St Joseph's CVA Market Harborough

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,2026-2027

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Keeping children safe in education (2026) is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge;
- Protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- 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 from suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm

Document Provenance

Title of policy	Safeguarding and Child protection Policy, 2026-27
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Date of next review	At least annually; on or before September 2027	
		Document review and editorial updates
Version control and signature	**Date**	Key revisions Staff need to know
6 S Giacchino [Chair of Directors]	**1st September 2026**	Part one KCSIE, paragraph 13: updated to distinguish between community-based early help and targeted early help, delivered through Family help. Early Help is support provided as soon as concerns emerge, before problems escalate and before a child requires statutory social care involvement It is often led by schools, health services, or other universal services, and may involve a Quick- Thinking Plan Family Help a wider, integrated service developed through the families First Partnership programme. It brings together: Targeted Early Help; Child in need (Section 17) support; Assessment functions; multi-agency family support New duty for all staff to recognise racism, faith-based prejudice and other discrimination as harm in its own right Racism and faith-targeted abuse can significantly affect a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety New expectation that schools promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture as part of their safeguarding responsibilities EYFS: Where schools are also subject to the EYFS framework, volunteers must not be permitted to begin working within the setting covered by the EYFS framework until the school or maintained nursery school has received the volunteer's enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information.

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1 Our strong safeguarding culture and commitment

1.1 Why it is important

1.1.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and it is the duty of St Thomas Aquinas CMAT and school name to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is our core safeguarding principle.

1.1.2 In adhering to this principle, we focus on providing a safe and welcoming environment for all of our children regardless of age, ability, culture, race, language, religion, gender identity or sexual identity. All of our children have equal rights to support and protection.

1.1.3 One of the cornerstones of our safeguarding culture is this policy and the procedures contained within it. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers,

LGB governors and CMAT Foundation Directors, all of whom are trained upon its contents and on their safeguarding duties. We update this policy at least annually to reflect changes to law, guidance and best practice.

1.1.4 This policy should be read alongside our other safeguarding policies, which are set out in Appendix Two.

1.2 What it means for our pupils

1.2.1 We work with our local safeguarding partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of family help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support to the child. It also includes contributing to broader, multi-agency strategic discussions about safeguarding children.

1.2.2 All of our staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Any pupils or staff involved in a child protection or safeguarding issue will receive appropriate support.

1.2.3 Our strong safeguarding culture ensures that we treat all pupils with respect and involve them in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils, and we set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

1.2.4 Identifying safeguarding and attendance and/or child protection concerns often begin with recognising changes in pupils' attendance and/or behaviour and knowing that these changes may be signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

1.2.5 All our staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

2 Safeguarding legislation and guidance

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)

- Statutory guidance on the Prevent Duty: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales (further updated 2024)
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- The Teacher's Standards 2012
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2010
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (2023)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- PACE Code C 2019
  Early years foundation stage statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (September 2025)

3 Roles and responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

Bernadette Dabbs

Contact details email: bdabbs@stjosephs.leics.sch.uk

The deputy DSL(s) are:

Thomas Hooley
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Helen Auckland
Contact details: hauckland@stjosephs.leics.sch.uk

Katrina Gamage
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The LGB safeguarding governor:

Abby Towl
Contact details: Abby.Towl@stjosephs.leics.sch.uk
The Headteacher is:

Bernadette Dabbs
Contact details: bdabbs@stjosephs.leics.sch.uk

3.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

3.1.1 The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school. The DSL duties include:

- ensuring child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff
- maintaining a key role in raising awareness amongst staff about the needs of children who have or who have had a social worker and the barriers that those children might experience in respect of attendance, engagement and

achievement at schools or college. This should include children under kinship care.

- understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online
- working with the CMAT Safeguarding Director and the Local Governing Body (LGB) to confirm that the Trust's child protection policies are reviewed annually and that the procedures are reviewed regularly
- acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff on child protection and safeguarding matters
- liaising with the Headteacher regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations and be aware of the requirement for Children to have an Appropriate Adult in relevant circumstances.
- Liaising closely with other services such as children's social care, police, family help and health as required
- Ensuring there is an appropriate safeguarding curriculum
- acting as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners
- making and managing referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies
- taking part in **all** strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
- keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions
- The leadership team will ensure there is appropriate cover arrangements for periods when the DSL is unavailable due to illness, leave or other circumstances. This will include a confidential shared mailbox: DSL@ to ensure safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted upon without delay
- liaising with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) (LADO) at the local authority if allegations are made against staff
- making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements available through the local safeguarding partner arrangements
- transferring the child protection file to a child's new school within the 5-day period
- Work with the Headteacher to ensure that the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable (**delete if not applicable)**
- Work with the Headteacher to ensure that each EYFS child is assigned a key person **(delete if not applicable)**

3.2 The deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

3.2.1 Our Deputy DSL(s) is/are trained to the same level as the DSL and support(s) the DSL with safeguarding matters on a day-to-day basis. The ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the DSL.

3.3 The LGB Safeguarding Governor

3.3.1 The role of the LGB Safeguarding Governor is to provide support and challenge to the DSL and the leadership of the school on how they manage safeguarding so that the safety and wellbeing of the children can continuously improve. The role includes:

understanding the requirements of the Governance Handbook and Keeping children safe in education 2026

- supporting and challenging the DSL on the standards of safeguarding at the school
- verifying that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across the school and the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and their effectiveness is reviewed and logged at least annually

This includes:

.1 Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring

.2 Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards

.3 Carrying out, along with the DSL, an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community

.4 updating the Local Governing Body and Board of Directors about the standard of safeguarding in the school

3.3.2 The DSL and the LGB Safeguarding Governor meet on a regular basis to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in the school.

4 Children who may be particularly vulnerable

4.1 Some children are at greater risk of abuse both online and offline . This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination and prejudice. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

are vulnerable because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity or sexuality;

- are vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying;
- are disabled or has certain health conditions and specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- are frequently going missing/goes missing from education, home or care;
- are at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drugs and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- are misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves;
- experience or have experienced mental health difficulties;
- are a young carer;

are showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;

- are privately fostered;
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending;
-

are at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse, such as FGM or forced marriage;

- is pregnant or is a parent themselves;

- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours;
- a child with medical conditions who could be at greater risk of being neglected abused or exploited because of their medical condition;
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school and is in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit;
- is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism;
- is at risk of faith-based abuse;
- Young carers;
- Are involved in the court system or have a family member in prison

5 Children with special educational needs and disabilities or Health needs

5.1 We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and or disabilities, or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges on and offline. Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and are three times more likely to be abused than their peers, and prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudiced- based bullying) than other children Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- The need for intimate care and are more likely to be dependent on adults for care.
- These children may have issues over cognitive understanding-being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content in online content and then repeating the content /behaviours in school, or the consequences of doing so.

5.2 Our staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

6 Children who are absent from education

6.1 Children being absent from education, for prolonged periods on an increasing basis and/or on repeat occasions, can be an indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery child criminal exploitation, mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks.

6.2 We closely monitor attendance and exclusions, and our DSL will take appropriate and proactive steps including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions, on an increasing basis and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

6.3 Our response to pupils' unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education will focus on identifying abuse and saving them from becoming children missing education in the future

7 Alternative Provision (AP)

7.1 Where a pupil is placed with an alternative provision provider, we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will ensure we are satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

7.2 We will always ensure we know where a pupil is based during school hours, through having records of the alternative provider's address and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend.

7.3 We will carry out frequent reviews of the alternative provision placements (at least half-termly) to provide assurance that the child is regularly attending, and the placement continues to be safe and meets the needs of the child. Whilst the Local Authority may hold a register of approved alternative provision providers the school however remains ultimately responsible for the provision we commission. We also obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.

8 Mental health

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

8.2 All our staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. All staff recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. Staff are also aware that where children have suffered adverse childhood experiences, these experiences can impact their mental health, behaviour and education. Education staff are well placed to observe children day-to day and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem. If a child is struggling with their mental health, exhibiting self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise. These include significant changes in behaviour, difficulty sleeping, withdrawing from social situations, neglecting themselves.

8.3 Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL/senior mental health lead who will alert other relevant agencies as necessary or be at risk of developing one.

