



BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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1 Safeguarding in our school

1.1 Our aims and responsibilities

Our commitment is to safeguard and promote the welfare, health (including mental health) and safety of our pupils by creating and maintaining an open, safe, caring and supportive atmosphere. This includes:

- Proactively teaching pupils about safeguarding
- Implementing a robust SRE policy and ensure that children feels safe and supported in discussing relationships
- Ensuring that systems and procedures are in place to protect pupils
- Acting in the best interests of the child
- Recognising that both mental and physical health are relevant to the safeguarding and the welfare of children

All staff have the following responsibilities:

- Contribute to providing a safe environment in which all children can learn and flourish
- Know what to do if a child tells you that he or she is being abused or neglected
- Know what to do if you are concerned about the behaviour or conduct of an adult in the school
- Manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality
- Identify children who may benefit from Early Help
- Refer **ALL** concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL
- Be aware of our local Early Help process and our role in it
- Be aware of the process for making a referral to Children's Social Care and understand the role you might be expected to play in statutory assessments

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) remains in force throughout the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) – see the Covid 19 Addendum at the end of this policy.

The department has issued non-statutory interim guidance on [safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#). This guidance supports governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads to continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe. It suggests where schools and colleges might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual.

1.2 Definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

In our school, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all decisions are made in the best interests of the child.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

1.3 Who this policy applies to

This policy and procedure applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the early years.

This policy and procedure applies to all teaching, non-teaching, residential, pastoral, support, peripatetic, supply staff, contract staff and ancillary staff, volunteers, and any other adults working at the school. All references in this document to "staff" or "members of staff" should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned, unless otherwise stated. It applies to adults in the Early Years phase of the school. Throughout the document, the term DSL is used for the Designated Safeguarding Lead. For staff in the early years, they should report directly to the Early Years Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead and staff in Prep to the Prep Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct applies to all pupils and adults in the school, including when being educated off-site and undertaking an educational visit. It also applies to students who are on an exchange and being hosted by the school.

1.4 Inter-agency working

The school is committed to inter-agency working in order to secure the best levels of safeguarding for all of its pupils. The school contributes to inter-agency working in accordance with statutory guidance. The school works with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. The school will also work within the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children partnership (LSCP), in this case Wirral Safeguarding Children's partnership (WSCP) <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>. When a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school within two weeks and the child's Social Worker is informed that the child has moved.

1.5 Definitions and terminology

'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18

'DSL' refers to the school's named Designated Safeguarding Lead

'LSCP' refers to the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership

'Designated Officer' refers to the person appointed by the local authority to deal with allegations against adults

'KCSIE' refers to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education

1.6 Related documentation

This policy should be read in relation to the most current version of the following documents:

National documents:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sep 2021)

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)
- Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (July 2015)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act (July 2018)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners (departmental advice) (March 2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (Feb 2018)
- Education Act 2002
- Children’s Act 2004

This policy is updated annually, drawing on feedback from staff, and is published to all staff and volunteers and placed on the school website. This policy is based on KCSIE 2021 and any references to national guidance made within this document are in relation to the versions listed above. The school will always refer to the above statutory guidance as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice and decision-making.

Internal documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- BYOD and Mobile Phone Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy
- Policy on Use of Phones and Devices in the Early Years
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

1.7 Safer recruitment

Our school prioritises embedding a culture of safer recruitment as part of our strategy for preventing harm to children. Statutory procedures for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with children are always followed (see Safer Recruitment Policy). The single central record covers the following people: all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party and supply staff who work at school.

1.8 Policy review

The school carries out an annual review of this policy. This includes an evaluation of the extent to which these policies have been effectively implemented throughout the school. The school will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements without delay and without waiting for the next policy review date, should any be necessary.

2. Key safeguarding facts

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is our number one priority
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility

We operate within a culture of openness and recognise and accept that abuse can happen in any organisation

All concerns should be reported

All concerns about a child (including signs of abuse and neglect) must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

In the event that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm a referral should be made to Children’s Social Care and/or the police immediately

An allegation about another adult in school should be referred to the Headmaster

An allegation about the Headmaster should be referred to the Chair of Governors

Any concern or ‘nagging doubt’ about an adult or child should be shared with the DSL

This policy must be read alongside ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ – DfE Statutory Guidance

3. Key people and contacts

School contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Kirsten Pankhurst, Deputy Head kp@birkenheadschool.co.uk 01516513002
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL - Prep)	Richard Halpin, Deputy Head of Prep rah@birkenheadschool.co.uk 0151651383
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL – Early Years)	Sam Mason, Head of Early Years sm@birkenheadschool.co.uk 0252651399
Headmaster	Paul Vicars prv@birkenheadschool.co.uk
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Dr Julia Moore
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Cross

Local Authority Contacts

Our school follows the safeguarding protocols and procedures of our Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCP)	Wirral Safeguarding Children’s Board 01516664442
Head of Service Quality and Safeguarding Children	Joe Banham 01516664371
Integrated Front Door	01516062008 (Office Hours) 01516776557 (out of hours) Ifd@wirral.gov.uk

The Designated Officer for child protection (sometimes referred to as the LADO)	Pamela Cope pamelacope@wirral.gov.uk 07504738266
Local authority Prevent Lead	Alison Burnett Alisonburnett@liverpool.gov.uk 01517778125
Director of Children's Services	Simone White 01516062000
Merseyside Police	01517772683 (office hours) 01517096010 (24 hours)

National Contacts	
NSPCC 24/7 Helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Text line	88858
NSPCC Child Line	Tel: 0800 1111
NSPCC FGM helpline	Tel: 0800 028 3550 Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline	Tel: 0800 028 0285 (8am – 8pm) Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
DfE Prevent helpline for schools & parents	Tel: 020 7340 7264 (non-emergency) Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF)	Tel: 0800 1000 900 Email: help@stopitnow.org.uk www.parentsprotect.co.uk
National Bullying Helpline	Tel: 0845 22 55 787
UK Safer Internet Centre helpline for School Staff	Tel: 0844 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation hotline for reporting criminal content	www.iwf.org.uk
Educate Against Hate	http://educateagainsthate.com

4. Types of abuse

The term 'abuse' is often used as an umbrella term. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Abuse and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse

Neglect

Sexual abuse

Emotional abuse

Physical abuse

4. Abuse

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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

4.1 Physical abuse

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

Signs of physical abuse can include:

- injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen;
- respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning;
- untreated or inadequately treated injuries;
- bruising which looks like hand or finger marks or caused by an implement;
- cigarette burns, human bites; or
- scarring, scalds and burns.

4.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse tend to be behavioural rather than physical (see below).

4.3 Sexual abuse

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

Signs of sexual abuse displayed by children may include:

- Pregnancy
- sexually transmitted infection/diseases;

- pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus/mouth;
- urinary infections;
- difficulty walking or sitting or standing;
- persistent sore throats; or
- stomach ache.

4.4 Neglect

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

Signs of possible neglect include:

- the child seems underweight or is very small for their age, or their weight deteriorates;
- the child seems very overweight for their age;
- they are poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather;
- they are often absent from school for no apparent reason; or persistently arrive late: or
- they are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters.

4.5 Peer on peer abuse and Sexual Harassment between pupils at School

4.5.1 Peer on peer abuse can include two specific forms, known as Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. Any response to these should fall within, and be consistent with, the school's wider approach to peer-on-peer abuse. The School has read and taken account of the report:

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98421/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges.pdf)
([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)) – from September 2021

Sexual Violence includes sexual offences which fall under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Sexual Harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature'. This can occur *online* (including, but not limited to non-consensual sharing of images, making sexual comments on social media) and *offline* (including but not limited to making sexual comments, sexual taunting or 'jokes', and physical contact, for example, brushing against someone deliberately or interfering with their clothes).

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can:

- occur between any two children, or a group of children against one individual or group
- be perpetrated by a child of any age against a child of any age
- be perpetrated by a child of any sexual orientation against a child of any sexual orientation
- include behaviours that exist on an often progressive continuum and may overlap
- be online and offline (physical or verbal)

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are more vulnerable, and there may be barriers in recognising abuse in this group of children. In addition, children who are perceived by their peers to be LGBT or identify themselves as LGBT may be more vulnerable.

Advice from the Department for Education on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (2017) provides information about what sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring, and what to do when incidents occur, or are alleged to have occurred. The DfE advice highlights best practice and cross-references other advice, statutory guidance and the legal framework.

