

THORPE HALL SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER: (Main DSL for School)	Mr Stephen Duckitt 01702 582340 sduckitt@thorpehallschool.co.uk
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD: Senior School	Mrs Roxi Sheern 01702 582340 rsheern@thorpehallschool.co.uk
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD: Prep School (INCL. EYFS)	Mrs Jade Peterson 01702 582340 jpeterson@thorpehallschool.co.uk
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS: Senior School PREP SCHOOL:	Mr Richard Turner 01702 582340 rturner@thorpehallschool.co.uk Mr Christopher Ramdin 01702 582340 cramdin@thorpehallschool.co.uk
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:	Mrs Jane Ladner 01702 582340 sggovernor@thorpehallschool.co.uk
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:	Mr Jonathan Gorridge 01702 582340 JGorridge@thorpehallschool.co.uk

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

MASH+ (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Children’s Social Care, Southend Borough Council: Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.	TEL:01702 215007 EMAIL: C-SPOC@southend.gov.uk (unsecure) (option 1 for assistance from the Southend City council Children’s Social Care Team)
OUT OF OFFICE HOURS: To make URGENT referrals	TEL:0345 606 1212
Essex County Council and Families Hub (Essex and Rochford and District)	TEL: 0345 603 7627 EMAIL: socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk
OUT OF OFFICE HOURS: To make URGENT referrals	TEL: 0345 606 1212
Essex EYFS Education Safeguarding Team	EMAIL: educationsafeguarding@essex.gov.uk

If a Child is in immediate danger	TEL: 999
SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR & LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO): Where there are concerns/allegations in respect of people working with children	ALLISON FRANCIS 01702 534539 LADO@southend.gov.uk
SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR	SHARON LANGSTON 01702 534591 safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk (unsecure)
Reporting Hate Crime/Incident (Rochford and District Council)	TEL: 01702 546366 (ask to speak to Hate Crime Ambassador) LINK: https://www.rochford.gov.uk/hate-crime-hate-related-incidents

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

PREVENT referrals should be reported in line with other safeguarding procedures Department for Education non-emergency advice for radicalisation	Essex Police can be contacted to discuss PREVENT concerns at: EMAIL: PREVENT@essex.pnn.police.uk TEL: 0207 3407 264 Non-emergency police TEL:101 counter-extremism@education.gov.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	ADDRESS: Weston House 42 Curtain Road London EC2A 3NH TEL: 0800 028 0285 (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm; weekends between 9am and 6pm) EMAIL: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Report Abuse in Education Advice Line	TEL: 0800 136 663 EMAIL: help@nspcc.org.uk
Disclosure and Barring Service	ADDRESS: DBS customer services PO Box 3961 Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 4HF. TEL: 03000 200 190 EMAIL: customerservices@db.gov.uk
Teaching Regulation Agency	ADDRESS: Teacher Misconduct Ground Floor South Cheylesmore House 5 Quinton Road Coventry

	<p>CV1 2WT TEL: 020 7593 5393 EMAIL: misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk</p>
OFSTED Safeguarding Children	<p>TEL: 0300 123 4666 EMAIL: CIE@ofsted.gov.uk (Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm)</p>
Independent Schools Inspectorate	<p>Tel: 0207 6000 100 EMAIL: concerns@isi.net</p>
Channel helpline	<p>Tel: 020 7340 7264</p>

This policy applies to staff, governors and volunteers at Thorpe Hall School (Inc. EYFS setting) but *anyone* can use this policy as a guide to making a referral. This policy is reviews and updated annually and is available on the School website.

APPROVED BY CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:

March 2025

DATE OF SIGNATURE:

Jonathan Gorridge

17 March 2025

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED: September 2025

This policy applies to Thorpe Hall School (“the School”) which includes the EYFS setting. This policy is reviewed and updated annually (as a minimum) and is available on the School website and upon request from the School office.

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#) (“KCSIE”)
 - *KCSIE incorporates the additional statutory guidance [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#) (September 2018)*
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#). (“WT”). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.
- [Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales](#) (December 2023). Prevent is supplemented by non-statutory advice and a briefing note:
 - [The Use of Social Media for on-line radicalisation \(July 2015\)](#)
- [Relationships education, relationships, and sex education \(RSE\) and health education \(September 2021\)](#)
- [Behaviour in schools \(February 2024\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities \(2024\)](#)
- [After school clubs, community activities, and tuition \(safeguarding guidance for providers\) \(September 2023\)](#)
- [Digital and technology standards in schools and colleges \(May 2024\)](#)
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), (July 1010)
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#),
- [The Equality Act 2010](#),
- [The Charity Commission guidance *Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees* \(June 2022\)](#)
- [What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused](#)
- [Children Missing Education](#) (September 2024)
- DDCMS/UKIS guidance [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (December 2020)
- [When to call the police](#) (non-statutory guidance from the National Police Chiefs’ Council)
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

This policy also takes into account the procedures and practice of both Essex and Southend local authorities as part of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set up by Essex County Council (ECC), Essex Police and the three NHS Integrated Care Boars (ICBs).

Equality Act 2010

The School understands and recognises their obligations under [The Equality Act 2010](#), and that the school must not discriminate against pupils because of a protected characteristic including sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, or sexual orientation. In the context of safeguarding, the School will consider how to support pupils with regard to particular protected characteristics in order to meet their specific needs. The School will also consider their duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

The School also complies with its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, including putting special provision in place to support dialogue with children who may not be able to convey their wishes and feelings as they may want to. This might include, for example, those who have communication difficulties and those who do not speak English or for whom English is not their first language.

Statement of Intent

The safety and well-being of all our pupils at Thorpe Hall School is our highest priority. This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We recognise our duty to both children in need and to children at risk of harm. Our business is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment, so that every pupil can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every pupil can develop their full potential and feel positive about themselves as an individual. All pupils should care and support each other. The School has a duty to consider at all times the best interests of the pupil and take action to enable all pupils to achieve the best outcomes. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

The Board of Governors

The DSLs report to the Board of Governors at every Full Governing Body meeting and the Governors consider any policy changes and review actions. The Headteacher/DSL reports to Board on any child protection matters on a meeting-by-meeting basis. The governing body ensures schools are working in accordance with new government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education compulsory. We also ensure there are our pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe (including online).

The governing body also ensures we follow the 'Safer Recruitment' policy to ensure we deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. This policy reflects statutory and local guidance, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 and is reviewed at least annually.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher appoints the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) – one for the Senior School, one for the Prep School and two deputies. There are two additional DSLs for the EYFS. All DSL staff are level 3 trained which is updated biannually. They also ensure the policies and procedures are followed by every member of staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Any safeguarding and child protection referrals are the responsibility of all DSLs within the school and are reported on CPOMS. The DSLs ensure that there is an effective Safeguarding & Child Protection policy in place and that it is fully implemented; the DSLs are responsible for:

- Reviewing the procedures for and the efficiency with which the child protection and safeguarding duties have been discharged;
- Ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay;
- Approving amendments to safeguarding arrangements in the light of changing Regulations or recommended best practice.
- Ensure that timely referrals to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub are made in accordance with current SET procedures
- Ensure all staff undergo regular safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that this is updated regularly both at the start of the school year and throughout to ensure all additional areas are covered (e.g child-on-child abuse, low level concerns etc).

All school staff

Every new member of staff, including part-time staff and volunteers receives, before they come in to contact with pupils, training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the DSL or the Headteacher.

All new staff and volunteers are issued with and must read Part One and Annexe B of "[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)" (KCSIE). All teaching staff and those directly involved with pupils will read both part 1 & 2 of KCSIE the school's Safeguarding Policy, the Pupil Behaviour Policy, the Attendance Policy (which covers children missing education), the Staff Code of Conduct including the Whistle Blowing procedures, Acceptable use of I.T. Policy, and the identity of the DSLs. Staff who work onsite complete a questionnaire to show compliance of the information within KCSIE.