9 Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

9.1 The school recognises that a child or young person may question their gender. We will take a sensitive, child-centred approach to pupils who are questioning their gender, or who have the protected characteristic of gender realignment. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, respectful and inclusive environment for all pupils, while ensuring that safeguarding and the welfare of the individual child remains paramount. We will respect both gender critical and gender-affirming beliefs held within the school community and will not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination in relation to any such beliefs.

9.2 The school will not initiate social transition. Where a child or parent/carer requests changes relating to social transition, including changes to names, pronouns, appearance, or how a child is treated within the school community, these matters will be considered through the school's safeguarding procedures and under the leadership of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Any decisions will be carefully assessed, recorded and reviewed. The school will only implement any changes in accordance with the following process: process below:

9.3 **DSL involvement**: The designated Lead (DSL) will be informed and involved in the decision-making process from the outset, as gender-related requests may intersect with safeguarding considerations.

9.4 Parents and carers will be involved in the vast majority of cases. The school will only consider delaying or limiting parental involvement where there is reasonable cause to believe that doing so is necessary to protect the child from a risk of significant harm. In such circumstances, the DSL will seek appropriate safeguarding advice and take action in accordance with child protection procedures

9.5 **Parental engagement**: Parents and carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views treated with importance. The school will not implement social transition arrangements without parental knowledge and engagement, save in the exceptional circumstances described in 9.6 below

9.6 Exception to parental engagement: Where staff have reasonable grounds to conclude that involving parents or carers would create a greater risk of harm to the child, the DSL will determine what safeguarding action is appropriate before parents are contacted and before any decision is taken to proceed without parental engagement will be documented with clear reasons.

9.7 Professional advice: Where appropriate the school will seek advice from relevant professionals, which may include the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator, relevant health professionals or The Local Authority Designated Officer –(LADO) where applicable. The school will be alert to the possibility that gender-questioning presentations may occur with or be influenced by other factors including neuro-developmental conditions, mental health difficulties or other needs.

9.8 **Cautious approach**: The school and the trust will take a careful and considered approach, recognising that social transition is an active intervention with potentially significant consequences. In primary schools, support for full social transition will be agreed in rare circumstances .

9.9 **Record-keeping: All discussions and decisions,** and the reason for those decisions will be recorded in writing and stored securely and confidentially. Records will be kept under review and revisited if circumstances change.

9.10 **Review;** Any agreed arrangements will be subject to periodic review. Where circumstances change the DSL will be informed immediately and arrangements will be reassessed.

9.11 The school acknowledges that children who are questioning their gender may have additional vulnerabilities or complex needs and may benefit from appropriate health, social care or other professional involvement. The school will work collaboratively with families and relevant agencies where appropriate to promote the child's welfare

9.12 The school will ensure that it's facilities arrangements comply with its legal obligations in relation to biological sex and with its safeguarding duties. Arrangements relating to toilets, changing facilities residential accommodation, sport and recording of pupil information will be managed in line with current statutory guidance and the school's legal obligations

9.13 **Toilets:** The school will not permit a child to use toilet facilities designed for the opposite sex. Where a pupil does not wish to use toilet, facilities designed for their own biological sex the school will consider whether an alternative arrangement, such as a self-contained individual can be provided without compromising single-sex provision or the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the pupil or other pupils. Any such arrangement will be recorded and reviewed regularly. For safeguarding purposes, relevant staff will be made aware of a pupil's biological sex and a pupil's biological sex will be recorded accurately, wherever it is recorded by the school.

9.13.1 **Changing rooms: Changing rooms and showers**: The school will not permit a pupil aged 11 or over to undress in the presence of a pupil of the opposite biological sex and will not permit access to changing rooms or shower facilities designated for the opposite biological sex as part of any social transition arrangements. Where a pupil does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider alternative arrangements that do not compromise single-sex provision, and will keep clear records, communicate appropriately, and review regularly. At St Joseph's children will wear the PE kit to school on their PE days, so the requirement to change clothes during the school day is limited.

9.14 Overnight accommodation: The school will not permit a pupil to share overnight accommodation with a pupil of the opposite biological sex. Where a pupil does not wish to share accommodation with a pupil of the same biological sex, the school will seek to identify alternative arrangements where possible without compromising safety, comfort, privacy, or dignity, and will document those arrangements.