The school **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure** will apply the principles set out in it when considering their approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children. The above guidance

- stresses the importance of making it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated, and are not an inevitable part of growing up
- highlights the risks of tolerating or dismissing any forms of sexual violence or sexual harassment, and encourages early intervention to avoid potential escalation;
- advises on how to embed training and education on these issues within a strong pastoral system, and a planned taught programme across the whole curriculum;
- encourages fora that enable children to talk about issues openly
- includes a list of possible topics that any taught programme could cover - including consent, gender roles, stereotyping and equality, healthy relationships, and power imbalances in relationships;
- advises on how to manage a disclosure, either from the child who has suffered abuse or from other children;
- provides guidance on when to carry out a risk and needs assessment for children affected by sexual violence or sexual harassment;
- provides guidance on initial considerations which schools should take into account when faced with a concern or allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment - including the age and developmental stages of the children, and any power imbalance between them;
- provides guidance on difficult scenarios which schools might encounter, for example: - how to handle an incident between two pupils which is alleged to have taken place away from school premises.

All staff must be alert to possible indicators of safeguarding concerns which may indicate peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Upskirting: 'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence and may constitute sexual harassment.

- Behaviour or coercion that causes someone to engage in any sexual activity without their consent, such as to strip, touch themselves, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

Staff must challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour, including reports of such behaviour outside of School. Staff should be vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing. DfE guidance situates sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in the context of developing a whole-school safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is seen as unacceptable, and not 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up. It should be recognised that these issues are likely to occur, and so schools should have procedures in place to deal with them. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender+ (LGBT+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and pupils with SEND.

Pupils are protected from 'upskirting', bullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination

Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents occurring both within and outside School. We operate a 'zero-tolerance approach to incidents of peer on peer abuse. All staff should be alert to the risk of peer on peer abuse, know that it could, and does, happen here and understand their role in preventing, identifying and responding to it. Staff should know that children are capable of abusing their peers. They should never dismiss abusive behaviour as a normal part of growing up, 'banter' or 'just having a laugh', and should not develop high thresholds before taking action. Abuse is abuse and peer on peer abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults.

4.5.2 What role does gender play?

Peer on peer abuse often manifests itself differently for boys than it does for girls. For example, girls seem to be at greater risk of sexual assault and/or exploitation, whereas boys seem to be at greater risk of physical gang-related violence and serious youth violence.

4.5.3 When does behaviour become abusive?

It can be difficult to distinguish between abusive behaviour which should be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out below, and behaviour which does not constitute abuse, such as low level bullying (where the School's Anti-Bullying Policy will be followed) or age appropriate sexual experimentation.

Factors which may indicate that behaviour is abusive include:

- a) where it is repeated over time and/or where the perpetrator intended to cause serious harm:
- b) where there is an element of coercion or pre planning and
- c) where there is an imbalance of power, for example, as a result of age, size, social status or wealth.

This list is not exhaustive and staff should always use their professional judgment and discuss any concerns with the DSL.

4.5.4 How can I identify victims of peer on peer abuse?

Identifying peer on peer abuse can be achieved by being alert to children's well-being and to general signs of abuse. Signs that a child may be suffering from peer on peer abuse overlap with those relating to other types of abuse – see indicators of abuse, earlier in this document.

Signs can include:

- a) failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard you would ordinarily expect.
- b) physical injuries.
- c) having difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing.
- d) becoming withdrawn, shy, experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety, panic attacks, suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much.
- e) drugs and/or alcohol use.
- f) changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse.

4.5.5 Are some children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers?

Any child can be affected by peer on peer abuse and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children. Research suggests that:

- a) peer on peer abuse is more prevalent amongst children aged 10 and older, although it also affects younger children, including by way of harmful sexual behaviour.
- b) children who are particularly vulnerable to abuse or to abusing others include those who have (i) witnessed or experienced abuse or violence themselves; (ii) suffered from the loss of a close family member or friend; or (iii) experienced considerable disruption in their lives.
- c) children with SEN/D are particularly vulnerable to both abuse and peer on peer abuse.

4.5.6 How prevalent is peer on peer abuse?

Recent research suggests that peer on peer abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse affecting children in the UK. For example, more than four in ten teenage schoolgirls aged between 13 and 17 in England have experienced sexual coercion (Barter et al 2015). Two thirds of contact sexual abuse experienced by children aged 17 or under was perpetrated by someone who was also aged 17 or under (Radford et al 2011) and over a third of young boys in England admitted to watching porn and having negative attitudes towards women (University of Bristol and University of Central Lancashire, 2015).

4.5.7 What should I do if I suspect either that a child may be being abused, or that a child may be abusing others?

If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of abuse from another child or young person, or that a child may be abusing others, the member of staff should report their concern to the DSL without delay in accordance with this policy. If a child is in immediate danger, or at risk of harm, a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the police should be made immediately.

4.5.8 How will the DSL respond to concerns of peer on peer abuse?

The DSL will discuss the behaviour with the member of staff and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the victim(s) or any other child. Where the DSL considers or suspects that the behaviour might constitute abuse, Children's Social Care will be contacted immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of it. The DSL will discuss the incident with Children's Social Care and agree on a course of action, which may include (a) taking any steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any children affected; (b) further investigation; (c)

referral to other agencies such as the police (where a crime may have been committed), CAMHS, a specialist harmful sexual behaviour team and/or youth offending services. All allegations will be logged on the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Incident Log and on MyConcern.

Any response should be decided in conjunction with Children's Social Care and other relevant agencies and should:

- investigate the incident and the wider context and assess and mitigate the risk posed by the perpetrator(s) to the victim(s) and to other children;
- consider that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved
- treat all children (whether perpetrator or victim) as being at risk - while the perpetrator may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves;
- take into account the complexity of peer on peer abuse and of children's experiences and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited, they are not consenting
- Take appropriate action in respect of the perpetrator – any action should address the abuse, the causes of it, attitudes underlying it and the support that may be needed if the perpetrator is at risk. Factors to consider include: the risk the perpetrator(s) poses and will continue to pose to other children, their own unmet needs, the severity of the abuse and the causes of it. Disciplinary action may be appropriate, including (a) to ensure that the perpetrator takes responsibility for and realises the seriousness of his or her behaviour; (b) to demonstrate to the perpetrator and others that abuse can never be tolerated; and (c) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim and other children in the school. Permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim(s) and other children in the school.
- Provide on-going support to victim(s) including by (a) ensuring their immediate safety; (b) responding promptly and appropriately to the abuse; (c) assessing and addressing any unmet needs; (d) following the procedures set out in this Safeguarding Policy (including where the child is in need of early help or statutory intervention); (e) monitoring the child's wellbeing closely and ensuring that s/he receives on-going support from all relevant staff members within the school; (f) engaging with the child's parents and any external agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term.
- Consider the lessons that can be learnt from the abuse and put in place measures to reduce the risk of such abuse recurring. This may include, for example: gender and equalities work, work around school safety, security and supervision, awareness raising for staff, students and parents about a particular form of abuse, training for staff on handling certain types of incidents or abuse.

4.5.9 How does the school raise awareness of, and reduce the risk, of peer on peer abuse?

Staff are trained on the nature, prevalence, and effect of peer on peer abuse, how to prevent, identify and respond to it. The school actively seeks to prevent all forms of peer on peer abuse by educating students and staff, challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse, encouraging a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community, and responding to all cases of peer on peer abuse and any cases of bullying (no matter how trivial) promptly and appropriately.

Children are educated about the nature and prevalence of peer on peer abuse via PSHE. They are told what to do if they witness or are victims of such abuse, the effect that it can have on the victims and

the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of the perpetrator. They are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its zero tolerance policy towards all forms of bullying and peer on peer abuse.

All members of the School community should encourage an openness in reporting concerns, and all 'overheard' conversations should also be reported. There should be an open acceptance and awareness of the zero-tolerance approach from all members of the school community. Students are able to report incidents of peer on peer abuse in a variety of ways:

- To form tutors
- To the DSL
- To a prefect or peer mentor
- To a member of the student council
- To the School Nurse
- Via 'worry notes'

4.6 Online safety

All staff should be aware of the risks posed to children by technology and the internet and should understand their role in preventing, identifying and responding to harm caused by its use. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's E-Safety Policy and BYOD and Mobile Phone Policy. Staff can be alerted to online harm through, disclosure, overheard conversation and work produced in class. The wi-fi is monitored by Smoothwall and notifications of harmful access are sent immediately to the DSL. The use of unrestricted 4g and 5G access is monitored through the BYOD and Mobile Phone policy and students in years 7-11 are not allowed access to their phones during the School day.

