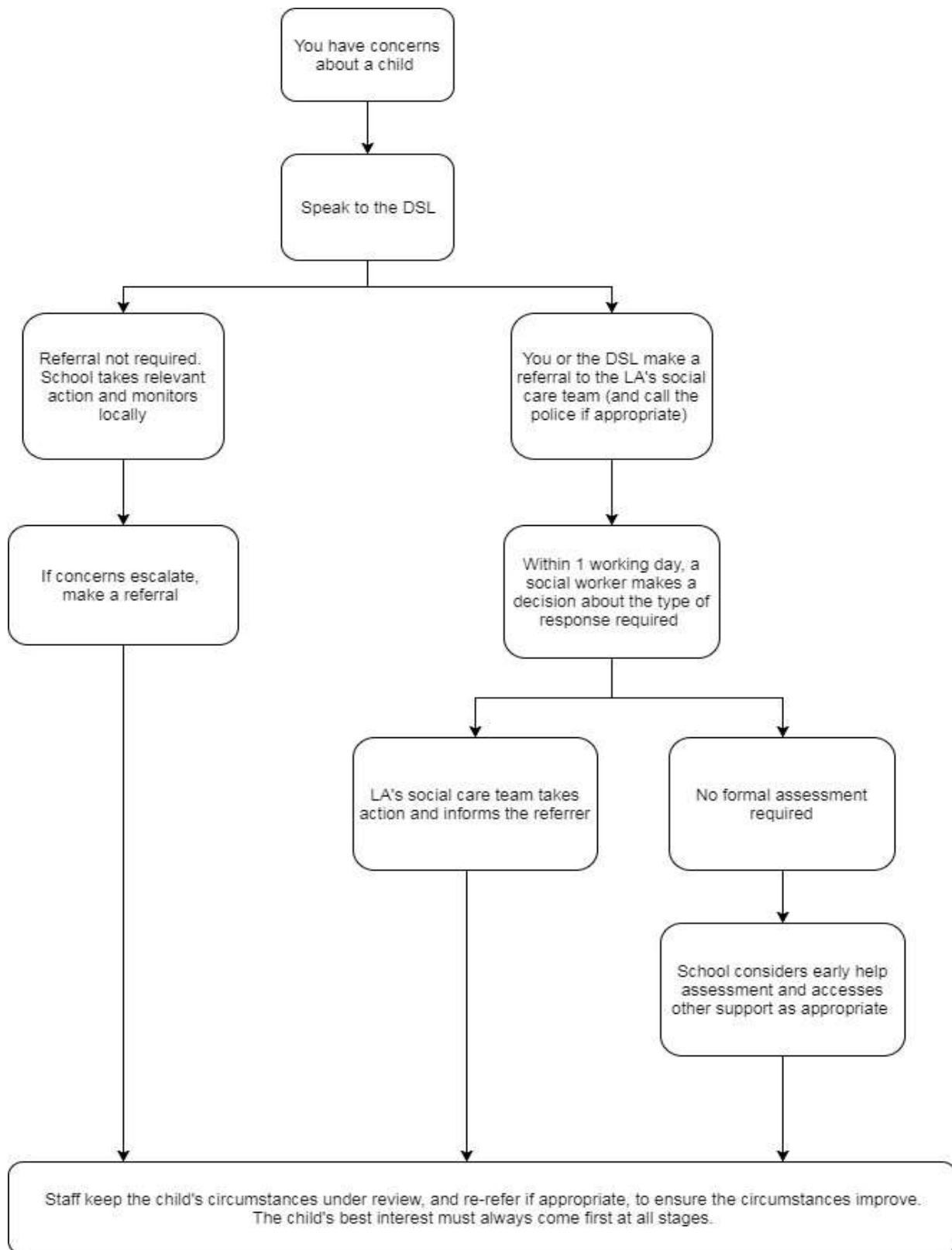
The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and LAB Members can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

**Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child’s welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)**

(Note –if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 8.4 for what to do.)