Each member of staff attends refresher training at least every year, including *Prevent* awareness training. Training in child protection is an important part of the induction process. There are also regular updates throughout the year so as to keep up-to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt via staff meetings, email or bulletins.

Staff are made aware that the Code of Conduct includes guidance and rules about the use of social media in relation to pupils.

We take particular care to ensure those involved in one-to-one teaching are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, and a weekly check whilst the school is in session is carried out to ensure that all rooms/locations used for this purpose are visited.

Staff are aware of who the DSL staff and Deputies are and how to report a disclosure using our CPOMS system. Staff are also made aware of how to report a concern themselves to Early Help and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH+), or local police, if required and their role in this process.

Staff are informed on what constitutes a child missing in education and how this puts them in significant risk or '*underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.*' ([Children Missing Education](#) (DfE), Sept 2016)

The school fosters a culture of transparency with parents, the school and local authority to ensure that pupils are safe and receiving suitable education. Where a child is not deemed safe the DSL will liaise with local authorities and agencies.

Safer employment practices

A complete description of safer recruitment practices operated by the school is contained in a separate policy called *Safer Recruitment and Appointments Policy*, available on request.

Thorpe Hall School follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children, set out in "[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)". All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before starting work. Volunteers engaging in regulated activity, are also vetted. Visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches provide the school with their DBS details prior to arrival at the School and additional checks are carried out if they are engaging in regulated activity. The School checks the DBS certificates of all adults not employed by the school who work with, or supervise our pupils off site, for example on residential trips. In addition to the DBS checks, a check on prohibition is carried out on anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work. This additional check ensures they have not been prohibited from teaching by the Secretary of State. Staff working in early years and later years settings (children under the age of 8) are asked to declare that they are not a disqualified person under the Childcare Act 2006.

Staff who are employed by another organisation and not directly by Thorpe Hall School (e.g. supply teachers and maintenance contractors) are required to provide evidence of identity and, if applicable, DBS status on arrival and prior to commencing their work here. They are required to sign

in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge at all times. Thorpe Hall School does not use such agencies unless we are satisfied that they have carried out all necessary checks.

The School's protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or pupils themselves, are suitable and appropriately supervised is set out in the School's Visiting Speaker Policy. Visiting speakers will be expected to understand that, where appropriate, their session should actively promote the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and at no point undermine these. In some cases, the School may request a copy of the Visiting Speaker's presentation and/or footage in advance of the session being provided. Visiting Speakers, whilst on the School site, will be supervised by a School employee and given a red Lanyard to wear. On attending the School, visiting speakers will be required to show original current identification documents including a photograph such as a passport or photo card driving licence. The School shall also keep a formal register of visiting speakers retained in line with its Data Protection Policy.

In addition, the Headteacher, is trained in Safer Recruiting and interviews all new members of staff involved in regulated activity.

The school keeps a single centralised register of all employees, volunteers and governors and this is checked for compliance against relevant regulations once a year by the Chair of Governors.

Transparency

Thorpe Hall School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school. Copies of this policy, together with our other policies relating to issues of child protection are on our website, and we hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the school. We will never ignore an allegation of child abuse and will always ensure that any concerns are followed up thoroughly and appropriately. Open communications are essential. Any deficiencies or weaknesses highlighted in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay. We will always seek the advice of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in all instances of suspected child abuse or allegations of abuse against a member of staff. Our Safeguarding policies are reviewed annually and ratified by the Board of Governors.

Developing our policy

Thorpe Hall School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers and visiting speakers working in the school.

[Working Together](#) (DfE, 2018) sets out how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the Southend Safeguarding Children's Partnership <http://www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk>.

In Southend, the statutory partners are Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Essex Police and one of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county of Essex

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in Southend are the responsibilities of the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). We contribute to inter-agency working and have developed this policy in consultation with the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership and have taken account of guidance issued by the Department for Education. We comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations.

Arrangements for reviewing the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

The Governors review all policies and procedures relating to safeguarding on an annual basis and the Chair of Governors performs the 'sign off' procedure described in APPENDIX 4 - Governor sign-off and oversight of safeguarding and other key policies.

In addition, the Headteacher reports to Governors at every Board meeting on Safeguarding and Child Protection matters and issues. The Headteacher/DSL gives an annual report to Governors on Pupil Welfare in June each year.

Where there has been a substantiated allegation against a member of staff, the school will work with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Liaison with other bodies

We work within the Southend Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) guidelines which confirm locally inter-agency procedures. We recognise our point of contact within Southend to be the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff, and Children's Social Care for allegations involving children. We will report through the LADO within one working day the actions we take in respect of allegations of abuse by adults, and through Children's Social Care (MASH+ (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) and their Social Care and Assessment team's Duty Social Worker (First Contact) where we have concerns that a child/young person may be at risk of harm. We also work with the Essex Safeguarding Children Board which includes EYFS pupils. The assessment framework model we abide by can be found in the document "[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)".

This policy acknowledges that LADO is the designated officer of Southend Borough Council and works with a team of officers.

Concerns about a child

As a School we have a duty to consider at all times the best interests of the pupil and take action to enable all pupils to achieve the best outcomes. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We adopt a 'whole school' approach to safeguarding which means involving everyone in the school and ensure safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.

Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns directly with the School, if necessary, using this safeguarding policy for concerns about the safety and/or welfare of children. Parents may contact the ISI directly if they wish.

Definitions of child protection and safeguarding and types and signs of abuse

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children 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.¹³ Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined as activity that is undertaken to protect children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation

to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. The policy covers all forms of abuse including:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse / sexual harassment
- neglect
- criminal exploitation
- forced marriage

Contextual safeguarding

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2024) states that:

“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 exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.”

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school and within our community. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child’s life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. Contextual safeguarding ensures we realise that young peoples can experience abuse or harm beyond their family network and also recognises that relationships that are formed in the local community, neighbourhoods, schools or online can have an adverse effect on a young person’s life. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

Procedures for dealing with a concerns about a child / Referral process

All staff (including governors, supply staff, agency staff and volunteers) should be aware of the indicators of abuse and should maintain an “it could happen here” attitude. The threshold for raising a concern should not be regarded as high. Even the slightest concern should be reported and recorded because it may form part of a picture which the DSL is aware of. Staff should not assume that somebody else will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

If staff members have concerns about a child they should raise these with the School’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members. The DSL will usually decide whether to make a referral to children’s social care, but it is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to children’s social care or the police directly. The DSL will keep the Headteacher informed. A copy of Right Help, Right Service, Right Time – City of Southend Threshold Guidance is shared Appendix 1.

Where there are concerns that a child may be in need of help or at risk, the DSL will make prompt contact with children’s social care. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to children’s social care immediately. Any adult can make a referral. If the child’s situation does not appear to be improving the staff member or other adult with concerns should press for re-consideration. All concerns will be referred so that the child continues to feel supported.

The guidance, *Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers* supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. The governing body recognises the importance of information sharing between

practitioners and local agencies, including ensuring arrangements for sharing information within the School and with local authority children’s social care, the safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.¹⁶ Fears regarding sharing information under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (“UK GDPR”) must not be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and neither the DPA 2018 or the UK GDPR prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. If in doubt about what information can and should be shared, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (“DSL”).

The governing body will ensure that staff understand the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, including:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as ‘special category personal data’
- understanding that ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ is a processing condition that allows the sharing of special category personal data, including without consent where there is good reason to do so. For example, information may be shared without consent where: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent; and, gaining consent would place a child at risk
- not providing pupils’ personal data where the serious harm test is met.

All staff should:

- listen carefully
- avoid asking leading questions
- observe their behaviour
- reassure the individual that the allegation/complaint will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- ensure that the individual is not made to feel ashamed for making the report or given the impression that they are creating a problem by making the report
- not guarantee absolute confidentiality (as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child) and explain that the information needs to be passed to the appropriate person who will ensure that the correct action is taken
- be aware that the individual may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Staff should exercise professional curiosity and speak to the DSL if they have concerns
- determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication

All concerns, discussions, and decisions (including the rationale for those decisions) made under these procedures are recorded on CPOMS. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as children’s social care or the Prevent programme. This will help if/when responding to any complaint about the way a case has been handled. 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 any action taken, the decision reached and the outcome. The information is only accessible to those who need to see it, and is shared in accordance with the guidance set out in Parts one and two of *KCSIE*.