4.6.1 Cybercrime

A cyber crime is a criminal activity that is conducted using technology where a computer or a network is involved. Such crimes could include:

- Stealing Confidential Information
- Cyber Bullying
- Harassing Students
- Ransomware Attacks
- Data Breaches and Theft
- E-Mail Spoofing
- Password Hacking
- Phishing Attacks

If there is a suspicion that a cybercrime has been committed that could constitute a safeguarding incident, the incident should be reported to the DSL. The e-safety policy will be followed and incidents reported to the relevant agencies, including CEOPS and the police where a crime has been committed.

4.6.2 Youth produced sexual imagery/'Sexting'

Whilst many professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting', there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. According to research, many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually

suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the internet.' Yet, recent NSPCC research has revealed that when children are asked 'What does sexting mean to you?' they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know.' Similarly, a recent ChildLine survey has revealed that many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages, rather than images.

For the purposes of this policy 'child', 'youth' and 'young person' refers to anyone under the age of 18; 'adult' refers to anyone aged 18 or over.

This is in accordance with the advice *Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*, which has been published by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety.

This policy only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by children. Possessing, creating, sharing and distributing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal, and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools (amongst other agencies) when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management. On this basis, this policy introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' and uses this instead of 'sexting'. This is to ensure clarity about the issues this advice addresses.

4.6.3 What is youth produced sexual imagery?

'Youth produced sexual imagery' best describes the practice because:

- 'Youth produced' includes children sharing images that they, or another child, have created of themselves.
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent'. A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout the policy).

4.6.4 What types of incidents are covered by this policy?

Yes:

- A child creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer (also under the age of 18)
- A child shares sexual imagery created by another child with a peer (also under the age of 18) or an adult
- A child is in possession of sexual imagery created by another child

No:

- The sharing of sexual imagery of children by adults as this constitutes child sexual abuse and schools should always inform the police
- Children sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual texts which do not contain imagery
- Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child
- Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child and shared with a peer (also under the age of 18) or an adult

4.6.5 Disclosure

All members of staff (including non-teaching staff) should be aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosure of incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery. All such incidents should be

responded to with reference to the School's E Safety Policy, and in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Disclosure about youth produced sexual imagery can happen in a variety of ways. The child affected may inform a class teacher, the DSL in school, or any member of the school staff. They may report through an existing reporting structure, or a friend or parent may inform someone in school or colleague, or inform the police directly. Any direct disclosure by a child should be taken very seriously. A child who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

4.6.6 Handling incidents

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with this policy. When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to a member of staff's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL will follow the procedures and guidance set out in '*Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*'
- Awareness will be given to the motivation behind the request or sharing, if consensual or non-consensual, the age of the parties, the relationship status and the question of power imbalance.
- There should be interviews with the children involved (if appropriate), bearing in mind that images should not be viewed by staff
- Parents of each child should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at greater risk of harm and jeopardise any police/social care investigation
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately

4.6.7 The use of mobile phones and cameras in the Early Years Setting

We require our staff to be responsible and professional in their use of social networking sites in relation to any connection to the School, staff, parents or children. We ask parents and visitors to respect and adhere to our policy. Staff are asked to adhere to the following:

- Mobile phones are either turned off or on silent and not accessed during working hours
- Mobile phones can only be used on a designated break and then this must be away from the children
- Mobile phones should be stored safely in staff lockers or staff rooms at all times during the hours of the working day
- During outings, staff will use mobile phones belonging to the School, wherever possible
- Photographs must not be taken of the children on any personal phones or cameras
- Staff must not post anything on social networking sites, such as Facebook, that could be construed to have any impact on the School's reputation or relate to the School or any children attending the provision in any way
- Staff must not post anything on social networking sites that could offend any other member of staff or parent using the provision
- Staff should not allow parents to befriend them on social networking sites. (Exception: if they were friends before they were in post)
- Parent and staff relationships should remain professional at all times

- School also strongly recommends that all staff keep their personal social networking sites private or on a closed group rather than for public view
- If any of the above points are not followed, then the member of staff involved will be reported to Head of Early Years (or Senior Teacher in Charge of Little School in the case of Reception), before referring to the Head of Prep should the incident require further follow-up

4.7 Grooming

Grooming is the process by which an individual prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for abuse of this child. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse. The signs of grooming are not always obvious. Groomers will also go to great lengths not to be identified.

Children may:

- be very secretive, including about what they are doing online;
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- go to unusual places to meet friends;
- have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain;
- have access to drugs and alcohol;
- go missing from home or school;
- display behavioural changes;
- have sexual health issues; or
- present as suicidal, self/harming, feeling depressed, unworthy.

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but you may notice unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age. See the NSPCC website for further information about grooming,

Signs of grooming and/or online abuse

A child may be experiencing abuse online if they:

- spend lots, much more, or much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media;
- are withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting;
- are secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online or on their mobile phone; and/or
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

Signs of grooming manifested by sex offenders

It is important to remember that not all sex offenders will exhibit the signs listed below and if an individual exhibits some or all of these signs, it does not mean that they are a sex offender:

- Overly affectionate behaviour with a child
- Affording special attention or preferential treatment to a child
- Excessive time spent alone with a child outside of the classroom/school

- Frequently spending time with a child in private or isolated areas
- Transporting a child to or from the school
- Making friends with a child's parents and visiting their home
- Acting as a particular child's confidante
- Giving small gifts, money, toys, cards, letters to a child
- Using texts, telephone calls, e-mails or social networking sites to inappropriately communicate with a child
- Flirtatious behaviour or making suggestive remarks or comments of a sexual nature around a child

Modus operandi of institutional grooming

- Target vulnerable victim: Perpetrators target victims who are vulnerable, isolated, insecure and/or have greater emotional needs.
- Gain victim's trust: Offenders may allow a child to do something (e.g. eat ice cream, stay up late, view pornography) which is not normally permitted by the child's parents or the school in order to foster secrecy.
- Gain the trust of others: Institutional offenders are often popular with children and parents, successfully grooming not only the victim but also other members of the victim's family and the community at large.
- Filling a need/becoming more important to the child: This can involve giving gifts, rewards, additional help or advice, favouritism, special attention and/or opportunities for special trips or outings.
- Isolating the child: The perpetrator may encourage dependency and subtly undermine the victim's other relationships with friends or family members.
- Sexualising the relationship: This can involve playful touches, tickling and hugs. It may involve adult jokes and innuendo or talking as if adults, for example about marital problems or conflicts.
- Maintaining control and secrecy: Offenders may use their professional position to make a child believe that they have no choice but to submit to the offender.

Signs of grooming for radicalisation

Staff follow the 'Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation' policy when grooming for radicalisation is suspected. There are no known definitive indicators that a young person is vulnerable to radicalisation, but there are a number of signs that together increase their risk of being groomed in this way. Signs of vulnerability include:

- Underachievement
- Being in possession of extremist literature
- Poverty
- Social exclusion

Traumatic events

- Global or national events
- Religious conversion
- Change in behaviour

- Extremist influences
- Conflict with family over lifestyle
- Confused identity
- Victim or witness to race or hate crimes
- Rejection by peers, family, social groups

Concerns may be identified through:

- Overheard conversations
- Responses in class or in writing
- Political views in PSHE
- Search history through Smoothwall filtering

The process for reporting a concern regarding grooming for radicalisation is to complete a log in MyConcern. The DSL will consider pastoral support, parental support or a referral to the Channel Programme. Staff may also refer to the Channel programme anonymously.

4.8 Forced marriage

Forced marriage is a crime in England and Wales. This can occur when an individual (male or female) is forced to marry without their full consent, when they do not have the capacity to consent (i.e. they have learning needs) or where they are coerced to marry either through psychological/emotional threats or other means. More information can be found in KSCIE (2018).

4.9 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL (or deputy DSL) with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers to report FGM. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police using the telephone number 101. See Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education for further details.

4.10 Domestic Abuse

Any incident 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.

Teen Dating Abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to adults; there is an increasing awareness of domestic violence within teen relationships.

- 1 in 5 teenage girls have been assaulted by a boyfriend.
- Young women are more likely to experience sexual violence than other age groups.
- Young women with older partners are at increased risk of victimisation.

- Recent surveys (including NSPCC, Zero Tolerance and End Violence Against Women campaign) reveal that approximately 40% of our young people are already being subjected to relationship abuse in their teenage years.

4.11 Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is the abuse of children and young people up to the age of 18, where the young person is being manipulated, coerced or forced into engaging in sexual activity. As a form of manipulation, the young person may receive something – such as affection, a bed for the night, food, alcohol, gifts – from their abuser. The young person may also believe they are in a loving, consensual relationship, when in fact they are being exploited.