9.15 The fact that a child or a young person may be LGB or gender questioning is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. We recognise however, that children who are (or are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning can be targeted by other children. We also recognise that LGB children are more likely to experience poor mental health. When staff have any concerns about a gender questioning child, they must report it as soon as possible to the DSL

9.16 When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and the pupil may have wider vulnerabilities, such as complex mental health or psychosocial needs, and in some cases, additional diagnoses of autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD)

9.17 The risk to these children can be compounded where children who are LGB or gender questioning lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where pupils can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

9.18 We foster **a culture of zero tolerance** towards sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia**, biphobia** and transphobia

10 Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

10.1 Child-on-child abuse – children harming other children - is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. It is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child , and girls victims, but allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls.

10.2 All staff should be clear about the school's policy and procedures for addressing child-on-child abuse and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

10.3 Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling
- **bullying,** including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- **sexual harassment, violence** such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault, serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon This may

include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence.
causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

- **upskirting**, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge for the purposes of sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress or alarm
- **consensual and non-consensual making and sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos** including pressuring others to share sexual content
- **abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (also known as teenage relationship abuse)** - such as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals–used to induct newcomers into sports teams or school groups by subjecting them to potentially humiliating or abusing trials which could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation
- All staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, all staff should know that child-on-abuse is preventable. As well as knowing how to recognise behaviour and indicators of risk early, staff should know that timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism and faith-targeted abuse

10.4 Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

10.5 All staff recognise that that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place but is not being reported.

10.6 It is important that when **staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse they should speak to the DSL**

Minimising risk

We take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Promoting an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries
- Using assemblies to outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- Using RSHE and PSHE to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities
- Ensuring that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.
-

10.7 Investigating allegations

All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed immediately to the DSL who will investigate and manage the allegation as follows:

- **Gather information -** children and staff will be spoken with immediately to gather relevant information.

- **Decide on action -** if it is believed that any child is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting

the police. In other cases, we may follow our behaviour policy alongside this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

- **Inform parents -** we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to a child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

- **Record** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored securely on the school's child protection and safeguarding systems and/or in the child's separate child protection file. The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of the action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

10.7.1 Where allegations of a sexual nature are made, the school will follow the statutory guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.The DSL will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment. Reports of rape or assault by penetration are especially serious. While the school establishes the facts and liaises with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator (s)may be removed from any shared classes with the victim. The school will also consider how to maintain a reasonable physical separation between the victim and alleged perpetrator (s) across the school, including before or after school-based activities, and on transport to and from the school.

10.7.2 Children can report allegations or concerns of child-on-child abuse to any staff member, confident that the staff member will pass on the allegation to the DSL in accordance with this policy. To ensure children can report their concerns easily, the school ensures each child has at least one trusted adult who they are encouraged to speak to, to confidently report abuse. All children are aware that the Headteacher DSL and Deputy Headteacher DDSL are responsible adults for safeguarding in the school and all children can talk to them about any concerns.

10.7.3 Supporting those involved, our staff reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Our staff will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor will victims be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

10.7.4 Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation.

10.7.5 The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their particular circumstance and the nature of the abuse. The support we provide could include counselling and mentoring or some restorative justice work.

10.7.6 Support may also be required for the pupil that caused harm. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. The consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

11 Serious violence

11.1 Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying. It can be associated with criminal exploitation. All staff are made aware of indicators that children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the DSL, (or deputy) who will assess the risk to both the individual pupil, and others in the school. Depending on the risk, the DSL will put in place a safety and support plan, and where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict. Serious violence indicators include increased absence, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of mental health difficulties, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts could also indicate that children have been approached by or are involved with individuals associated with criminal gangs.

11.2 All staff are made be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

12 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

12.1 CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery. Being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. Being forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threating/committing serious violence to others. Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity and may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

12.2 This power imbalance can be due to a range of factors, including:

12.2.1 Age

12.2.2 Gender

12.2.3 Sexual identity

12.2.4 Cognitive ability

12.2.5 Physical strength

12.2.6 Status

12.2.7 Access to economic or other resources

12.3 The abuse can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery. In accordance with KCSIE 2026, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified.