Where the allegation relates to harmful sexual behaviours, if possible, the disclosure will be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one of them being the DSL or their deputy).

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will ensure the pupil's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. This is particularly important in the context of harmful behaviours, such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. The School manages this by ensuring that there are systems in place, that are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

We implement a child-centred approach to Safeguarding. Whilst the School are committed to working collaboratively, and in partnership, with parents and carers as far as possible the wishes and feelings of the child and what is in their best interest is always central to the School's decision-making process.

If a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will press children's social care for reconsideration. Staff will challenge any inaction and follow this up with the DSL and children's social care as appropriate. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

If a criminal offence is suspected, the DSL will contact the police.

Early Help

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

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health, and care plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement as association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, or in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, and/or sexual or criminal exploitation
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is a privately fostered child
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage

Early help is support for children of all ages that improves resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Early help may be appropriate for children who have several needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable.

The School has effective measures in place to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual pupils. All staff undertake appropriate training to ensure that they know when to share information with other agencies and what action to take to support early identification and assessments.

In the first instance, staff identify a pupil who may benefit from early help should discuss this with the School's DSL. If appropriate, the DSL will work with the Safeguarding Children Board/three safeguarding partners to undertake an assessment of the need for early help. The DSL will support staff in liaising with external agencies and professionals in an inter-agency assessment, as appropriate. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for early help can be found in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

If early help is appropriate, the matter will be kept under review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving.

Staff procedure in a child protection situation

If staff (including governors, supply staff, agency staff and volunteers) suspect or hear any allegation or complaint of abuse, exploitation, or neglect from a child or any third party, they must act immediately and follow the relevant procedure below. Staff should not assume that somebody else will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Staff who observe, or are told of, injuries which appear to be non-accidental, or have concerns that indicate physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, must report their concerns to the DSL who will record the concerns on CPOMS. The DSL will inform the Child Services Agency and in any case will report back to staff any actions that have been taken. It is the school's policy to report any incident to any appropriate agency without parental consent. Staff should not carry out any investigations themselves as this is a matter for the Social Services or Police. If staff are unsure how to proceed, they should ask the DSL for advice. The DSL will not hesitate to seek advice from the Local Area Designated Officer, even if that dialogue is informal in the first instance.

The following guidance is given to staff if they are the first point of contact for the information from a child:

- You must not promise confidentiality to a child who wishes to disclose information on possible abuse.
- Ask the child to tell you about all the details which they can remember and listen carefully. Ask for clarification if necessary but be careful not to put words into his/her mouth; do not suggest events, speculate on peoples' actions or ask leading questions.
- Make notes if you can, as you are being told the information. If this is not possible, do it as soon as you can. Try to use verbatim quotes – do not interpret what the child said.
- When the child has finished telling you their account, read or relate the details back to the child to confirm that you have understood the details correctly.
- Discuss with the child what action might be taken now and the possibility of disclosure to the DSL. The DSL could be informed by the child, the staff member or a trusted friend.
- Remove the child from any threatening or embarrassing situation and comfort them if they are in distress. Be sure to use age-appropriate and sympathetic language and try to re-assure them. Steps must be taken as appropriate to protect a child from further possible harm following a disclosure.
- Pass the information to the DSL as soon as you possibly can and log on CPOMS.

Staff can find further important information relating to procedures at:

<https://safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/>

Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Child Protection Procedures can be found [here](#):

Keep a copy of all the documentation yourself for future reference.

If the abuse you are made aware of is by one or more pupils against another pupil you should follow the guidance on child-on-child abuse contained in this policy.

You must ensure that your behaviour and actions do not place pupils or you at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil, etc.). For guidance see the **Staff Code of Conduct** (available for staff via the [Your HR Space](#) portal and upon request from the school office).

If you hear third-hand about a safeguarding children situation in your capacity as a teacher, a friend or neighbour etc: you must:

- Write down any details that you know; when you heard the information and from whom etc. and pass it to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Keep a copy of what you gave to the DSL yourself.
- Log all concerns on CPOMS

If a member of staff is not confident that the school and DSL is going to take action appropriately, they should use their discretion to report the matter immediately following the guidance contained above.

Different Needs of Children

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm from abuse by another child or group of children, then such abuse will be notified to Children's Social Care. It is expected all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being "at risk".

On the other hand, it may be that a child is in need of additional support from one or more agencies. In this case the school will work with the child and parents (if appropriate) and the Southend Early Intervention Team. This team offer a service to which the school subscribes and access to their work is through the Headteacher and/or the DSLs. The Early Intervention Team prefer the school to complete an 'Early Help Assessment' form (replacing the previous 'CAF' Form) at the point of referral.

Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff are alert to the additional barriers that exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children which can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Children with SEND or certain medical conditions can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs
- Children with SEND are more prone to child-on-child abuse or peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying)
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers or reporting these challenges

Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the DSL as appropriate.

“Looked after” children

If the school admits a ‘looked after’ child a suitable staff member will be assigned immediately to oversee the welfare of that child.

Private fostering

Private Fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a **private** arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more. The school will inform the Local Authority of any children in such arrangements.

Online Safety

As a school we ensure that we have established mechanisms in place to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate. We have a stringent block on all the iPads in school to ensure any ‘trigger’ words used in searches are referred to the DSL and bespoke support offered to any vulnerable students. As a school we look at trends in the searches from pupils and run a bespoke or whole school approach to ‘trigger’ searches- this runs via 1-2-1 time with pupils or a whole school approach with assemblies or PSHE lessons.

We follow our school policy and procedures on this to ensure all staff are aware how to educate the pupils and ensure their safety both online and if accessing on-line provisions. We run assemblies, PSHE lessons and ICT lessons to inform the students on how to keep safe online (with specific focus of online and live streaming). We also ensure that we support and include parents and carers by sharing helpful advice and resources where appropriate.

It is important that our students understand how to (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

- Keep personal settings on
- Practise safe browsing
- Choose strong passwords
- Be careful what they post to social media
- Be careful what they download
- Do not add someone to social media platforms that they do not know or have not met

Staff receive training during induction and throughout the year regarding content, contact, conduct and contract with specific examples given so that this can be taught to pupils.

Filtering & Monitoring

The School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate material online when using the School's IT system. The School's systems are:

- Securely
- IBOSS and;
- Securely Aware.

Such systems aim to reduce the risk of children being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful materials online (content risk); reduce the risk of children being subjected to harmful online interaction with others including commercial advertising and grooming (contact risk); restrict access to online risks such as online gambling, phishing or financial scams (commerce risk); and help manage online behaviour that can increase a child's likelihood of, or causes, harm for example making, sending and receiving explicit images.

The School recognises however that children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G) which means that children may consensually and/or non-consensually share indecent images, sexually harass their peers via mobile and smart technology, and view and share pornography and other harmful content whilst at school undetected.

The School ensures compliance with the DfE's ‘filtering and monitoring standards for schools’ by;

- Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- Reviewing the filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet our safeguarding needs.

Further detail of the School's policy and procedures in relation to online safety can be found in the School's Online Policy and our EYFS E-Safety Policy which also includes detail on the use of mobile and smart technology in School, including the School's management of the associated risks, and the School's filtering and monitoring arrangements to ensure that children are safe from harmful and inappropriate content, including terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet through the School's systems.

The School will liaise with parents to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and the systems the School uses to filter and monitor online use. Parents and carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online when undertaking remote learning, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from the School their child is going to be interacting with online.

How staff respond to an incident of nudes and semi-nudes being shared by pupils

All members of staff in an education setting have a duty to recognise and refer any incidents involving nudes and semi-nudes and will be equipped with the necessary safeguarding training and support to enable them to recognise concerns.