Children and young people who are victims of this form of sexual abuse often do not recognise they are being exploited. There are a number of signs that could indicate a child is being groomed for sexual exploitation but the following are some common warning signs:-

- Going missing frequently or regularly returning home late.
- Regularly missing school/college.
- Having unexplained gifts or unaffordable new items in their possession.
- Reducing their contact with family or friends.
- Having older boyfriends/girlfriends/friendship groups.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Mood swings/changes in emotional wellbeing/secretcy.
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse.
- Self-harming.

4.12 Children Missing in Education * Using Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (Sep 2016) Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

4.13 Honour-based Violence

HBV is a crime or incident which has, or may have been, committed to 'protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. HBV has the potential to be both a domestic abuse incident and a child abuse incident or concern. HBV is sometimes referred to as "Izzat" which means dignity, honour, reputation, or social rank.

Individuals, families and even communities may take drastic steps to preserve, protect or avenge their 'honour'; this can lead to a substantial breach of human rights and can include the following abuse:

- All forms of domestic abuse
- Assaults
- Disfigurement
- Versions of sati (burning)
- Sexual assault and rape

- Forced Marriage

Attitudes, behaviour and actions that may constitute 'dishonour' are wide ranging and can include:

- Reporting domestic abuse to a third person

4.14 Child criminal exploitation - County Lines

A geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity is the criminal exploitation of children and young people. This is usually through engaging them into gangs and using them to carry money or drugs from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Staff should be aware of the signs of criminal exploitation such as children missing education. More information can be found in KCSIE (2021)

4.15 Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members, by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances) and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence, for example, as they start walking to school on their own, it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. This is done through PSHE lessons and outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. These lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

Where staff are concerned about a specific incident, this should be reported to the DSL who will consider whether to report to the police or other agency. More general information is available at www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

4.16 Children with family members in prison

School will be informed by local services, including the police if we have any children or young people on their roll whose parent or close family member is in prison so that we can provide additional support. Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We will work with the WSCP to support these students.

4.17 Children and the Court System

Students may be asked to give evidence in court for crimes committed against them or as part of their witnessing or being involved in a criminal event. Students are also involved in court systems when involved in divorce or custody cases. In these cases students will be supported through the pastoral system of Form Tutor and Head of year using MyConcern to share information. Students who are finding the process difficult will be referred to the School Nurse. The DSL will keep in regular contact with both parents and Social Services.

4.18 Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery includes the trafficking of people, forced labour, servitude and slavery.

Children (those aged under 18) are considered victims of trafficking whether or not they have been coerced, deceived or paid to secure their compliance. They need only have been recruited, received or harboured for the purpose of exploitation. Modern slavery is an international crime affecting an estimated 45.8 million people around the world. Students who are suspected of being victims of modern slavery should be referred to the DSL and a MyConcern log completed. The DSL will utilise the National Referral Mechanism, initially by a social services referral.

4.19 Homelessness

Where families are homeless, parents can feel anger or sometimes guilt at the unfairness they see impacting on their children. Many do a tremendous job of minimising the impact wherever they can, and ensure their children are well cared for and feel valued.

Homelessness can however be a factor in children being at risk due to the stresses it creates in families and the limitations it places on the family. By itself is not a safeguarding matter. However homelessness can lead to issues which are safeguarding matters, such as neglect or poor mental health. Where staff suspect homelessness has become a safeguarding concern, this should be reported to the DSL through MyConcern.

4.20 Mental Health

Any child or young person can develop mental health issues. But research has shown there are some factors that are associated with children and young people's long-term mental health.

Abuse and neglect

The traumatic impact of abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of children developing a range of mental health issues – both during childhood and in later life. These include anxiety, depression, eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Norman et al, 2012; Spatz Widom, 1999).

Specific types of abuse may be connected to certain mental health issues. Children who have experienced emotional abuse may be more likely to develop anxiety and depression compared with children who have experienced other types of abuse (Cecil et al, 2017; Gavin 2011). One study found that almost three quarters (74%) of young people who had experienced sexual assault developed PTSD (Lewis et al, 2019).

Abuse and neglect can also make children more vulnerable to developing more than one mental health condition at one time (known as composite mental health issues) (Chandan et al, 2019).

Providing effective mental health support for children who have experienced abuse and neglect can help them recover from its effects (NSPCC, 2019b).

Additional needs and disabilities

Children and young people with additional needs and disabilities may face a range of challenges including:

- reduced mobility
- prejudice, discrimination and bullying.

These challenges may lead to lower self-confidence, difficulty forming peer networks and social exclusion, putting them at higher risk of developing mental health issues (Falcounbrige, Hunt and Laffan, 2019).

Adults may confuse the signs of learning disabilities with the symptoms of mental health issues. This can mean concerns aren't recognised and responded to quickly or appropriately.

Children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities

Children from black and minority ethnic groups may experience:

- racism, discrimination and prejudice – this can be direct, indirect or institutional
- an increased stigma around mental health issues in the community.

This can lead to inequalities and issues in accessing appropriate care and support for mental health needs (Race Equality Foundation, 2020).

Living in care

Children in care are more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty (NSPCC, 2019c). This can be due to isolation and loneliness. Children in care may also have experienced abuse or neglect, which increases the likelihood of developing mental health issues (National Youth Advocacy Service, 2019)

LGBTQ+ children and young people

LGBTQ+ children and young people may experience:

- prejudice, discrimination and bullying
- a fear of or an actual rejection from family and/or friends
- feeling excluded or like an outsider.

They may also experience gender dysphoria: the distress when someone's assigned gender does not match their identity.

If staff suspect students are suffering poor mental health they should fill out a log in MyConcern. The DSL will assign a team leader to the case and a session will be held with the School Nurse who will advise on next steps.

5. Behavioural signs of abuse and neglect

If a child is being abused, their behaviour may change in a number of ways. For example, they may:

- behave aggressively or be disruptive, act out, demand attention, and require more discipline than other children;
- become angry or disinterested and/or show little creativity;
- seem frightened of certain adults;
- become sad, withdrawn, or depressed;
- have trouble sleeping;
- become sexually active at a young age;
- exhibit inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age or sexualised behaviour in their play with other children;
- refuse to change for gym or participate in physical activities;
- develop eating disorders;
- self-harm;
- refuse to attend school or run away from home;
- lack confidence or have low self-esteem; or
- use drugs or alcohol.
- suffer poor mental health. Staff, including those who deal with mental health support, such as the School Nurse, should be aware that poor mental health can be linked to abuse.

6. Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are statistically more vulnerable to child abuse, including peer on peer abuse. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These include:

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

7. Stages of Child Protection

The school can use a range of arrangements depending on the information available. The school will always work cooperatively with external agencies, including the local authority and the police. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. 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. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety of children. (KCSIE 2021)

Child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
Children in need
Early help

5.1 Early Help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL or DDSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to Children's Social Care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse. [The Multi-Agency Referral Form](https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/communities%20and%20neighbourhoods/Crime%20Reduction/Youth%20Offending%20Service/Request-for-Service-Form-2017-2.pdf) available online should be used <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/communities%20and%20neighbourhoods/Crime%20Reduction/Youth%20Offending%20Service/Request-for-Service-Form-2017-2.pdf>

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

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is a privately fostered child.

5.2 Children in Need

A Child in Need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. A child who is deemed to be a Child in Need will have been assessed by Children's Social Care under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

5.3 Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

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

are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour based violence, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation. Should an investigation occur, then the school's involvement and any action may be determined on the advice given by the investigating agency.

5.4 What to do if you have a concern about a child

5.4.1 This should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (statutory guidance) – Part One and Annex A. All members of staff who come into contact with children should also read Annex B. These documents are stored on Firefly and on MyConcern.

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. 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. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety of children. (KCSIE 2021)

If in any doubt or you have concerns about the safety and welfare of a child



Complete an entry on MyConcern



Discuss the content of the entry with the DSL or Deputy DSL



Maintain confidentiality

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility (KCSIE 2021). All staff should know what to do when a child discloses abuse to them, they have concerns about a child's welfare, or when children or staff raise concerns about a pupil to them.

If a child tells a member of staff that they know about or have been a victim of abuse or neglect the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully and allow the child to speak freely and remain calm. Do not interrupt the child or be afraid of silences.
- Provide reassuring nods and words such as, "I am so sorry this has happened", "You are doing the right thing in talking to me". Avoid saying things like, "I wish you had told me about this earlier" or "I cannot believe what I am hearing".

- Questioning of the child about what they are saying should not be extensive as partner agencies will lead any investigation. Limit questioning to the minimum necessary for clarification using *What, When, How and Where* but avoid leading questions such as, "Has this happened to your siblings?" Do *not* use questions beginning with *Why* as this can apportion feelings of guilt within a child.
- If the child discloses abuse, then it is appropriate to ask whether any other adults were present and observed the abuse and whether the abuse has happened before
- At an appropriate time tell the child that the matter will be referred in confidence
- Tell the child what will happen next. The child may want to accompany you to see the DSL, otherwise let the child know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.