12.4 Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families)with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. Perpetrators pressure them into carrying weapons such as knives or persuade them to begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection.

12.5 Our staff recognise the vulnerabilities of children who are criminally exploited and will treat and support them as victims.

12.6 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

12.6.1 Children can become trapped by this exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection.

Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

12.6.2 It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys and both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

12.7 CCE Indicators

12.7.1 **CCE** indicators can include children who:

(a) appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions

(b) associate with other young people involved in exploitation

(c) suffer from changes in emotional well-being

(d) misuse drugs or alcohol

(e) go missing for periods of time or regular return home late

(f) regularly or increasingly miss school or education or do not take part in education

12.8 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

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

12.8.3 CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. CSE can be committed by an individual or an organised network. Most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim.

12.8.4 Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking. Our staff follow guidance and procedures outlined in Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

12.9 CSE Indicators

12.9.1 The above indicators can also be indicators of **CSE**, as can children who:

(a) have older boyfriends

(b) suffer sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

12.10 We include the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in our RSE and health education curriculum. It is often the case that the child does not recognise the coercive nature of the exploitative relationship and does not recognise themselves as a victim.

12.11 Victims of criminal and sexual exploitation can be boys or girls, and it can have an adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex.

12.12 All staff are aware of the indicators that children are at risk of or are experiencing CCE or CSE. As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. All concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. Staff must always act on any concerns that a child is suffering from or is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation.

13 County Lines

13.1 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

13.2 County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors set out at paragraph 12.2 of this policy.

13.3 Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools and colleges. Indicators of county lines include those indicators set out at 13.4 of this policy, with the main indicator being missing episodes from home and/or school.

13.4 Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited include children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from home
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs

- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation with which they have no connection or in a hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

13.5 All staff are aware of indicators that children are at risk from or experiencing criminal exploitation. The main indicator is increased absence during which time the child may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or money.

14 Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes

14.1 Sharing photos, videos and live streams online is part of daily life for many children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Making and sharing nudes and semi-nudes means the sending or posting online of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums, or carried out offline between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop. Images may be taken or created by the child themselves or by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

14.2 The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'. Other terms used in education have included 'sexting', youth produced sexual imagery' and 'youth involved sexual imagery'.

14.3 The motivations for making and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer
- children and young people digitally manipulate (deepfake) an image of a young person into an existing nude online
- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame
- In all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, whether they are consensual or non-consensual, the school will take a safeguarding and proportionate approach that considers the age, development and circumstances of the child involved. We will look for any elements of coercion, exploitation or vulnerability. All incidents involving nude or semi-nude images will be managed as follows:
- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately, who will discuss it with the appropriate staff. If necessary, the DSL will may also interview the children involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved with the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm.

- At any point in the process, if a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, we will refer the matter to the police and/or children's social care.

- If staff are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, videos, including computer-generated images, they must report it to the DSL immediately.
- **They must not:**
- view, copy, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a pupil to share or download it.(if they have already viewed the imagery by accident, they must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask a pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) involved to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident to anyone, except the DSL
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved
- Staff will explain that they need to report the incident, and reassure the (pupil)s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL
-

14.4 The UK Council for Internet Safety updated its advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in December 2024 - UKCIS advice 2024 . The school will have regard to this advice when managing these issues.

15 Online safety

15.1 It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As well as educating children about online risks, we have appropriate and effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to limit the risk of children being exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to harmful online interaction with other users and to ensure their own personal online behaviour does not put them at risk. Our filtering and monitoring systems also prevent access to harmful and inappropriate content accessed through generative AI tools and products

15.2 These filtering and monitoring systems block harmful and inappropriate content, and we take care to ensure that they do not unreasonably impact on teaching and learning. The systems are reviewed regularly (at least annually) to ensure their effectiveness and formally recorded. Staff have been identified and assigned suitable roles and responsibilities to monitor to manage these systems

15.3 We tell parents and carers what filtering and monitoring systems we use, so they can understand how we work to keep children safe.

15.4 We will also inform parents and carers of what we are asking children to do online, including the sites they need to access, and with whom they will be interacting online.