For this purpose, 'sharing nudes/semi-nudes' means the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by persons under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media (including Snapchat), gaming platforms, chat apps (including WhatsApp and iMessage) or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline. The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes may happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and/or via closed social media accounts. The images, videos or live streams may include more than one child. 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'.

Many professionals may refer to 'nudes and semi-nudes' as:

- youth produced sexual imagery or 'youth involved' sexual imagery
- Indecent imagery. This is the legal term used to define nude or semi-nude images and videos of children and young people under the age of 18.
- 'Sexting'. Many adults may use this term, however some young people interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know' rather than sharing images
- Image-based sexual abuse. This term may be used when referring to the non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

Terms such as 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting' are also used to refer to specific incidents of nudes and semi-nudes being shared. However, these terms are more often used in the context of adult-to-adult non-consensual image sharing offences outlined in s.33-35 of the [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015](#), [Voyeurism \(Offences\) Act 2019](#) and s.67A of the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#).

Terms such as 'deep fakes' and 'deep nudes' may also be used by adults and young people to refer to digitally manipulated and AI-generated nudes and semi-nudes. Any direct disclosure by a child will be taken seriously and staff will ensure the child is feeling comfortable and will only ask appropriate and sensitive questions, in order to minimise further distress or trauma to them.

If staff are notified or become aware of an incident of nudes or semi-nudes being shared by a pupil or of a pupil, they should refer the incident to the DSL as soon as possible.

The DSL will follow the DDMSC / UKIS guidance "[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)" (February 2024) when responding to a report of sharing nudes and/or semi-nudes. This will include:

- Holding an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. This may include the staff member(s) who heard the disclosure and the safeguarding or leadership team who deal with safeguarding concerns.
- Carrying out interviews with the children involved (if appropriate).
- Informing parents and carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process in order to best support the pupil unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put the child at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform them should be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the police, who would take the lead in deciding when they should be informed.
- Carrying out a risk assessment to determine whether there is a concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of immediate harm at any point in the process

An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care through the MASH or equivalent will be made if any of the following points apply:

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident.
- There is reason to believe that a child or young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special educational needs).
- The images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent.
- The images involves sexual acts and any child or young person in the images or videos is under 13.
- There is reason to believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, for example, they are presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply, the School may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. All incidents relating to nudes and semi-nudes being shared need to be recorded, whether they have been referred externally or not. The decision to respond to an incident without involving the police or children's social care will only be made in cases where the DSL (or equivalent) is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to any child or young person involved and the risks can be managed within the School's pastoral support and disciplinary framework. Any decision in this regard will be made by the DSL (or equivalent) with input from the Head. The decision will be made and recorded in line with this Policy and will be based on consideration of the best interests of any child or young person involved. Any decision will take into

account proportionality as well as the welfare and protection of any child or young person. The decision will be reviewed throughout the process of responding to the incident. If doubts remain local safeguarding arrangements will be followed.

This guidance does not apply to the sharing of images of persons under 18 by an adult over 18 as this constitutes child sexual abuse. In the event that staff become aware of such an incident, they should notify the DSL immediately, who should always inform the police as a matter of urgency.

Procedures when a member of staff or volunteer, other than the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Headteacher, faces allegations of abuse

Allegations that a member of staff has abused a pupil or pupils either inside the school premises or during a school trip or any other occasion could be made by:

- Parents
- The abused pupil
- Other members of staff
- Other pupils
- The Police or Social Services
- A third party
- Anonymously

An allegation of such seriousness would normally be made directly to the Headteacher; but if another member of staff is told first, he/she will ensure that the Headteacher is informed immediately.

If the Headteacher is unavailable, or is involved, the DSL should be told at once. As soon as possible, the Headteacher will appoint a 'Case Manager' to lead any investigation.

Arrangements for dealing with safeguarding concerns or allegations of abuse about supply teachers

The School's procedures for managing allegations against staff above also apply to staff not directly employed by the School, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business. The School will usually take the lead but agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services.

In no circumstances will the School decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. The School will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

The School will advise supply teachers being investigated to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the School during the investigation.

Allegations involving the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Any allegation involving the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will then contact and follow the advice of the LADO.

Any allegation involving the DSL should be reported to the Headteacher who will liaise with the Chair of Governors will then contact and follow the advice of the LADO. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting to the Headteacher the Chair of Governors or LADO will be informed.

Where there are concerns that a child may be in need of help or at risk because of the actions of a member of staff, the DSL will make prompt contact with the LADO. All allegations are reported to the LADO within one working day. They will also contact the police if a criminal offence is suspected.

Allegations involving the Chair of Governors or Governing Body

Any allegation involving the Chair of Governors or Governing Body should be reported to the Headteacher who will then contact and follow the advice of the LADO. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting to the Headteacher, the DSL should be informed. The DSL will then contact the LADO.

Low level concerns

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean that the concern is insignificant, it means that an adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm threshold set out above. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

Any low level concern about a member of staff must be reported to the Headteacher or DSL. Any low level concern regarding the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors using the contact details on the front of this policy

Low level concerns are covered in more detail in our standalone Low Level Concerns Policy.

The first response to allegations against staff

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the victim and his or her family. We undertake to:

- Take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, very seriously
- In all cases, we would seek the advice of the LADO before undertaking any investigation.

The next step

Although a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, we will always, within 24 hours:

- Invite the police to conduct the investigation
- Involve the LADO. Discussions with the LADO will be recorded in writing and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the child/children agreed.
- Consider suspending the member of staff concerned – see below.

Low level concerns should be reported to the Headteacher/ DSL or the Chair of Governors, Mr Gorridge (if the concern is regarding the Headteacher).

sduckitt@thorpehallschool.co.uk

jgorridge@thorpehallschool.co.uk

EYFS

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children within the Early Years setting and liaising with the local children's agencies as appropriate. The Early Years Coordinator assists in this goal, and undertakes training specific to the EYFS. It is essential that Ofsted and ISI are informed as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at the premises and of the action taken in respect of these allegations, in addition to the procedures laid out in this policy.

Suspension

Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and does not imply that any judgement has been reached about his or her conduct. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff where:

- There is a serious risk of harm (or further harm) to the child
- The allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven
- The police are investigating allegations of criminal misconduct

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

- Keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached;
- Interview a member of staff before suspending him or her, giving due weight to the advice of the LADO.

Any member of staff who is invited to a meeting whose outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension is entitled to be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union representative.

Alternatives to suspension

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate. Possibilities include:

- Sending the member of staff on leave
- Giving him or her non-contact duties
- Ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches

If the member of staff resigns

The resignation of a member of staff mid-way through an external investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of the individual's dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning members of staff, contracted staff, volunteers and students are normally made by the DSL. If the DSL is involved, the report is made by the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is involved, the report is made by the Board of Governors. The referral form can be obtained from the DBS. The school plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the DBS at any time. The DBS address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA.

Referral to the teaching regulation agency

Where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned), the Headteacher will decide whether to make a referral to the [Teaching Regulation Agency](#) (TRA). In some instances, for example, where there is evidence of 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute', or where there is a 'conviction at any time for a relevant offence', a prohibition order may be appropriate. Further guidance can be obtained from the DfE website.

Recording allegations of abuse / Outcomes of investigations

We will record all allegations of abuse, and our subsequent actions, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual's file. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained until he or she reaches statutory retirement age, or for ten years, if that is longer.

Lessons learned

At the end of any investigation into allegations against staff, whether or not sustained, the Headteacher and Case Manager will review the process to learn lessons from the proceedings with the hope of reducing a reoccurrence.

Non recent allegations

Where an adult makes an allegation to a school or college that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, should be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with local authority children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Confidentiality

Any allegation against a member of staff will be kept confidential and the school will guard against unwanted publicity. This applies up to the point where the accused person is charged with an offence, or the DfE/TRA publish information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case.