5.4.2 Recording

Staff should make a written record of the conversation with the child as soon as possible, using MyConcern, or on paper if not at a computer. Staff should use the specific words that the child used (e.g. if referring to parents of their body), indicating these by using “speech marks/inverted commas”. **If a disclosure of abuse has been made by the child, immediately discuss the concerns verbally with the DSL, Deputy DSL.** If the DSL is not available then this should not delay appropriate action being taken and staff should speak to the DDSL, Headmaster or, failing that, a member of the SLT. All documents should be kept in a secure location with restricted access.

5.4.3 Making referrals to statutory agencies

If a child is thought to be at risk of harm

When a child is thought to be at risk of harm or is likely to be at risk of harm (see above), then a referral should be made **immediately** to Children’s Social Care or the police if a criminal act is thought to have occurred. Whilst it is the role of the DSL, any member of staff can make a referral to Children’s Social Care or the police. *The school does not require parental consent for referrals to be made to statutory agencies.* Consent to do this must **not** be obtained from the parents if to gain consent would put the child’s safety at risk or to do so could jeopardise any investigation by partner agencies (WTSC 2018).

If a child has unmet needs

When a child is not considered at risk of harm, but still has unmet needs that could mean that they are a Child in Need (see above), a referral should be made to Children’s Social Care via the local authority process. The school does not require parental consent for referrals to be made to statutory agencies in these circumstances, however, it is best practice that these concerns should be discussed with the parents and any subsequent referral made transparently with the parent’s knowledge.

Confidentiality

Staff should never guarantee confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. They should guarantee that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know and that they will pass on information in confidence only to the people who must be told in order to ensure their safety.

5.5 Passing on safeguarding records when a child leaves the school

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse. When a child leaves the school, it is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that a copy of their safeguarding records are transferred securely and confidentially to the new school.

Whilst data protection legislation places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, this is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of

harm. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

The designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school 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.

6. Whistleblowing

Please read alongside the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

All adults have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to the care and protection of a pupil or pupils. If a member of staff believes that best practice in this area is not being adhered to or that practice may put a pupil or pupils at risk, they should:

Report any concern to the Headmaster

If the concern relates to the Headmaster, they should:

Report the concern to the Chair of Governors

Concerns raised under this Whistleblowing Policy are distinct from concerns or allegations about an adult's suitability to work with or have access to children. No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practice, provided that they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblowing procedures.

Where an adult feels unable to raise a concern about poor safeguarding practice or where they feel that their concern is not being addressed, they can raise their concern externally using either of the routes below:

- Guidance can be found at - <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for adults who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – lines are available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday, or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

7. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Kirsten Pankhurst and is the senior member of staff responsible for leading safeguarding in the school (including online safety). The DSL is a member of the school leadership team. The DSL takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety in the school and their job description explicitly reflects this.

7.1 Deputy DSL

The school has two Deputy DSLs (RAH, SM). Their role is to support the DSL in their safeguarding role. Whilst the *activities* of the DSL can be delegated to DDSLs, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection must remain with the DSL, and this lead responsibility must not be delegated. The Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL and the duties of the Deputy DSLs are reflected explicitly in their job descriptions.

7.2 Inter-agency working

The DSL and Deputy DSLs liaise with the local authority and work in partnership with other agencies in the best interests of children in the school.

7.3 Support for DSL

The DSL is given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or to support other staff to do so, and to contribute to the assessment of children.

There are 4 key elements to the DSL role. They will:

- Manage referrals
- Work with others
- Train
- Raise awareness

7.4 Manage referrals

The DSL:

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

7.5 Work with others

The DSL is expected to:

- liaise with the Headmaster to inform him of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (in relation to allegations against adults) 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, school nurses, IT technicians, and SENCO on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies; and
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.

7.6 Training

The DSL (and any deputies) undergoes bi-annual DSL training and, at least annual training with WSCP to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role, including inter-agency working. The DSL undertakes additional Prevent awareness training to the government Prevent training that all school staff undertake.

Note: The Head and Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL.

7.7 Raise awareness

The DSL:

- ensures the school's safeguarding and child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- ensures the school's safeguarding and 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;
- ensures the safeguarding and child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals to children's social care or the police about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and
- links with the local LCSB to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

7.8 Safeguarding Files

As stated above, where children leave the school, ensure a copy of their Safeguarding File is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. This file should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools should ensure key staff, such as DSLs and SENCOs, are aware as required.

In addition to the Safeguarding File, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. This should be done with the parent's consent unless to do so would place a child or parent at heightened risk.

7.9 Availability

During term time the DSL (or a deputy) will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the DSL (or deputy) will normally to be available in person, the Headmaster will define what "available" means and whether availability via phone and/or Skype or other such media is acceptable. It is the responsibility of the DSL to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

8 Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governors will comply with all duties under legislation and will always take into account statutory guidance, ensuring that all policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at the time. Governors are recruited giving due consideration to S128 checks. Governors will undergo Safeguarding training every two years.

It is the responsibility of the Governors to:

- Ensure that all staff read a least Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Staff working with children will also read KCSIE Annex A
- Ensure that all staff follow the requirements of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities, as set out in Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Designate a senior board member to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure that all safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency procedures set up by the WCSB
- Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguarding and promote children’s welfare
- Ensure that School works in line with local inter-agency procedures
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is updated annually and made available via the school website
- Provide a Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy
- Ensure that all responsibilities regarding Children Missing from Education are followed
- Instruct School to hold more than one contact number for each child, where possible
- Ensure that School reports to their local authority the removal of a child from the school roll in line with statutory and local authority guidance
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction – this must be in line with advice from the LCSB
- Recognise the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing concerns on a daily basis
- Ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to keep children safe online
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety

9. Induction

At the point of induction, **all** staff are provided with, should read and are trained in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 – Part One and Annex A . All members of staff who come into contact with children should also read Annex B. These documents are stored on Firefly and on MyConcern.
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure, including whistleblowing
- Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of IT Policy (including staff/pupil relationships and communications)
- Digital Safety Policy (including use of social media)
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

At the point of induction, new staff must be informed of the names and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies.

10 Training

10.1 Staff employed in school

All staff employed in school will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, usually at the commencement of the academic year. Staff will all complete their Level 1 Safeguarding training on a biennial basis. Staff also receive safeguarding and child protection updates regularly throughout the year, provided by the DSL, in order to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge, including LCSB advice, to safeguard children effectively, for example, learning about the topics in Annex A (KSCIE 2021).

Type of Training:	Date completed:	Next due date:
Whole School Safeguarding Training (Due every three years)	12/2021	09/2021
Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Due every 2 years)	22/11/2022	09/2024
Deputy Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)(Due every 2 years)		
Whole School Staff Refresher/updates (Annual)	09/2021	09/2022
Safer Recruitment Training Name & Date of training (Due every 5 years)	10/2021 IHASCO	2024
Governor Training	12/2019	12/2021

10.2 Third-party contractors

It is good practice for those employed as third-part contractors who work regularly in school with opportunity for contact with pupils to have basic safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their role.

10.3 Teaching about safeguarding

The school is committed to proactively teaching children about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of our approach to offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Through ongoing work with the children, we aim to build resilience so that every child knows that we are a ‘telling school’ and that speaking up about any concern is valued and actively promoted. This includes raising a concern about themselves or about another.

The PSHE Curriculum is amended each year. Relationships and sex education is taught at an appropriate level to all children paying consideration to the Secretary of State’s 2000 guidance on SRE and supplementary SRE guidance as well as the new statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (2019) .

Tutor periods occur daily and Form Tutors and Class Teachers are the first point of contact for children and parents.

We actively promote the view that children should feel able to raise any concerns that they may have. This includes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

12. Private fostering

12.1 What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, legal guardian or person with parental responsibility. Close relatives *only* include parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. It is not private fostering if the child is 'looked after' by the Local Authority (also known as 'in care' and which includes placement in residential care, with an approved foster carer or a 'kinship' carer). Private fostering occurs in *all* cultures, including British culture, and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Examples of private fostering situations include:

- children and young people living apart from their families for a variety of reasons e.g. a parent is ill, has had to temporarily move for work or there has been conflict, separation or divorce
- children whose parents work or study elsewhere in the UK or overseas
- children sent to this country by their parents for education and health care
- young people living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- children on holiday exchanges

People become private foster carers for all sorts of reasons. Private foster carers can be a family friend, or someone who is willing to care for the child of a family they do not know, for example host families supplied by a Guardianship Organisation. If a host family is going to be caring for a child for 28 days or longer, they are classed as private foster carers and the Local Authority must be notified.