15.5 We ensure staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training

15.6 Online safety risks can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation and extremism

- **Contact**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that stimulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children

- **Conduct**: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images such as making, sending or receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying

- **Commerce**: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

15.7 All staff are aware of these risk areas and should report any concerns to the DSL.

16 Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children **where they see, hear or experience its effects.**

16.1 Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes people who have been or are married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another or each have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

16.2 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. This means children can also be victims of domestic abuse. children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse)

16.3 Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic violence in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse and exposure to it can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on children, and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

16.4 When police have been called to a domestic violence incident where children are in the household and/or experienced that incident, the police will notify the local authority Operation Encompass team, who will inform the DSL the following morning. This ensures that the school has up to date safeguarding information about the child. The police will also notify us if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This ensures that the school has up to date safeguarding information about the child.

16.5 All staff are aware of the impact domestic violence can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL.

17 Handheld Devices (tablets, smart phones and cameras)

17.1 All staff must abide by the CMAT's protocols for the use of handheld devices and cameras. In EYFS settings, all staff, visitors and volunteers must ensure that during working hours their mobile phones, personal cameras and recording devices are stored securely on school premises. As required by the EYFS framework the school has a policy regarding the safe use

of phones and cameras. EYFS settings must follow these protocols: use of mobile phones, cameras and personal devices are only to be used by staff when on a designated break away from the pupils. At all other times personal devices are to be switched off. School devices are only to be used by staff for work purposes. Photographs and videos of the pupils must be approved by the Headteacher, and in accordance with our Data Protection policy.

17.2 In all school settings, personal mobiles and personal phones must not be used in any teaching area or within toilet or changing areas. Our school-approved and managed devices should be used for recording student progress. Personal devices must not be used under any circumstances. All recorded data, including photographs, must be stored securely on school's systems or approved platforms.

17.3 In accordance with keeping children safe in education, the school adheres to the mobile phone policy, which states that pupils should have no access to their phones at any point during the school day. This includes all breaks and the rule applies to lessons, transitions between classes, morning breaks, and lunch times. Anything other than a phone free policy is only allowed under specific, strictly defined exceptions.

18 Honour or Faith-Based abuse

18.1 Honour or Faith-based abuse encompasses actions taken to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including female genital mutilation (FGM) forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. committed abuse encompasses actions taken to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing.

18.2 Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors and we take them into consideration when deciding what safeguarding action to take.

18.3 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of honour and faith-based abuse or who has suffered from honour or faith-based abuse they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead immediately.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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

18.3.2 FGM is carried out on females of any age, from babies to teenagers to women. Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, including concerns expressed by girls about going on a long holiday during the summer break. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of FGM or who has suffered FGM, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Teachers are also under legal duty to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18. In such circumstances, teacher will personally report the matter to the police as well as informing the designated safeguarding lead.

Forced Marriage

18.3.3 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. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure or abuse.

18.3.4 Forced marriage is illegal. It is also illegal to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteen birthday. Even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

18.3.5 Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, which may include being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK.

18.3.6 Forced marriage is not the same as arranged marriage, which is common in many cultures.

18.3.7 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead immediately.

19 Radicalisation and Extremism

19.1 Extremism is defined as: the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to: negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).

19.2 Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

19.3 Schools are under a duty to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism (The Prevent duty). To fulfil this duty the school has a Prevent Lead. This is the designated safeguarding lead DSL/Prevent Lead or SPOC (Single Point of Contact for Prevent). If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they should speak to the designated safeguarding/SPOC who will take the appropriate steps.

19.4 The designated safeguarding lead/SPOC will receive additional, in-depth training, including training on extremist and terrorist ideologies. The designated Prevent lead will then deliver training to other staff to support them in making informed referrals to Prevent where necessary.

19.5 As with broader safeguarding issues, a multi-agency approach will be supported by the school where it is necessary and appropriate. Any Prevent concerns will be securely transferred when a child moves to a different education provider.

19.6 The school will continue building resilience to radicalising influences through the curriculum, effective IT policies and effective visiting speaker protocols.

19.7 The school will annually assess and reflect upon local risk and threat, based on the size and provision. The outcome of these risk assessments will inform any necessary changes to the Prevent Risk assessment and this policy.