Handling unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations

The Child

A child who has been the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with the Southend Safeguarding Partnership to set up a professional programme that best meets his or her needs, which may involve the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS), and an Educational Psychologist. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community. However much support the child may need in such circumstances, we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the teacher. In such circumstances, we may conclude that it is in the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help him/her to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians and the new school.

The Member of Staff

A member of staff could be left at the end of an unfounded or unsubstantiated allegation of child abuse with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of "no smoke without fire". If issues of professional competency are involved, and though acquitted of child abuse, disciplinary issues are raised, we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances, together with professional counselling outside the school community. A short sabbatical or period of re-training may be appropriate.

Allegation of abuse of a child who is not a pupil at the school

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff was abusing a child who was not a pupil at Thorpe Hall School, we would immediately pass such information to the LADO to handle. We would then, if appropriate, interview the member of staff and formally advise him/her of the allegations, making it clear that the school would not play any part in the investigatory process. He or she would be advised of the possibility of facing suspension, re-assignment to other duties etc in exactly the same way as if the allegation had involved a school pupil. If the allegation subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the school in resuming his/her career.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Mrs Sheern is the DSL for the Senior School (Years 7-11) and Mrs Peterson is the DSL for the Prep School (Years 1-6) and the EYFS section (Nursery & Reception) at Thorpe Hall School. Mrs Holland and Miss Moore are additional DSLs for the EYFS. Mr Turner is the Deputy DSL for the Senior School and Mr Ramdin the Deputy DSL for the Prep School. The DSLs and the Deputy DSLs have been fully trained for the demands of this role in child protection and inter-agency working. They regularly attend courses with other child support agencies to ensure that they remain conversant with best practice. The DSLs, the deputy safeguarding leads and the Headteacher undergo refresher training every two years. The school uses CPOMS, a Child Protection Online Monitoring System. This has replaced the hardcopy report forms as our means of reporting any safeguarding concerns. However paper forms will still be used if for any reason the online system is not available. All staff have access to CPOMS to submit any safeguarding concern they may have. The school's records on child protection are saved securely, and are separated from routine pupil records. The DSLs are members of the Senior Leadership Team and their work as DSLs is reviewed by the Headteacher annually. The governor responsible for safeguarding is Mrs Jane Ladner. Her role as the Safeguarding Governor is to ensure that the school has an effective policy which is discharged efficiently and appropriately and that the SSCP/SET guidelines are complied with to support the school in this respect. The safeguarding governor also attends appropriate training.

Whistleblowing

Thorpe Hall School believes in and promotes a culture of safety and of raising concerns. The school actively encourages staff and volunteers as well as Governors to develop their awareness of safeguarding issues and to report any concerns they may have. If a teacher, volunteer or member of staff has concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff towards a pupil, he or she should report it at once to the Headteacher. Any concern will be taken very seriously under the school's whistleblowing procedures which can be found in the employment policies section of the staff handbook on <https://yourhr.space/thorpehall/>. If there is evidence of criminal activity, the Police will always be informed. No one who reports a genuine concern in good faith needs to fear retribution. If a teacher, volunteer or member of staff has concerns about the behaviour of the Headteacher, they should refer the matter to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are on the front page of this policy.

Confidentiality

A member of staff who uses the whistleblowing procedure is entitled to have their name protected from being disclosed by the Headteacher to the alleged perpetrator, without their prior approval. However, it has to be recognised that their evidence may be required by the Police to be used in any criminal proceedings.

Spotting abuse – key signs

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If members of staff are unsure they should always speak to the DSL.

The NSPCC lists some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect
- Repeated minor injuries
- Children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or who appear underfed
- Children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in school work, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- An air of "detachment" or "don't care" attitude
- Overly compliant behaviour
- A "watchful" attitude
- Sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age), continual open masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- A child who is reluctant to go home, or is kept away from school for no apparent reason

- Not trusting adults, particularly those who are close
- “tummy pains” with no medical reason
- Eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting
- Running away from home, suicide attempts
- Self-inflicted wounds
- Reverting to younger behaviour
- Depression, withdrawal
- Relationships between child and adults which are secretive and exclude others
- Pregnancy
- See Keeping Children safe in Education 2024 for more information:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_childr_en_safe_in_education_2024.pdf Pages 11-17

These signs are not evidence themselves, but may be a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them or a pattern emerges. It is important to remember that there may be other explanations for a child showing such signs. Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts. For details on all forms of abuse refer to Appendix 2.

Making children safer

In order to create a safe environment for children both in school and elsewhere the school will: Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;

- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried;
- Include opportunities in the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse and to minimise the risk of child on child abuse. There are separate policies which describe the PSHE curriculum and RSE.

Thorpe Hall School prides itself on its culture of open and effective communication between staff and pupils, and on its excellent pastoral support structures. We prepare all of our pupils to make reasoned, informed choices, judgments and decisions. Time is allocated in PSHE for discussion of child abuse, and in developing in pupils the confidence which they require to recognise abuse and to stay safe.

All pupils know that there are adults to whom they can turn if they are worried, including their tutor, any member of staff, or their parents.

The ethos of Thorpe Hall School is to develop the individuality and abilities of each child, to make him/her self-reliant and adaptable and to help him/her face reality. We see this as making an important contribution towards the development of the whole person, who grows up to value society and to expect to make a personal contribution towards the general community.

Thorpe Hall School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual’s race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background. We aim to create a friendly, caring and compassionate environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each student.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. There is a separate [Anti-bullying policy](#) available via the School’s website or the School’s office.

Teaching children to be safe

All pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE and other teaching and activities to help children to adjust their behaviours in order to reduce risks and build resilience, including to radicalisation. This includes teaching pupils about the safe use of

electronic equipment and the internet (including when accessing remote learning) and the risks posed by adults or young people, who use the internet and social media to bully, groom, abuse or radicalise other people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Internet safety is an integral part of the School's ICT curriculum and also embedded in PSHE and sex and relationships education (SRE). The School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate material online. These systems aim to reduce the risk of children being exposed to illegal, inappropriate and harmful materials online; reduce the risk of children being subjected to harmful online interaction with others; and help manage online behaviour that can increase a child's likelihood of, or causes, harm. The School has IT arrangements in place to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet through the School's systems.

Teachers can find resources on online safety promoted by the DfE at:

The UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk)

CEOP's Thinkuknow website (www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

The use of social media for on-line radicalisation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation>)

Advice about sexting in schools is available from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS): [Sexting in schools and colleges](#).

Mental health and Wellbeing

At the school we recognise that students often suffer from mental health and wellbeing concerns which need to be identified and supported. As a school we make it clear to staff that mental health concerns are also safeguarding and in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff need to take immediate action and follow the procedures within the school. In the first instance of mental health we refer to our pastoral team and then if there are further concerns of the child being at risk of harm then they will log on CPOMS and the DSL staff will intervene and make any necessary referrals.

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 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.

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

Making staff safer

In order to support staff in ensuring they avoid situations which might give rise to false allegations and to guide their professional behaviour, the school publishes a **Code of Conduct for Staff**. This is available via the School's HR website or School office. This policy contains the following headings:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. SETTING AN EXAMPLE
3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS
4. PUPIL DEVELOPMENT
5. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS
6. STAFF/PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS
7. COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

8. ACCEPTABLE USE OF I.T
9. MOBILE TELEPHONES
10. COMMUNICATION WITH PUPILS
11. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT
12. AVOIDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE
13. HONESTY AND INTEGRITY
14. DRESS CODE
15. CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK
16. CONFIDENTIALITY
17. EQUAL TREATMENT
18. WHISTLE BLOWING
19. MONITOR & REVIEW

Taking, storing and using images of children

All pupils and staff are encouraged to report any concerns about the misuse of technology to the Headteacher. The use of cameras, cameras on mobile phones and/or iPads by pupils is not allowed without express permission from a member of staff. Staff may only use cameras, cameras on mobile phones and/or iPads in a manner that is strictly in accordance with the guidance in this policy and which, in any case, does offend or cause upset. The misuse of cameras by staff or pupils in a way that breaches our Anti-Bullying Policy is always taken seriously and may be the subject of disciplinary procedures.