## 8.6 Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

If you have concerns about a member of staff or volunteer, or an allegation is made about a member of staff or volunteer posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the Headteacher. If the concerns/allegations are about the Headteacher, speak to the Chair of the Local Advisory Board.

The Headteacher/Chair of the LAB will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 3, if appropriate.

### Safeguarding concerns about a staff member

**There are two types of allegation; allegations that meet the harms threshold and allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this policy as ‘low-level concerns’.**

**If you have either a ‘low-level concern’ or an allegation about a member of staff (in a paid or unpaid capacity, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors), speak to the Headteacher. If you have concerns about the Headteacher, speak to the Chair of the Twynham Learning Trustees. The Headteacher/Chair of Trustees or the DSL will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix 3, if appropriate.**

**Where the low level concern shared is about supply staff or contractors, these will be notified to their employers.**

## 8.7 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators) and that children with special educational needs and disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. This school will approach child-on-child abuse robustly, with a zero-tolerance policy assuming ‘this could happen here at this school’. Whilst recognizing that child-on-child abuse can take place online and/or not on the school premises, staff must ensure that students’ and parents’ concerns are taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour is:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- includes physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- includes sexual violence (refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, these include rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent)
- includes harmful sexual behaviours
- includes upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- involves Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery): Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- could put pupils in the school at risk
- is violent
- involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol

- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as telling sexual stories, sexual jokes, indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must reassure the victim that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it may have taken them to come forward and they will be supported and kept safe. You must explain to them 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.
- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place, considering any intra-familial harm, for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected, including siblings) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

**We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:**

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially by informing them of the importance of talking/sharing through assemblies, class discussions and by highlighting the presence and availability of pastoral support in school.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

## 8.8 Sexting

This is a suggested approach based on guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety for [all staff](#) and for [DSLs and senior leaders](#).

### Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

### **Initial review meeting**

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

### **Further review by the DSL**

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

### **Informing parents**

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through the safer schools team, a police community support officer, local neighbourhood police or dialling 101.

### **Recording incidents**

All sexting incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 13 of this policy also apply to recording incidents of sexting.

### **Curriculum coverage**

The schools computing curriculum includes regular safety guidance. This includes appropriate use of mobile devices and social media and how to stay safe online. It also provides guidance on how to deal with receiving inappropriate images.



## 9. Notifying parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

### **Children who are looked after, those previously looked after and care leavers**

Appropriate staff should hold information about a child's legal status, care arrangements, any contact arrangements, name of the Social Worker and work with the virtual school head/team. Previously looked after children remain vulnerable. Care leavers will have plans initiated by the LA of which the school should be aware. The policy should state the additional support available.

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

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should 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 local authorities and schools and colleges 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).

## 10. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We offer extra pastoral support for pupils with SEN and disabilities. This includes:

Group work or 1:1 work where appropriate (eg social communication groups, nurture groups), Lunch club and the nurture playground.

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

The fact that a child may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, the school is aware that pupils who are LGBT can be targeted by other pupils. In some cases, a pupil who is perceived by other pupils to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as a pupil who identifies as LGBT.

We provide a safe space for pupils to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. LGBT inclusion is part of our Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum.

## 12. Mobile phones and cameras

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to noncontact time when pupils are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

All staff will be asked to read and sign the Acceptable Use IT Agreement annually (please refer to this policy for more information).

The school provides clear guidance on mobile phones and cameras. Pupils may not bring these devices into school unless they leave them in the care of the front office (with parents' permission)

## 13. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies

### 13.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3).

### 13.2 Other complaints

The Twynham Learning MAT holds a Complaints Policy which is published on the school's website.

### 13.3 Whistle-blowing

The Twynham Learning MAT holds a Whistle-blowing Policy which is published on the schools website.

## 14. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded, using the MyConcern online records system. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be stored securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

In addition:

- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and preemployment checks
- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff
- Appendix 5 sets out our best practice for record-keeping

## 15. Training

### 15.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, ebulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

### 15.2 The DSL and deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

### 15.3 LAB Members

All LAB Members receive regular training on safeguarding to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.