19.8 Children can be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Whilst Islamic fundamentalism is the most widely publicised, extremism and radicalisation can occur in other cultures, religions and beliefs, including the far right and white supremacy. Our staff are trained to identify those at risk of being radicalised or drawn into extremism.

19.9 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead/SPOC.

20 Staff/pupil relationships

20.1 Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

20.2 We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity, and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.

20.3 Our Staff Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff to confirm that they have read, understood and will comply with the guidance and expectations in our Code of Conduct.

21 Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors

21.1 If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply staff, trainee teacher, volunteer, or contractor, or relates to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, our set procedures must be followed, which are detailed in the allegations and low-level concerns policies on SharePoint. The full procedure for managing such allegations or concerns is set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

21.2 Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the police.

22 Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

22.1 It is important that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about a colleague's practice. All such concerns should be reported to the Headteacher, unless the complaint is about the Headteacher, in which case the concern should be reported to the Trust's CEO.

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

22.3 The school's whistleblowing code allows staff to raise concerns or make allegations and for an appropriate enquiry to take place.

23 Staff and LGB Governor/Board Foundation Director training

23.1 Our staff receive appropriate and regular safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and have an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and empowered to provide exceptional safeguarding to our pupils. All our staff have received information and training regarding the risks that can take place outside the child's family. This is known as extra-familial harm which can take on 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 - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking),

criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines, financial exploitation and radicalisation.

23.2 New staff and volunteers receive a comprehensive safeguarding briefing, including online safety and children absent or missing from education during their induction which covers this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and our staff code of conduct, how to report and record concerns and information about our Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy DSLs.

23.3 Our Board Foundation Directors and local governing body receive appropriate mandatory safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that there is an effective whole trust approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

23.4 Our LGB Safeguarding Governor receives additional training to empower them to support and challenge the Designated Safeguarding Lead and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding across the trust.

24 Safer Recruitment

24.1 The Local Governing Body and our senior leadership team are responsible for securing that we follow recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might harm children. When doing so we check and verify the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the local safeguarding partner arrangements.

24.2 We inform shortlisted candidates that the school will carry out online search checks on the successful candidate to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available **online,** as part of our due diligence process

24.3 All relevant staff (involved in primary or early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare guidance and their obligations to disclose to us relevant information that could lead to disqualification.

Our volunteers working in regulated activity will have an enhanced DBS check. All volunteers must have their enhanced DBS check before undertaking regulated activity in line with the Crime and Policing Act 2026 when in school. We check the identity of all contractors working on site and request DBS checks where required. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

24.4 When using supply staff, we will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that staff they provide have been appropriately checked and are suitable for working with children. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

24.5 The CMAT maintains and audits the single central record of recruitment checks undertaken in each of our academies for compliance.

25 Site security

25.1 Visitors are asked to sign in at the school reception and are given a badge to confirm they have permission to be on site. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be escorted at all times.

26 Child protection procedures

26.1 Recognising abuse

26.1.1 Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

26.1.2 Keeping Children, Safe in Education 2026 refers to four categories of abuse, and These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse and neglect.

26.2 Taking action

26.2.1 Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action required to help the child, if necessary, call 999
- report your concern on CPOMS and speak to the DSL as soon as possible
- share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family

26.3 If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

26.3.1 0ur staff and volunteers will be vigilant to indicators that a pupil may be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or modern slavery. This may be because the pupil's behaviour has changed, their appearance has changed, or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

26.3.2 If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice set out at **26.4 below.**

26.3.3 Staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, neglected, or exploited, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened, which could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to our DSL if they have concerns about a child.

26.4 If a pupil discloses to you

26.4.1 If a pupil tells a member of staff about a risk to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will:

- remain calm and not overreact
- allow them to speak freely
- not be afraid of silences
- not ask investigative questions
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not automatically offer physical touch as comfort
- let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL

- tell the pupil what will happen next and give them an opportunity to ask questions about what will happen next.

- Speak verbally to the DSL and write a report about the disclosure on CPOMs, even if the child has promised to do so by themselves
- let the pupil know when they can expect to be updated or receive more information, emphasising that the pupil can talk to them or the DSL at any time.