If we discover that a child or young person is at risk as a consequence of online activity, we may seek additional assistance from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit (CEOP). We will impose a range of sanctions on any adult, child or young person who misuses technology in this way.

Using photographic material of any kind to bully, harass or intimidate others will not be tolerated and will constitute a serious breach of discipline.

All pupils must allow staff access to images stored on school mobile devices and/or cameras and must delete images if requested to do so. Staff should not view or forward illegal images of a child.

The posting of images which in the reasonable opinion of the Headteacher is considered to be offensive on any form of social media or websites such as YouTube etc. is a serious breach of discipline and will be subject to disciplinary procedures whatever the source of the material, irrespective of whether the image was posted using School or personal facilities.

There is a separate EYFS Policy on Camera, Mobile Phone and Photography.

Use of mobile phones and cameras in the Senior School

The School's policy on the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting can be found in the School's Acceptable Use Policy. We understand that staff wish to document certain events e.g school trips and events within school. We therefore ask that any staff who wish to use take photographs or video of pupils (whether on a personal or School device) must gain consent from the child and tell them where and how it will be used-e.g social media or displays. They will then need to send these photos to the relevant person and then delete immediately from the device used. They must also go to recently deleted in order to ensure all photos have been deleted. Staff who act in breach of this may be subject to disciplinary action. Parents or external visitors are not permitted to use their mobile phones or camera in or around the school or EYFS setting without prior approval from the Headteacher/DSL.

When a pupil moves to and from another school

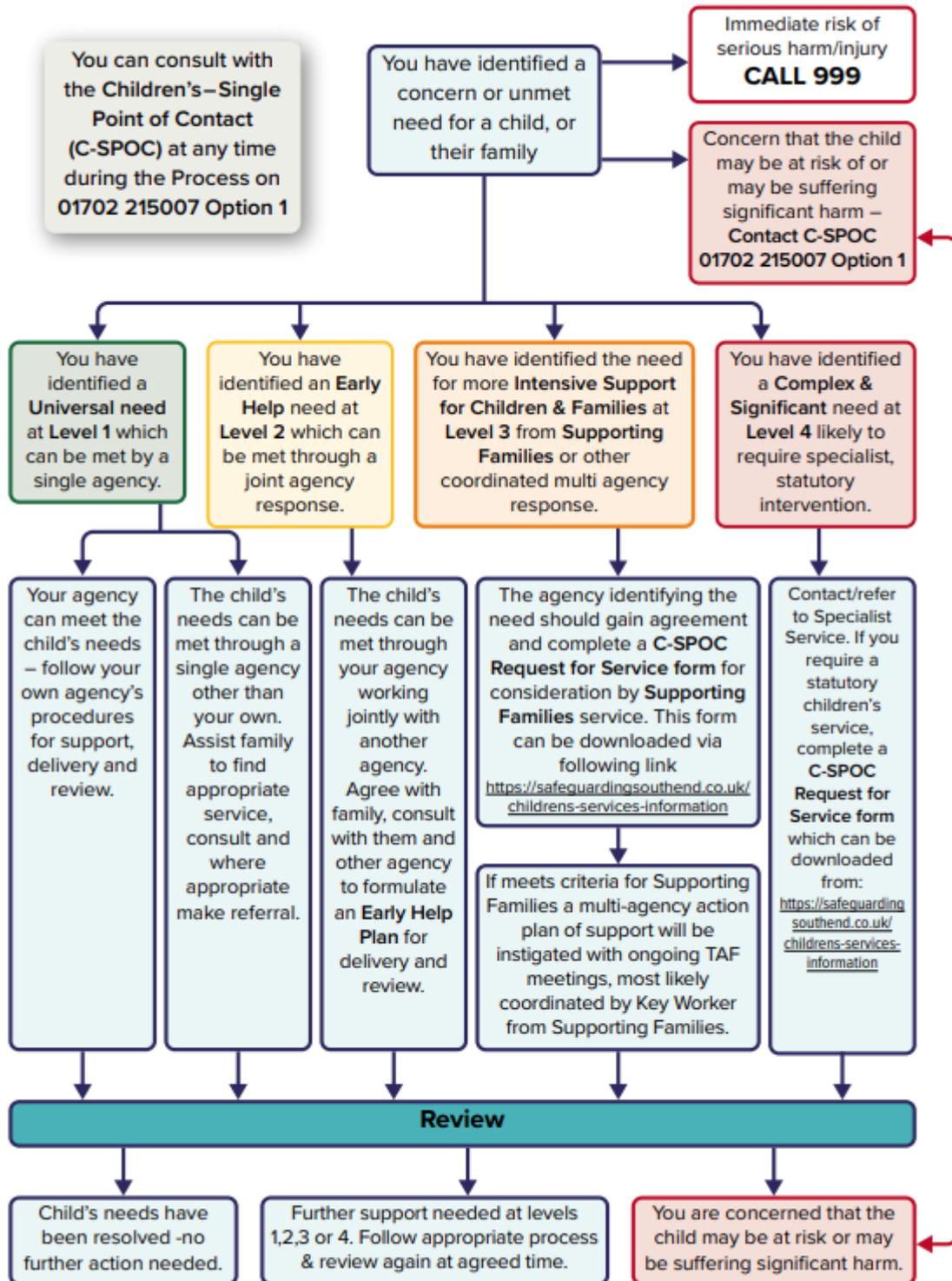
A pupil's safeguarding file follows them from Thorpe Hall to their next school and is sent separately from any other files.

Wherever possible, the file is hand delivered to a named person at the new school, where a receipt is obtained confirming its delivery. This ensures the security and continuity of the file and provides evidence of the chain and responsibility for the file.

If a pupil moves to a school that is a significant distance away, thereby making hand-to-hand transfer impracticable, the file is posted to a named person using a secure and tracked postal service. In this instance, we produce and retain a copy of the file until the new school confirms receipt of the file and that the child has attended and is on their attendance register. At this point the copy held by Thorpe Hall is destroyed.

When a pupil arrives at Thorpe Hall School from another school a separate request for safeguarding information will be made to the previous school.

Appendix 1 – Southend Threshold Guidance Process



APPENDIX 2 – Signs and Risk Factors of Types of Abuse

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child where someone causes them harm or distress. It can take place in a number of ways including disrespect, neglect or causing someone physical or mental pain. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused at home, in a community setting (school, hospital etc), a public place or online. It is often undertaken by someone the child knows 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 (Child-on-Child abuse). The school is aware that there will be many indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation and will list these throughout this policy. Wherever we have a list we are aware that these are not exhaustive of other indicators and staff will be made aware of this.

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

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

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

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

Specific safeguarding issues

Behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger. Safeguarding issues can also manifest themselves via child on child abuse, such as abuse within intimate partner relationships, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender-based violence/sexual assaults, sexting and upskirting. Safeguarding issues can also be linked to, for example, children missing education; child sexual exploitation; domestic violence; fabricated or induced illness; faith abuse (including ostracism of families); female genital mutilation; forced marriage; gangs and youth violence; gender-based violence / violence against women and girls; hate; mental health; preventing

radicalisation; relationship abuse; sexting; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes; and trafficking.

Whilst the school will ensure that staff avail themselves of opportunities to raise their awareness and gain knowledge regarding these areas, we recognise that expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support in relation to these issues.

Government guidance is available on the GOV.UK website and organisations such as the NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk) provide specialist information.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Our school recognises that a child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE). Staff follow the school's procedures for unauthorised absences and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. The school is aware of its duty to report to the local authority when a child is removed or added to the admissions register at non-standard transition times and we work with the local authority in this respect. The school must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. (Further detail can be found in the school's Attendance Policy, available on the School website).