LAB Members are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty) and their local safeguarding multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

LAB Members consider and question how the school is supporting their pupils and students with regard to particular protected characteristics – including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

As the Chair of the LAB may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

### 15.4 Pupils

School will provide many opportunities to teach safeguarding through subject specific curriculum (eg computing and online safety) and through relationship and sexual health education (RSHE).

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment. These will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as a planned programme of RHSE lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

### 15.5 Recruitment – interview panels

At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

## 16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by Mr Sam Fuller, Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Local Advisory Board.

## 17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Complaints
- Curriculum
- Equality
- First aid
- Health and safety
- IT acceptable use
- Online safety
- Privacy notices
- Relationships and sex education
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistle-blowing

**These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.**

### Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another

- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff are aware of it and how to report it.

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

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse) criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation. (KCSiE 2022)

## Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

### New staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months

- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

As part of the shortlisting process, schools should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. We will only accept information presented on a curriculum vitae alongside an application form.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

**Regulated activity** means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

## Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and

- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

### **Agency and third-party staff**

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

### **Contractors**

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

### **Trainee/student teachers**

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

### **Volunteers**

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

## LAB Members

All LAB Members will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

The Chair of Trustees will have their DBS check countersigned by the Secretary of State.

All proprietors, trustees, local LAB Members and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under [section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#)). [Section 128 checks are only required for local LAB Members if they have retained or been delegated any management responsibilities.]
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

## Appendix 3: allegations of abuse made against staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, supply teacher or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children (KCSiE Sept 2022)

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

## Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the academy trust

## Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation



- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

### Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Headteacher (or Chair of the LAB where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- In a case where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation, the Chair of the LAB will first inform the CEO of Twynham Learning (or, if the CEO is unavailable, then the HR Manager for Twynham Learning).
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children’s social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice

- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the academy trust will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the Headteacher who will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

**Contact:** Laura Baldwin

01202 456744 / lado@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Any concern or allegation against a Headteacher will be reported to the Chair of the LAB /Trustees, who will then report this to the LADO.

## Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

## Specific actions

### Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

### Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

### Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

### **Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Headteacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

### **Confidentiality**

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

### **Record-keeping**

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

### **References**

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

### **Learning lessons**

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

### **Welcoming other Practitioners**

Visitors with a practitioner role, such as the school nurse, social worker, educational psychologist or members of the Police will have been vetted to work with children through their own organisation.

Practitioners will be required to bring their identity badges on all visits and to wear these. They will complete signing in/out forms and wear a school I.D. badge if required to do so.

For agency, third-party staff and contractors, safer recruitment procedures and the guidance in KCSIE must be followed.

### **Off Site Visits**

Off site visits are the subject of a risk assessment. Safeguarding concerns or allegations will be responded to following the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures (as above). The member of staff in charge of the visit will report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, who will pass to Children's Social Care ([childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)) if appropriate. In an emergency the staff member in charge will contact the police and/or Children's Social Care.

The child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures of an off site provider e.g. water sport activity, will be checked and the DSL satisfied that they are appropriate, before using the facility.

## **Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues**

This appendix is based on the advice in annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **Children missing from education**

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the

local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education, or not taking part in education

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

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
  - children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
  - children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
  - children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
  - children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- and

- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. (KCSiE 2022)

## Domestic Abuse

The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right. Domestic abuse is any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are “personally connected” to each other as a result of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse. Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; or psychological, emotional or other abuse. This includes incidences where the abusive party directs their behaviour at another person (e.g. a child). Economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on someone’s ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

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, physical 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 operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adults, DSL and Deputy DSL, in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL and Deputy DSLs are trained to receive information from Operation Encompass. If school are notified about a domestic incident via Operation Encompass.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil’s form tutor before the beginning of the school day to ensure a welfare check can take place. In some cases this may not be appropriate and the DSL or Deputy DSL will need to speak to the pupil directly. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures if appropriate.
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority’s designated officer

- If necessary, seek advice from the Operation Encompass 0204 513 9990.
- Share the National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 where appropriate.
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

### County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] 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 schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism<sup>103</sup> should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office. (KCSiE 2022)

### Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare.

The DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children’s social care.

### So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBV are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

### FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 8.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
  - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
  - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
  - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
  - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
  - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
  - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
  - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
  - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
  - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
- Having limited level of integration within UK society
- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.



## Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmf@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmf@fco.gov.uk)
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

## Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions

- › Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- › Possessing extremist literature
- › Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 8.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

## Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

**All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of Reception staff.**

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- › Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- › The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Keep the child under safe supervision
- Try to contact the parent or other named contact from our list
- Make a record of the incident (if appropriate)

## Missing pupils

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

- Investigate and search for the child within the school grounds
- Contact parents (or another named contact from our list)
- If not found within 20 minutes, a decision will be made (with parents if possible) about contacting the police

## Gangs, Youth Violence, Weapons

All staff should be aware of indicators that may signal children are at risk from or are involved in serious violent crime (see list para 29) and links to further guidance Para 30. This will include any known or anticipated links to County Lines activity. The school will work closely with the police on these matters.

## Children and the court system

The pastoral team should be aware of tools and support which can be accessed and should offer additional support at school/college to children involved in any form of court process.

## Homelessness

The school should be aware of any housing issues which may be posing a risk to a child's welfare. They should work with appropriate services and where a child is thought to be at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care ([childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk))

## Appendix 5: Record Keeping: Best Practice

To be read and followed by all DSLs and Deputies

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been highlighted repeatedly in national and local Serious Case Reviews.

1.2 It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)'s responsibility to ensure that child protection files, access, storage and transfer meet the required professional standards as detailed in this document.

1.3 The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. In summary, the Data Protection Act requires that records should be securely kept, accurate, relevant, up to date and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.

1.4 The school will make use of the 'MyConcern' electronic record keeping system which is compliant with the general standards set out in this policy.

### 2. A record needs to be made by an adult receiving a disclosure of abuse (when a child talks about abuse)

2.1 This record should be made as soon as possible **after** the individual hearing the disclosure has reported it verbally to the DSL. The facts, not opinions (unless of particular relevance), should be accurately recorded in a non-judgemental way. It is important to remember that expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds.

2.2 The record should be logged on the 'MyConcern' system which will automatically record:

. The child's name, gender and date of birth

- Date and time of the conversation
- The name of the person to whom the disclosure was reported.
- The name and job title of the author, and the time of recording.

2.3 The "Details of concern" section should be completed accurately. This account should be factual and not contain opinions. Be precise with names and if necessary avoid pronouns where they cause confusion. Helpful details include:

- What was the context and who was present during the disclosure?
- What did the child say? – verbatim if possible
- What questions were asked? – verbatim
- Responses to questions –verbatim
- Any observations concerning child's demeanour and any injuries

Any other records about a disclosure of abuse should be passed to the DSL and scanned for uploading on to the MyConcern record (as it could be used as evidence in court proceedings).

2.4 Schools should never ask pupils, regardless of their involvement in a child protection matter (ie the subject of an allegation, a witness or the alleged 'perpetrator'), to write out their 'statements' of what has happened. In some cases this could have the unintended consequence of jeopardising a child protection investigation. This applies regardless of whether the incident(s) took place within or outside school.

### **3. Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

3.1 All conversations/disclosures and records of action should be recorded electronically on MyConcern.

3.2 Concerns which initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation by the DSL with the parent, or, at the other end of the scale, could lead to matters being heard in a court.