12.2 Why does your Local Authority Children's Services need to know?

By law, the Local Authority must be informed about all private fostering situations. The child's parents, private foster carers and anyone else involved in the arrangement or who becomes aware of the arrangement, e.g. guardianship agencies, schools or health professionals are *legally required* to inform Children's Services. Children's Services have a legal duty to make sure all private fostering arrangements are safe for the child. Once informed of the arrangement, they will check the suitability of private foster carers, make regular visits to the child and ensure advice, help and support is available when needed. Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement s/he should raise this with the DSL. Where Children's Social Care are not already aware of the circumstances, the DSL should make a referral to them.

12.3 Timescales for informing the Local Authority

The child is not yet living with the private foster carers	Within 6 weeks beforehand
The child will move in with the private foster carers within 6 weeks	Immediately
The child is already living with the private foster carers.	Immediately

13. Looked After Children

A child who is being 'looked after' by their Local Authority is usually known as a 'Child in Care' or a 'Looked After Child'. They might be living with foster parents or at home with their parents under an Interim Care Order granted to social care, or in residential children's homes, or other residential settings like schools or secure units.

A child who is adopted is **not** a Looked After Child. Occasionally, children are placed into Local Authority foster care under an Interim Care Order when an adoption breaks down and the adoptive parents relinquish the child. Once a Full Care Order is agreed, the child remains on long term foster care. The adoptive parents may or may not have continued contact with the child, depending on the situation and the emotional impact on the child.

An Interim Care Order will remain in place until care proceedings are concluded (within 26 weeks in most authorities). At the conclusion of care proceedings in any situation, the child will either stay in long term foster care (under a Full Care Order) until they reach the age of 18 years, return to their parents (usually under a Supervision Order), reside with other family members/friends (usually under a Special Guardianship Order), or in some cases be adopted. In all the latter situations, it is most usual for parents to have agreed contact arrangements with their child, most commonly three times per year. A child may also have been placed in care voluntarily by their parents who are struggling to manage their children's behaviour, or meet their child's needs due to their own illnesses or disabilities (under section 20, Children Act 1989). In these cases, rehabilitation will always be the aim, but if this is not possible, the Local Authority will apply for an Interim Care Order and finally a Full Care Order. Usually, these parents will have continued contact with their child.

As a result of their experiences both before and during care, Looked After Children are at greater risk than their peers; they are, for example, four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty. Providing a secure, caring environment and enabling such children to develop strong, trusting and stable relationships with professionals is critical to their safety and wellbeing.

The DSL (a) is responsible for ensuring that any looked after children are adequately supported by staff in school; (b) has contact details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Virtual School Head for children in care; (c) ensures that relevant staff members have sufficient information about the child's looked after legal status and care arrangements; (d) works with the Virtual School Head to discuss how staff can best support the progress of Looked After Children in the school and meet the needs in the child's Personal Education Plan; and (e) attends Looked After Children reviews and other meetings they are required to attend.

14 Host families

14.1 When might this happen?

Schools often make arrangements for children to take part in exchange visits, either to other parts of the UK or abroad. Exchanges can benefit learning across a range of subjects. In particular, foreign visits can enrich the languages curriculum and provide exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and expertise in the use of other languages.

14.2 What is the responsibility of the school?

Schools have a duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare as outlined in this policy. This extends to considering their safety and how best to minimise risk of harm to those children during any exchange visit the school arranges, and when organising for the care and accommodation of a child with a host family (known as homestays) as part of the exchange.

14.3 Suitability of adults in UK host families for homestay arranged by the school

When arranging a homestay, schools should consider the suitability of the adults in the respective families who will be responsible for the visiting child during the stay.

In circumstances where a school arranges for a visiting child to be provided with care and accommodation in the UK (including where they engage a company to make those arrangements) in the home of a family to which the child is not related (including where a person has parental responsibility for the visiting child), the responsible adults will be engaging in 'regulated activity' for the period of the stay. In such cases and where the school has the power to terminate such a homestay, the school or college would be the regulated activity provider.

A regulated activity provider commits a criminal offence if it knows, or has reason to believe that, an individual is barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from engaging in regulated activity but allows that individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

14.4 Private arrangements

Where the child's parent(s) or a student themselves arranges their own homestay, this would be a private arrangement, therefore the school or college would not be the regulated activity provider. Where it is a private arrangement, the school is not entitled to obtain a standard or enhanced DBS check.

14.5 Background checking for adults in homestay arrangements

When a school arranges a homestay, it should consider what intelligence/information will best inform its assessment of the suitability of the adults in those families who will be responsible for the visiting child during the stay. It will be for the school or college to use their professional judgement to decide what it considers will be most relevant. However, to help inform that assessment, schools and colleges should obtain, as a minimum, a DBS enhanced certificate with barred list information. This check will not only establish whether the adults are barred from engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but where criminal record information is disclosed it will also allow the school or college to consider, alongside all other intelligence that it has obtained, whether the adult would be a suitable host for a child.

14.6 Volunteer DBS check

DBS enhanced certificates with barred list information for volunteer roles can be obtained free of charge. In respect of an adult who provides UK homestay and receives no remuneration in respect of the stay or where schools reimburse families only for expenses incurred, to enable a DBS application to be considered as a volunteer role, the 'Position Applied For' field will need to make clear that the position is unpaid.

In addition to those engaging in regulated activity, schools are free to decide whether they consider it necessary to obtain a DBS enhanced certificate in respect of anyone aged 16 or over in the household where the child will be staying.

14.7 Suitability of adults in host families abroad

It is not possible for schools and colleges to obtain criminal information from the DBS about adults who provide homestays abroad. Schools should liaise with partner schools abroad to establish a shared understanding of, and agreement to, the arrangements in place for the visit. They should use their professional judgement to satisfy themselves that the arrangements are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard effectively every child who will take part in the exchange. Parents should be aware of the

agreed arrangement. Schools are free to decide whether they consider it necessary to contact the relevant foreign embassy or High Commission of the country in question to discuss what checks may be possible in respect of those providing homestay outside of the UK.

The school should produce a written risk assessment outlining the approach taken and indicating the reasons for specific decisions.

14.8 During the visit

Pupils should understand who to contact during a homestay should an emergency occur or a situation arise which makes them feel uncomfortable.

14.9 Additional action for extended homestays

Where a period of UK homestay lasts 28 days or more, for a child aged under 16 years of age (under 18 years of age if the child has disabilities), this may amount to Private Fostering under the Children Act 1989. In these cases, the school should notify the local authority of the arrangements. Private fostering legislation places a duty on local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of a child who is being, or proposed to be, privately fostered in their area is being or will be satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. By notifying the local authority, the school and college will be assisting the local authority in discharging its duty. See section on Private Fostering.

15 Signposting to further information and Additional Support

Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education contains further guidance on a range of specific safeguarding issues. This section should be read by all staff. Staff who work directly with children must also read Annex B.

Any person who has a concern about a child within the school must follow the procedures outlined within this documents.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to Children's Social Care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

Annex A of KCSIE contains guidance on the following issues:

- Children and the court system
- Children missing from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation: county lines
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- So-called 'honour-based' violence
- Preventing radicalisation
- Peer on peer abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Additional Support can be obtained from the DSL, additional resources and policies on Firefly, and from training opportunities provided via IHASCO and the WSCP.

16 Low level concerns

The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is dependent on the vigilance of all our staff and their prompt communication to the DSL of any concerns, no matter how small, about any conduct by an adult which causes you to doubt that adult's suitability to work with or have access to children. All references in this section to "adult" should be interpreted as meaning any adult (defined above) and any visitor, unless otherwise stated. The school is conscious of its duty of care to pupils and will always act, including if alerted to the possibility of abuse arising from situations or persons outside the school setting.

The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults is fundamental to safeguarding children. It helps to identify and prevent abuse and to protect adults against misunderstandings or misinterpretations. It also encourages openness, trust and transparency and it clarifies expected behaviours. Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported, and adults in respect of whom concerns or allegations have been raised will not suffer any detriment unless the concern or allegation is found to be substantiated.

If you are concerned about the behaviour or actions of any adult speak to the DSL or Head Master.

16.1 Code of Conduct

All staff must behave responsibly and professionally in all dealings with children and specifically with pupils for whom they have a duty of care. All staff must follow the procedures set out in our 'Staff Code of Conduct'. Staff should always avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and all members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should note that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over and in a position of trust to touch a child in a sexual way or have a sexual relationship with a child, even if the relationship is consensual. A position of trust could arise even if the member of staff does not teach the child.

The school has a specific Early Years Policy for The Use of Mobile Phones and Devices that recognises and manages the risks by a means appropriate to the setting.