All staff are aware that children repeatedly not in school can be a concern. They are aware that this can also mean the child may be experiencing any type of abuse and must be reported immediately so that an investigation can take place. These incidents of absence may also be linked to county lines involvement or other types of exploitation, 'honour-abuse' or radicalisation (among others).

Early intervention is crucial to uncovering such abuse or exploitation and the school liaises with external agencies and Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub in order to safeguard any pupil of concern. A child at risk of this exposure are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The school receives updates and refers to The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO to support the school working with offenders and their children.

<https://www.nicco.org.uk/>- NICCO

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse (see above) which 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 (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. 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.

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) who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. 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). Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

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

The below CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

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

The DfE has published guidance on this entitled "[Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)".

CSE may occur alone, or may overlap with CCE, and/or county lines, as well as other forms of abuse.

Our school uses the SSCP Risk Assessment Toolkit and reports any information to Essex Police on a report form, as well as referring to First Contact Team or for Early Help Assessment, as appropriate.

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home or education and will suffer mental health issues at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

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 (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. 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. 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 (county lines, see below), forced to shoplift or pickpocket. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals (especially when they are older children). It is important in these circumstances that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts, money, or new possessions
- children who associate with other children 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,
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.¹⁷²

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

CCE may occur alone, or may overlap with CSE, and/or county lines, as well as other forms of abuse.

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

Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation. All staff are aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or

new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

County Lines

County lines is when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban areas and seaside towns. As a school we understand that this is not just aimed at the senior school pupils but can also be prevalent in children of the Preparatory age groups. These gangs are involved in importing and exporting illegal drugs and recruiting young people to act as runners or move cash. In some cases the dealers will take over local property (this can be of a vulnerable person or someone with SEND and operate their activity from this property-known as Cuckooing. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

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. Many children don't often see themselves as victim or realise they have been groomed as the gangs will often lure them in with presents, money and time to begin with. Children can then 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.

Some of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are (not an exhaustive list):

- Change in behaviour
- Signs of assault and/or manipulation
- Access to more than one phone or device
- Use of unusual language/vocabulary –gang language
- Association with gangs
- Unexplained travel tickets-bus/train
- School truancy or missing episodes (both from home and school)
- New belongings of value
- New friendship groups or names of people they are with that are not known or recognised (or 'not allowed to meet')
- Mental health problems

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.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the *'unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child.'*

This can be committed by parents, other family members, by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances) or by strangers. The school remains aware of any local concern areas and informs both staff and pupils where appropriate.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts and the school relies on transparency from parents to inform us of these situations. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds which the school use in order to prepare and support our pupils through this process.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708114/ywp-5-11-eng.pdf (5-11 years)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708093/ywp-12-17-eng.pdf (12-17 year)

Cybercrime

Cybercrime, also called computer crime, is the use of a computer as an instrument to further illegal ends, such as trafficking in child pornography, stealing identities, or violating privacy. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crimes include:

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

If there are any concerns about a child within the school the DSL refers to the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide policy programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency.

This ensure that intervention can happen if there are concerns of a student being drawn into low level offences online and tries to divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Cyber Choices- <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices>

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

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. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse can take many forms, including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

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 will be offered support.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Our staff are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or already having suffered FGM. FGM is a collective term for illegal procedures, which include the removal of part or all external female genitalia for cultural or other non-medical reasons. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Staff should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the SET procedures and on pages 16-17 of the FGM [Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines](#) that can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Any suspicion of intended or actual FGM must be referred to Children’s Social Care. From October 2015, where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there will be a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police.

So-called ‘honour-based abuse’ (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. If there are any concerns the DSL will contact the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. A referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding will also be actioned if there is harm caused or risk of harm to the child.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include:

- household debt
- rent arrears
- domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour
- the family being asked to leave a property

The school also takes into consideration that fact that, in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

A child or young person being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a pupil who is perceived by their peers to be lesbian, gay or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

When supporting a gender questioning child, the School will take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of the pupils individual needs, in partnership with the parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. The School will adopt (to the extent that it is reflected in *KCSIE*), the draft [DfE guidance for schools and colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children](#), when deciding how to proceed.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. The School endeavours to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral

Mechanism Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery and can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

The school use the following document to assist in accessing signs that a child might be at risk and also how to refer and support them further:

NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales>

Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

As with other safeguarding risks, our staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the [Channel](#) programme or Children's Social Care.

If staff suspect a pupil is in danger of being radicalised, a risk assessment should be undertaken by the staff member, DSL and Headteacher.

The school is mindful of The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and will cooperate fully with and act as partners of the Channel Panel set up by the SSCP. The DSL has had training from the SSCP on their approach to *Prevent* duties.

The school actively promotes fundamental British Values through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) scheme which is taught throughout the school. It includes teaching pupils to understand the value of democracy and their participation in the democratic process; respect for others' cultural traditions and non-discrimination against protected characteristics. It also encourages pupils to acquire a respect for public institutions and services Our PSHE policy which outlines the full programme of study may be requested from the School.

Prevention of radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is crucial.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Staff are alert for changes in behaviour associated with radicalisation and use their judgement in identifying children at risk and contacting the DSL to make a Prevent referral.

The Prevent Duty

As of July 2015, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015) placed a new duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>)

It requires schools to:

- Teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- Be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- Be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues
- Staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.
- Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral

Channel

Channel is a voluntary national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required.

Additional support

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.

https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/prevent_referrals/01-welcome.html

- Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel_awareness/01-welcome.html

Educate Against Hate, is a government website designed to support school teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help school staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation. <https://educateagainsthate.com/>

Serious violence

All staff are aware of signs which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in their behaviour, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues are not confined to instances where children are harmed by adults but can also manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. Child-on-child abuse is abuse by one or more children against another child. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. It can manifest itself in many ways and can include abuse within intimate partner relationships, bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), abuse within intimate partner relationships between peers, physical abuse (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm), initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, upskirting, sexting, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and/or semi-nudes, sexual assault, gender-based issues, sexual behaviours including child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, 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.

These arrangements apply to all reports and concerns of child on child abuse, whether they have happened in school or outside of it, and/or online. Abuse that occurs online or outside of school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously.

The School has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse and staff will challenge inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) to help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Abusive comments and interactions should never be passed off or dismissed as "banter" or "part of growing up". Nor will harmful sexual behaviours, including sexual comments, remarks or jokes and online sexual harassment, be dismissed as the same or "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys". The School recognises the gendered nature that child on child abuse may take (this could for example include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence), and is clear that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Staff will also challenge physical behaviours (that are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The school acknowledges that even if there have been no reported cases of child on child abuse in relation to pupils within the school, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. The school will ensure that children are aware of how they can report abuse, and that they are aware of the procedures that the School will follow once a report has been made. These procedures will be well promoted and in a format that is easily accessible and easily understood by children.

The school recognises that a child is likely to disclose an allegation to someone they trust: this could be any member of staff. By making such a disclosure the pupil is likely to feel that the member of staff is in a position of trust. The School also recognises that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally and that instead they may show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to. It is also recognised that an incident may come to a member of staff's attention through a report of a friend, or by overhearing conversations. It is therefore important that all staff are clear on the School's policy and procedures with regards to child on child abuse, and can recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and how to respond to reports.

The School recognises that a first disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported. It is not necessarily representative of a singular incident. Staff will take all reports of abuse seriously regardless of how long it has taken for the child to come forward. Staff will act immediately and will support the victim when they raise a concern.

In addition to this Safeguarding policy, staff should also consider the provisions of our separate Harmful Sexual Behaviour/Child-on-Child Abuse and Anti-bullying policies. If staff are unsure as to how these policies work together, they should seek guidance from the DSL. All child on child abuse will be managed in accordance with this policy; a bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

The school recognises that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The School will consider extra pastoral support for those children. The School also recognises that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident of abuse because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation can be more prone to child-on-child group isolation than other children and will consider extra pastoral support for those children.

The following procedures also apply when dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. Information about possible abuse may come to a member of staff in several ways – direct allegation from a child that has been abused, through a friend, relative or other child, through a child’s behaviour or through observation of an injury to the child.