26.5 Notifying parents

26.5.1 The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are notified. Examples of when parents might not be notified about concerns include:

26.5.2 where the pupil's disclosure is about a parent or carer

26.5.3 where the pupil has expressed concerns about a parent or carer's possible reaction to the disclosure

27 Referral to children's social care

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

28 Reporting directly to child protection agencies

28.1 Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the DDSL, the headteacher are not available, and a referral is required immediately.

28.2 In the event of any complaint or allegation against a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher, the headteacher (or the Designated Safeguarding Lead) if the headteacher is not present, will be notified immediately. If the concern relates to the headteacher, the trust CEO will be informed without delay. We will respond to all allegations robustly and appropriately in collaboration with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

28.3 A list of useful contact details for reporting or seeking advice about a safeguarding matter can be found **here**

29 Confidentiality and sharing information

29.1 Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, headteacher or DDSL as appropriate.

29.2 Sharing information

29.2.1 The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share child protection information. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL

may share information *without* consent and will record the reason for deciding to do so.

29.2.2 Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

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

29.2.4 The UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Trust's Data Protection Officer.

29.3 Storing information

29.3.1 Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file, and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. It will be stored and handled in line with our Retention and Destruction policy.

29.3.2 Our Confidentiality and Information Sharing policy and our Retention and Destruction policy is available to parents and pupils on request.

30 Special Circumstances

30.1 Looked after children

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

30.2 Children who have a social worker

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

30.3 Young Carers

We are alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support, at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services

30.4 Work Experience

30.4.1 When placing a student in a work experience placement the school will ensure the person providing the teaching/training/instruction or supervision of the student frequently or in more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight this is a regulated activity and therefore need the necessary checks.

30.4.2 If a student aged 16+ on a work experience placement which takes place in a school or nursery which provides opportunity to for the student to be in contact with children which is regulated activity, the school will consider if a DBS enhanced check is required

30.5 Children staying with host families (schools to delete this section if not applicable)

30.5.1 The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with host families, for example during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. When we do, we follow the guidance set out in Keeping children safe in education 2026 to ensure hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

30.5.2 Schools cannot obtain criminal record information from the Disclosure and Barring Service about adults abroad. Where pupils stay with host families abroad, we will agree with the partner schools a shared understanding of the safeguarding arrangements. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the arrangements are sufficient to safeguard our pupils and will include ensuring pupils understand who to contact should an emergency occur, or a situation arise which makes them feel uncomfortable. We will also make parents aware of these arrangements.

30.5.3 Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school term, and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

30.6 Private fostering arrangements

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

30.6.2 Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will tell the DSL who will notify the local authority of the circumstances.

31 Local risks and emerging developments

31.1 The local authority and LSCPB have their own priorities which reflect the area in which our school is based. Some of these include being aware of knife crime, gang related issues, radicalisation, county lines, criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, FGM and contextual safeguarding. **(delete/add the local risks/ issues as appropriate to your setting. Also include safeguarding issues which are prevalent to your school, e.g. domestic abuse, neglect)** We work closely with other agencies including the Police, community groups and social care to safeguard our pupils from these risks.

Appendix One - Indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation

It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and neglect and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff are also aware of the indicators of abuse – neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children may be at risk of harm inside and outside the home, and online.

The four main categories of child abuse are as follows:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

1. Indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation:

1.1 **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. 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, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

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

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

1.4 **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing, causing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbations, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, sexual images,

watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse 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 (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and **all** staff should be aware of it and of their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.

1.5 **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, because 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 (the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

1.6 Child Criminal Exploitation: occurs where an individual or organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group, takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Child Criminal exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

1.7 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection.

Appendix Two - Related Safeguarding Policies

- Staff Code of Conduct, including safe working practice;
- The school's Behavior policy;
- First aid and the administration of medicines;
- Anti-bullying, including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- Equal opportunities;
- Physical intervention and restraint;
- Personal and intimate care;
- Special educational needs and disability;
- Complaints procedure;
- Work experience and extended work placements;
- Online safety and acceptable use of IT;
- Mobile phone and camera use;
- Extended school activities;
- Whistleblowing;
- Allegations policy;
- Low-level policy;
- Recruitment and selection;
- Critical Incident Plan;
- Data Protection and Privacy Notice;
- Lone working/home visits risk assessment;
- Grievance and disciplinary;

Early years foundation stage statutory framework (EYFS)