16.2 Low-Level Concerns

The school's overarching aim is to facilitate a culture in which the clear values and expected behaviours which are set out in our Code of Conduct are lived, constantly monitored, and reinforced by all staff. In particular, the intention of this policy is to:

- maintain a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which staff are confident and clear about expected behaviours of themselves and their colleagues, the delineation of boundaries and reporting lines;
- ensure staff feel empowered to raise any low-level concern, whether about their own or a colleague's behaviour, where that behaviour might be construed as falling short of the standards set out in our Code of Conduct.

18.3 What is a low-level concern?
A low-level concern for this purpose is any concern, no matter how small and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt', that an adult may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the school's Code of

Conduct or simply – even if not linked to a particular act or omission – a sense of unease as to the adult’s behaviour particularly towards or around children.

16.3 What should I do if I have one?

Where a low-level concern exists it should be reported to the DSL or to the Headmaster as soon as reasonably possible and, in any event, within 24 hours of becoming aware of it (where the concern relates to a particular incident).

16.4 How will my low-level concern be handled?

The DSL will discuss all low level concerns she receives with the Headmaster as soon as possible and in any event within 24 hours of becoming aware of it. The Headmaster will, in the first instance, satisfy himself that it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as an *allegation* and dealt with under the appropriate procedure (outlined later in this document). The rationale for these decisions should be noted. The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified as an allegation are where:

- a) the threshold is met for an allegation
- b) there is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to an allegation or
- c) there is other information which, when taken into account, leads to an allegation.

Where the Headmaster is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the Designated Officer, if necessary on a no-names basis.

Having established that the concern is low-level, the DSL or Headmaster as appropriate will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary. The name of the person reporting the concern will be noted, respecting their wishes to remain anonymous wherever possible. Most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training etc. If the concern has been reported by a third party, the Headmaster will collect as much evidence as necessary by speaking, where possible, with the person who raised the concern, to the individual concerned, and to any witnesses.

16.5 What records will be kept?

Where a low-level concern has been communicated, a confidential record will be kept in a central safeguarding file by the DSL. This is necessary to enable any patterns to be identified. However, no record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

- a) the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as an allegation as above; or
- b) the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure.

Following a low level concern being reported and investigated, the School (Headmaster and DSL) should consider whether any wider cultural issues should be addressed. Additional training for some or all members of staff should also be considered.

17 Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff

The purpose of this section of the policy is to outline how allegations against adults will be handled. Allegations will always be dealt with in accordance with statutory guidance provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education. We will consider all allegations against an individual not directly employed,

where disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, (for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency) and ensure allegations are dealt with properly.

17.1 What is an allegation?

Allegations represent situations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm to children if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This policy applies to all adults in the school if it is alleged that they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

An allegation may be triggered by one specific incident or by a pattern of behaviour by the adult, or low-level concerns which when considered collectively amount to an allegation.

17.2 What should I do if I have an allegation?

<p>Allegations about staff or volunteers should be reported to the Headmaster immediately. The Headmaster will liaise with the Designated Officer of the Local Authority as set out below and inform the Chair of Governors. The adult to whom the concern or allegation relates should not be informed.</p>	<p>If the allegation is about the Headmaster, it must be referred to the Chair of Governors without informing the Headmaster. The Chair of Governors will liaise with the Designated Officer of the Local Authority as set out below.</p>	<p>Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting, the allegation should be referred directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer.</p>
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17.3 Duties as an employer and an employee

This policy relates to members of staff and volunteers who are currently working in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the police.

The School has a duty of care to all employees and will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

17.4 Dealing with an allegation

The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above, or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquiries by local authority Children’s Social Care services. In these cases, local arrangements will be followed to resolve cases without delay. Some rare allegations will be so serious they require immediate intervention by Children’s Social Care services and/or the police. Where an allegation relates to a member of supply staff, the supply agency will be fully involved from the outset.

Initial discussion

The Headmaster will not undertake any investigation before first speaking to the Designated Officer. The Headmaster (or Chair of Governors where there is an allegation against the Headmaster) will inform the Designated Officer of all allegations that come to the school's attention and appear to meet the criteria. The Designated Officer will consult with the police and Children's Social Care as appropriate. After first notifying the Designated Officer, the Headmaster must notify the Chair of Governors of the allegation and the action taken.

The purpose of an initial discussion is for the Designated Officer(s) and the School to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The Designated Officer(s) may ask the School to provide or obtain relevant additional information, such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations previously and about the individual's current contact with children. There may be situations when the School will want to involve the police immediately, for example if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. Where there is no such evidence, the Headmaster should discuss the allegations with the Designated Officer(s) in order to help determine whether police involvement is necessary.

The initial sharing of information and evaluation may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern, in which case this decision and a justification for it should be recorded by both the Headmaster and the Designated Officer(s), and agreement reached on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom. The Headmaster should then consider with the Designated Officer(s) what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

Inter-agency Strategy Discussion

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion will be convened by the Designated Officer or the police in accordance with the statutory guidance Working together to Safeguard Children. If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the police will take into account that teachers and other school and college staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Where a strategy discussion is needed, or police or Children's Social Care services need to be involved, the case manager (school) will **not** inform the accused person until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the accused. The case manager should only inform the accused person about the allegation after consulting the Designated Officer(s) and actions have been decided. It is extremely important that the case manager provides the accused with as much information as possible at that time.

Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or Children's Social Care services is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial evaluation decides that is the case, the designated officer(s) will discuss the next steps with the case manager. In those circumstances, the options open to the school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available. This will range from taking no further action to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future. Suspension should not be the default position: an individual should be suspended only if there is no reasonable alternative (see guidance on suspension, below).

Internal investigations

In some cases, further enquiries will be needed to enable a decision about how to proceed. If so, the designated officer(s) will discuss with the case manager how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. In straightforward cases, an internal investigation will be agreed upon and should normally be undertaken by a senior member of school staff. Where necessary, due to lack of resource or the nature or complexity of the allegation, the allegation will require an independent investigator. An independent investigator will be appointed by the Head of HR.

Where a safeguarding concern or allegation triggers another procedure, such as grievance or disciplinary, that procedure shall only be followed once the immediate safeguarding concern or allegation has been fully investigated.

17.5 Suspension of an employee

The School will consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school or whether alternative arrangements can be put in place until the allegation or concern is resolved. All options to avoid suspension will be considered prior to taking that step.

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. In some rare cases, this will require the case manager to consider suspending the accused until the case is resolved. Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported: all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. If the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the designated officer(s), Children's Social Care or the police as required. But suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.

Suspension will be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically: the case manager will consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school or until the allegation is resolved.

In cases where the school is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual who works at the school, immediate action will be taken to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order, i.e. pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual must not carry out teaching work.

The case manager will also consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. In many cases an investigation can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. If the Designated Officer(s), police, and Children's Social Care services have no objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation, the case manager will aim to be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension.

Based on assessment of risk, the following alternatives will be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school or college so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;

- redeploying to alternative work in the school so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reduce the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager will consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated or maliciously intended.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action should be agreed and recorded by both the case manager and the designated officer(s). This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. The School will make clear to the suspended employee where they can obtain support. Children's Social Care services or the police cannot require the case manager to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although the case manager will give appropriate weight to their advice.

Where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation concludes that there should be enquiries by Children's Social Care services and/or an investigation by the police, the designated officer(s) should canvass police and Children's Social Care services for views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children in order to inform the school consideration of suspension. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision will be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment.

17.6 Support for employees

The School will act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support for the accused individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the Children's Social Care services or the police. The individual will be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support..

The case manager will appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. Particular care needs to be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work-related issues. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or Children's Social Care services need to be involved, the case manager will not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers. Parents or carers will also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a

decision, cannot normally be disclosed but the parents or carers of the child will be told the outcome in confidence.

Parents and carers will also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers whilst investigations are ongoing, as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002. If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they will be told to seek legal advice.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, Children's Social Care services, or the police as appropriate, will consider what support the child or children involved may need.

17.7 Timescales

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible and ensure consistency with a fair and thorough investigation. All allegations will be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay. The time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors, including the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation.

For cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, it is aimed that they will be resolved within one week. Any concerns about safeguarding will always be discussed with the Designated Officer.

17.8 Confidentiality

When an allegation is made, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2002 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State or the General Teaching Council for Wales publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions are disapplied if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so. The provisions commenced on 1 October 2012.

The legislation imposing restrictions makes clear that "publication" of material that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation is prohibited. "Publication" includes "any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public." This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site, would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public).