Pupils who have a problem may speak to someone whom they trust. It is important that the member of staff sets the boundaries firmly at the outset of such a conversation, making it clear that no one can offer absolute confidentiality. A pupil who is insistent upon confidentiality should be referred to an external source such as Child Line. If the pupil is only prepared to speak if absolute confidentiality is guaranteed, the member of staff should terminate the conversation at that point. The adult should provide the designated safeguarding lead with a written account of what has transpired as a matter of urgency.

If a pupil decides to speak to a member of staff about the fact that either he/she, or a pupil known to them, is being bullied, harassed and abused, the member of staff should:

- Make it clear why unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered;
- React professionally;
- Have regard to the Anti-Bullying Policy, published on the school’s website;
- Take what the child says seriously, and calmly, without becoming emotionally involved;
- Explain that any adult member of staff is obliged to inform the designated safeguarding lead if child protection or safeguarding issues are involved, in order that specialist help can be arranged;
- Encourage the pupil to speak directly to the designated safeguarding lead if appropriate;
- Explain that only those who have a professional “need to know” will be told, and, if appropriate, measures will be set up to protect the pupil from retaliation and further abuse;
- Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell, and that he/she is not to blame for having been bullied or abused;
- Allow the child to tell his or her own story, without asking too detailed or leading questions;
- Record what has been said;
- Inform the designated safeguarding lead or the Headteacher by the end of the day.

Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’, staff should follow the procedures below rather than the School’s Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies:

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation. The School will take advice from the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH+) on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged victim and perpetrator. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of MASH+, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult and until the investigation is completed. Confidentiality will be an important consideration for the School and advice will be sought as necessary from the SSP and MASH+ and or the Police as appropriate.

Police may be informed of any harmful sexual behaviours which are potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Rape and sexual assaults will be passed to the police. If the DSL decides to make a referral to children’s social care and/or a report to the police against a victim’s wishes, the reasons should be explained to the pupil and appropriate specialist support offered.

The School's approach to sexting is that it is totally unacceptable and in any case a full investigation will be carried out, parents informed and providing there has been no coercion and the pupils are of a similar age, school disciplinary procedure will be applied. In more serious cases, the police will be informed. Staff know that they should not view or forward illegal images of a child. The School will follow the DDMSC / UKIS guidance "Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people" (December 2020) when responding to an allegation that nudes and/or semi-nudes have been shared.

In the event of disclosures about pupil-on-pupil abuse, all children involved (both victim and perpetrator) will be treated as being at risk and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this policy will be followed. Victims will be supported initially through the school's pastoral support team, and as appropriate by more expert professionals as advised by Children's Social Care or other appropriate advisory channels, such as the Police.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim;
- whether there may have been other victims;
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, staff) at the School especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic) and kept under review. In relation to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the DSL (and indeed all staff) will reassure any victim that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. The victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment; nor would a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or have their experience minimised. The School will consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. The School acknowledges that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s). The DSL will consider the risks posed to pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe and to ensure their educational attainment is not adversely affected as far as is possible. This may include consideration of the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport. The School will also consider the risks posed to the victim from other health needs, including physical, mental and sexual health problems, as well as unwanted pregnancy which may arise as a result of the incident, and will consider recommending additional support.

The School will keep a written record of all concerns, discussions and decisions made.

The School will reflect on reported concerns, including the decisions made and actions taken, in order to identify any patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour which may indicate an unacceptable culture, or any weaknesses in the School's safeguarding system which may require additional training or amendments to relevant policies. Where a pattern is identified the School will decide on an appropriate course of action.

In the event that a report is proven to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious, the DSL will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Headteacher will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it in accordance with the School's behaviour policy.

Where there are evident signs of physical injury, that may (or may not) be the result of abuse or bullying, medical help should be summoned, or the pupil should be taken to the first aid room. In serious cases, the Police should be informed from the outset.

Support for the victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child on child abuse will be given via our in school counsellor, reflection sheets and parental involvement.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur at school, at home or online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. As a school we educate all pupils on the sexual violence and harassment and any pupils who make a disclosure are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We make it clear to the victim that they are not creating a problem or being made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk:

- girls
- children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- LGBT children are at greater risk

Staff and students know that the school has a zero tolerance of this and to challenge any inappropriate behaviours and report to a member of staff or trusted adult.

The school makes it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up; not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”

Staff and students know to challenge and report physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Staff and students are also made aware of what sexual violence and sexual harassment are and that in some cases it can happen in a loving relationship. They are made aware of what consent is and reassured that they can say ‘no’ at any time.

Sexual violence

Students are made aware that child on child abuse can and does happen and can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone’s bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment means ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- sharing of unwanted explicit content
- upskirting (is a criminal offence)
- sexualised online bullying
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Upskirting

Keeping Children Safe in Education states that Upskirting is:

[The Voyeurism \(Offences\) Act 2019](#), which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

Any criminal cases disclosed will be reported to the local police.

APPENDIX 3 - The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The “[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)” guidance sets out the broad areas of responsibility to which our DSLs are asked to comply with, having regard for our internal safeguarding policy and in liaison with the Lead DSL as appropriate:

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children’s social care as required;
- support staff who make referrals to local authority children’s social care;
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Work with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff;
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;
- liaise with the Headteacher to inform him of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory Guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#).
- as required, liaise with the “case manager” (as per KCSIE Part four) and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, IT Technicians, and the SENCO) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically;
- liaise with the mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances;
- work with the Headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college. This includes:
 - ensuring that the school knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
 - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The designated safeguarding leads are responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information is kept confidentially and stored securely. Concerns and referrals are stored on CPOMS. Safeguarding notes are kept in a separate child protection file in a locked unit for each child. Records include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken,
- decisions reached and the outcome.

The DSLs should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice.

Where children leave the school (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named person with oversight for SEND in colleges, are aware as required.

In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead should undertake Prevent awareness training.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements.
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;

- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school;
- can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

Raise Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the governing body regarding this;
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school leadership staff.

Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or other such media is acceptable.

APPENDIX 4 - Governor sign-off and oversight of safeguarding and other key policies

Overview

This policy describes how the Governing Body is assured that the school employees and school systems are effective in ensuring children are safe in school and are taught to be safe.

Safeguarding Policies

The school has the following policies and systems that relate to safeguarding children. These policies are reviewed by the Board on a regular basis.

1. Safeguarding & Child Protection policy
2. Safer Recruitment & Appointments Policy
3. Staff Code of Conduct
4. Visiting Speaker Policy
5. Health and Safety Booklet
6. Low-level concerns policy
7. Images of Children Policy – EYFS camera, Mobile Phones and photography Policy
8. Acceptable Use of IT Policy
9. Online Safety Policy – EYFS E-Safety Policy
10. Single Central Register of employment

In addition, the school is mindful of the Independent Schools Statutory Regulations and the Independent Schools Inspectorate Guide to the Regulations in their current state.

Policy review

The following policies are reviewed and signed off by the Governing Body annually:

Admissions
 Anti-bullying
 Behaviour and Rewards
 Complaints
 Curriculum
 Health and Safety
 Low-level concerns
 Online Safety
 Safeguarding Children
 School Trips
 Special Educational Needs
 Staff Code of Conduct

All these policies are dated and appear on the school’s website and/or the School’s HR area website.

Sign-off on safeguarding

On an annual basis and in addition to the policy reviews listed above, the Chair of Governors, and the Headteacher, will scrutinise the following documents to ensure, on behalf of all the Governors, that the following policies and systems are compliant with regulations:

- The Single Centralised Register of employment
- Randomly selected staff files, cross-referenced against the Single Centralised Register of employment
- Any other policy they chose to select.

This sign-off session will be diarised and minuted to be reported back to the full board for information and discussion. Any governor may attend this sign-off session.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

Policy reviewed	Feb 2025
Policy approved	Feb 2025
Next review	Oct 2025