3.3 All 'lower level' / pastoral concerns about a child's welfare, can be recorded using MyConcern/Arbor.

### **4. Starting a school child protection file**

4.1 A school child protection file does not necessarily mean that the student is or has been the subject of a child protection conference or plan. 'Child protection file' denotes a high level of school concern which has warranted referral to/ involvement of, and in most cases assessment by, child care social workers.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the DSL to start a school child protection file when a social worker is or was involved, eg:-

- a) A formal referral is made by the school to Children's Social Care on an inter-agency referral form or
- b) Social Care inform the school they have commenced an assessment in relation to a student resulting from information from another source or
- c) A child protection file is forwarded to the school by a previous school or pre-school attended by the student or
- d) A child who is in care/looked after transfers into the school or
- e) A student is privately fostered

4.3 It is not good practice to make 'family files'; each child should have his/her own record which includes information specific to him/her and which will be sent to the next school at the time of transfer. The names of siblings and/or other children who live in the household who also attend the school should be clearly noted on individual files.

4.4 If two (or more) students at the school are referred to Social Care for the same concern (for example, an allegation of sexually harmful behaviour), then child protection files will be started on both/all students.

4.5 School child protection files are never 'closed' or de-categorised. Once a school has started a child protection file, the chronology is maintained so that any future concerns can be considered in the context of past events, even if Social Care ceases involvement.

4.6 Note - If there is an allocated social worker because a child is disabled or a young carer and there are no child protection concerns then a child protection file should not be started.

### **5. Adopted children**

5.1 When a student is admitted to a school in Reception class and parents provide the information that s/he was adopted prior to commencing education, this should be recorded with their permission on the main school file in order that appropriate support can be provided in future if necessary.

5.2 Some older adopted children will have school child protection files because they were initially in care/looked after and were subsequently adopted. During the period when the child is 'placed for adoption' (prior to an adoption order being made) any file that contains information that identifies both the birth family

and the adoptive family must be classed as highly sensitive and this information should only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

5.3 Once the adoption order has been made the DSL in the school that holds the child protection file must overhaul the file. The principle is that there must be nothing that identifies the child's birth name or the birth family. In sifting the file it is acceptable to destroy documents that will continue to be held by other agencies: for example, child protection conference minutes and LAC review minutes which will be in Social Care records.

5.4 A chronology should be prepared that gives an overview of the information previously held in the file but without giving the child's birth name or any details which would identify the birth family.

5.5 The overhauled file should only contain the new chronology and any information that has originated from within school (for example concern forms). This file should now be in the child's new name, contain no information which identifies the birth name or birth family, will be held in the school as long as the child remains or sent onto a new school as described (at 9) below.

5.6 Please note that once a child is adopted, all school records, not just cp files, must be amended so that there is nothing which gives the birth name or identifies the birth family.

## **6. Storage**

6.1 Any records (other than those recorded on MyConcern) relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential so will be kept in a secure (ie locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other school files, and accessible through the DSL, the Deputy(ies) and other senior staff in larger schools.

6.2 The student's general school file should be marked in some way to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff who may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and to speak to the DSL if necessary if they see this symbol and have concerns. For example, a member of the office staff who is looking in the main file for a parent's contact details because of unexplained absence might decide to report this to the DSL if they see the indicator, in case the absence is significant.

## **7. Sharing of and access to child protection records**

7.1 It is highly unlikely that all members of staff need to know the details of a child's situation, or that there should be widespread access to the records. Access to, and sharing of, information should be on a need-to-know basis, decided case by case. The DSLs are the best people to decide this. Consideration must also be given to what needs to be shared. Generally speaking, the closer the day-to-day contact with the child, the more likely the need to have some information. A DSL can identify any colleagues who can access a record on MyConcern by adding them to the team for a child or for an individual concern.

7.2 The child who is the subject of a child protection record has the right to access the file, unless to do so would affect his/her health or well-being or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or a Section 47 assessment (which relates to significant harm) under the Children Act 1989.

7.3 Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection file, with the same exemptions as apply to the child's right to access the record. Note that an older student may be entitled to refuse access to the record by his/her parents. As a guide, this applies to students who are 12 years of age or above, if they are of normal development or maturity.

7.4 References by name to children other than the student who is the subject of the file should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s concerned (or their parents/carer on their behalf). Care must be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.