In accordance with the Authorised Professional Practice published by the College of Policing in May 2017, the police will not normally provide any information to the press or media that might identify an individual who is under investigation, unless and until the person is charged with a criminal offence. (In exceptional cases where the police would like to depart from that rule, for example an appeal to trace a suspect, they must apply to a magistrates' court to request that reporting restrictions be lifted).

The case manager will take advice from the Designated Officer(s), police, and Children's Social Care services to agree the following:

- who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;
- what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
- how to manage press interest if, and when, it should arise.

17.9 Oversight and monitoring

The Designated Officer(s) has overall responsibility for oversight of the procedures for dealing with allegations, for resolving any inter-agency issues, and for liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children Board on the subject. The Designated Officer(s) will provide advice and guidance to the case manager, in addition to liaising with the police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process. Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals, depending on the complexity of the case.

Police forces should also identify officers who will be responsible for:

- liaising with the Designated Officer(s);
- taking part in the strategy discussion or initial evaluation;
- subsequently reviewing the progress of those cases in which there is a police investigation; and
- sharing information on completion of the investigation or any prosecution.

If the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that a police investigation is required, the police should also set a target date for reviewing the progress of the investigation and consulting the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) about whether to: charge the individual; continue to investigate; or close the investigation. Wherever possible, that review should take place no later than four weeks after the initial evaluation. Dates for subsequent reviews, ideally at fortnightly intervals, should be set at the meeting if the investigation continues.

17.10 Information sharing

In a strategy discussion or the initial evaluation of the case, the agencies involved will share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible, the employer will ask the police to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer disciplinary process. This will be done as their investigation proceeds and will enable the police to share relevant information without delay at the conclusion of their investigation or any court case.

Children's Social Care services should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child or children named in the allegation are in need of protection or services, so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case can be passed to the employer without delay.

17.11 Following a criminal investigation or a prosecution

The police should inform the employer and Designated Officer(s) immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute the case after the person has been charged. In those

circumstances, the Designated Officer(s) should discuss with the case manager whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or Children's Social Care services should inform that decision. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration will need to take into account the result of the police investigation or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

17.12 Outcome of an allegation

The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence;
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

17.13 On conclusion of a case

There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. If an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the employer ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the School will refer the case to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. In the case of a member of teaching staff at a school, the matter will be referred to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching in relation to their professional misconduct.

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The case manager will also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still a student at the school.

When the case involves supply staff or contractors their employers or the supply agency will be notified so that potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

In Registered Settings (Early Years) OFSTED will be informed of allegations against people living or working at the premises, or of any other abuse alleged to have taken place on the premises, as soon as is practicable and within 14 days at the latest.

17.14 Malicious or unsubstantiated allegations

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the Designated Officer(s) will refer the matter to the Children's Social Care services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmaster will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate

against the pupil who made it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible, even if he or she were not a pupil.

17.15 Learning lessons

At the conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the Designated Officer(s) will review the circumstances of the case with the case manager 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. This will include issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified. Lessons will also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The Designated Officer(s) and case manager will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

17.16 Resignations and 'settlement agreements'

If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this will not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with the statutory guidance KCSIE. A referral to the DBS must be made if the criteria are met (see criteria in KCSIE). The School will also consider whether a referral to the TRA is appropriate (see criteria in KCSIE).

If the accused person resigns or their services cease to be used and the criteria are met, it will not be appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement. Any settlement/compromise agreement that would prevent the School from making a DBS referral even though the criteria for referral are met, is likely to result in a criminal offence being committed. This is because the School would not be complying with its legal duty to make the referral.

It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible, the accused will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. But the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated on the basis of all the information available, will continue even if that cannot be done or the accused does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should not be used in cases of refusal to cooperate or resignation before the person's notice period expires. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate.

17.17 Record keeping

Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS

checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record will be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. The Information Commissioner has published guidance on employment records in its Employment Practices Code and supplementary guidance, which provides some practical advice on record retention.

17.18 References

Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious will not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious will also not be included in any reference. See KCSIE for further information on references.

Kirsten Pankhurst 3rd September 2021. To be reviewed September 2022

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum for Remote Learning

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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Kirsten Pankhurst	kp@birkenheadschoo.co.uk 01516513002
Deputy DSL	Richard Halpin Sam Mason	rah@birkenheadschoo.co.uk sm@birkenheadschoo.co.uk
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Paul Vicars	headmaster@birkenheadschoo.co.uk
Headmaster	Paul Vicars	headmaster@birkenheadschoo.co.uk

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Pamela Cope	pamelacope@wirral.gov.uk
Chair of Governors	Andrew Cross	School Reception: 01516524014

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020. It reflects updated advice from our local authority - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP).

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of coronavirus, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

This addendum is subject to change, in response to any new or updated guidance the government may publish. We will keep it under review as set out below.

In this addendum, where we refer to measures to protect students who are at home, this means those who are learning at home for reasons to do with coronavirus – for example, due to clinical and/or public health advice, such as if there’s a local or national lockdown or if they need to self-isolate.

In this addendum, where we refer to vulnerable children, this means those who: are under the care of the School Nurse or an external agency for anxiety, eating disorders or self-harm. Vulnerable children are also identified as those who have suffered or do suffer mental ill health as a result of the pressures of remote learning. They are also assessed as all those children who are assessed as being in need, including children:

- With a child protection plan
- With a child in need plan
- Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or LAs, for example those who are:
 - On the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services
 - Adopted
 - Young carers
 - Considered vulnerable by the school and/or LA

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

We will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first

- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should act on it immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children at school and those at home.

Reporting procedures remain the same as per our Child Protection Policy.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be on site, they can be contacted remotely by telephone on 07748902047.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Paul Vicars, Headmaster. You can contact him by emailing headmaster@birkenheadschool.co.uk, or by calling the main School reception number.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with our off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments
- Support students in crisis by telephone or by visit where required
- Liaise with the School Nurse and School Chaplain as required

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners, to help keep children safe.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our local safeguarding partners
- The local authority, about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

6. Monitoring attendance

We will monitor attendance daily during Form Tutor Registrations. We will also follow guidance from the Department for Education on how to record attendance and what data to submit.

All students of compulsory school age will be expected to attend School (Live Zoom and Firefly Forums) unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health advice, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

Where any child we expect to attend School doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by communicating through the pastoral support structure: Form Tutor – Head of Year – Deputy Head - Headmaster
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both children attending school and those at home.

Investigations will be carried out as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, via Zoom if necessary.

8. Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/supply teachers/volunteers working on site or remotely.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker, and other children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where the child is at home.

The School has a remote pastoral plan in place which sets out:

- How often the school will make contact – this will be by Form Tutor daily, Head of Year weekly and by other pastoral staff as required
- Staff will make contact via email, over the phone, doorstep visits, or a combination of all the above

If we can't make contact, we will follow the Child Missing in Education Policy and, if necessary, contact the police.

10. Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on students' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with the procedures set out the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10.1 Children returning to school

The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before children return.

They will also liaise with the school nurse(s) to gather relevant information about any support provided by school nursing services while children have not been in school.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see students in person.

10.2 Children at home

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

11. Online safety

11.1 In School

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in School. The Wi-fi will be monitored daily by the safeguarding leads and IT using the Smoothwall monitoring system.

11.2 Outside School

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our staff code of conduct. This particularly relates to Zoom use during remote learning where staff:

- Will follow the Zoom principles in the teachers guide
- Will not meet 1-1 with students online (unless previously agreed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for legitimate reasons, such as Learning Support Sessions or Peri Music Lessons). Parents will always be informed of a 1-1 session.
- Will end meetings where there is one student remaining in the meeting
- Be alert to peer on peer abuse and cyber-bullying

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have by regular Form Tutor reminders.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what School is asking children to do online, where relevant, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

This information is in the Guide for parents on Firefly.

12. Mental health

12.1 Children returning to school

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have on students' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including students being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed. Support will be provided on return through the Form Tutor and then referral to the School Nurse or external agencies, such as CAMHS.

12.2 Children at home

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all students. Students will be encouraged to report concerns to their Form Tutor, Head of year, Deputy Head, School Nurse or Chaplain. The pastoral team will offer the usual mental health interventions over the telephone, via Zoom or face to face. Vulnerable students will be able to request to come into School, including those suffering bouts of poor mental health or anxiety as a result of remote learning. We will also signpost all students, parents/carers and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time via Firefly.

When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately, following our reporting procedures.

13. Staff and volunteer recruitment

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that staff and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks, we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home Office and Immigration Enforcement as appropriate (for example, with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 183-188 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive a safeguarding induction in line with the expectations of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This may be in person or via Zoom.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- E-Safety Policy

Kirsten Pankhurst 29th November 2021. To be reviewed September 2022