7.5 Always seek advice from your legal advisor or Dorset Data Protection Officer (01305 225175) if there are any concerns or doubt about a child or parents reading records. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held unless there is a valid reason to withhold it, e.g. to do so would place the child or any other person at risk of harm. Any requests to see the child's record should be made in writing to give time for confidential information, such as any details of other students, to be removed.

7.6 In respect of requests from students or parents for information which wholly or partly consists of an educational record, access should be granted within 15 school days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main school file, for example. Viewing-only access to these records is free but it is reasonable to charge for copies on a sliding scale from £1 - £50 (maximum) depending on the number of pages.

7.7 However, should the request only seek access to a child protection file (which is not classed as an educational record), access should be granted within 40 calendar days. A discretionary maximum fee of £10 can be charged for viewing access to or a copy of a child protection record.

7.8 If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties e.g. a reference to a teacher in their teaching role or a school nurse in their nursing role. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it should be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

7.9 Child protection information should not normally be shared with professionals other than those from Social Care, the Police, Health or the Local Authority. OfSTED and other school inspectors can view individual child protection files. Information should not be released to parents' solicitors on request; advice should be sought from the school's legal advisor in such cases.

7.10 LAB Members, including the Nominated LAB Member, should not access the records.

## **8. Transfer of child protection records**

8.1 When a student transfers to another school (including to a Learning Centre because of permanent exclusion) the DSL should inform the receiving school as soon as possible in person or by telephone that child protection records exist. If the receiving school uses the MyConcern system, records will be transferred electronically. Otherwise the original records must be passed on either by hand or sent by recorded delivery, separate from any other records. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible.

8.2 Where children leave the school, the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of the term to allow the new school to have support in place for when the child arrives.

8.3 If the records are to be posted, they should be copied and these copies retained until there has been confirmation in writing that the originals have arrived at the new school. They can then be shredded.

8.4 Whether child protection files are passed on by hand or posted, there should be written evidence of the transfer (such as a form or slip of paper signed and dated by a member of staff at the receiving school.) This receipt should be retained by the originating school for 6 years (in line with guidance from the Records Management Society).

8.5 If the student is removed from the roll to be home educated, the school should pass the child protection file to the LA EHE Administrator and a receipt obtained as described above.

8.6 If a student with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address and no contact is received from a new school, the DSL should follow the school's Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. If there is reason to suspect the student is suffering harm then the DSL will refer to Social Care in the usual way.

8.7 If a child arrives in the school in an unplanned way and / or there are concerns about them from the outset, it is worth contacting the previous school for a discussion with the DSL. There might be a cp file which has not been passed on.

8.8 School 'welfare' or pastoral records (ie where concerns or issues have been raised but there has been **no** referral to or involvement by a social worker) should also be passed on to the next school for their information and can be included in the main school file, for example. In respect of data protection, parents/carers should be made aware (either individually or through newsletters, for example) that information is transferred in this way to enable the next school to properly support their child. Most parents will understand the reason for this but if for whatever reason a parent disagrees with you passing on non-child protection documents, you should not do so.

## 9. 'Dual registered' students

9.1 Where a student is on roll at the school and starts to attend a Learning Centre (LC), the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection file should be copied and passed to the DSL at the LC at the earliest opportunity. Because of the nature of such 'bespoke' arrangements for individual student, the two DSLs should agree on which one of them will keep the chronology updated and how best to communicate to each other significant events and issues in relation to that student.

## 10. Retention of Records

10.1 The school should retain the record for as long as the student remains in school and then transfer as described above.

10.2 The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has instructed relevant organisations, including schools and colleges, that they should NOT destroy, for the foreseeable future, any of their records that could potentially come within the scope of the inquiry (ie any records relating to sexual abuse).

### 10.3 Electronic child protection records

- Electronic records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.
- They should be in the same format as paper records (ie with well-maintained chronologies etc) so that they are up to date if/when printed, if necessary.
- Electronic files should be transferred electronically via MyConcern. When the receipt has been returned to confirm that the file has been received at the new school, the computer record should be deleted.