



# Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Adopted Date: **01/09/2024**

Review Date: **01/09/2025**

Safeguarding team contacts and roles	Name and contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Eluned Beaumont-George Gary Pilkington
Alternate DSLs	Ashley Betts
Named safeguarding governor	Matt Paisley
Chair of Governors	Mandy Gowers
School Online Safety Lead	Eluned Beaumont-George
Designated teacher for Children in Care and children previously in care (CiC)	Gary Pilkington
Senior Mental Health Lead	Simone Last

*All policies must be read in conjunction with this policy.  
The terms of the Safeguarding Policy are to take precedence over the  
guidelines set down in any other policy.*



Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.

*(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024)*

## **PURPOSE AND AIMS**

The purpose of Hadleigh Community Primary School's safeguarding policy is to provide a secure framework for the school to fulfil their statutory and moral responsibility in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those pupils who attend our school. The policy aims to ensure that:

- We will always act in the best interest of our pupils.
- All our pupils are safe and protected from harm.
- Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable pupils to feel safe and adopt safe practices.
- Staff, pupils, governors, visitors, volunteers and parents are aware of the expected behaviours and the school's legal responsibilities in relation to its pupils.
- Ensures consistent good practice across the school.

## **OUR ETHOS**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all the children at Hadleigh Community Primary School are safe and free from harm. If they are considered to be at risk of or have suffered abuse or neglect, the school will take the steps described to minimise the risk or protect them from further harm. Our school will establish and maintain an ethos where our pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to. Children at our school will be able to talk freely to any member of staff or regular visitor to our school, if they are worried or concerned about something. Both children and adults are confident that their concerns are acted upon and appropriate action is taken to make them feel safe.

All staff and regular visitors will, either through training or induction, know how to recognise a disclosure from a child and will know how to manage this. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets.

Hadleigh Community Primary School will endeavour to provide activities and opportunities in the PSHE curriculum that will equip our children with the skills they need to stay safe. This will also be extended to include material that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills.

At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies. This policy will be reviewed annually, as a minimum, and will be made available publicly via the school website or on request.

In order to monitor the effective safeguarding of pupils at Hadleigh Community Primary School, the Governing Body will require the Headteacher to submit a termly report on safeguarding issues within the school. This report will not reveal details of any individual children or families.

The School complies with the statutory guidance ***Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, The Teaching Standards and Prevent Duty Guidance***. We also comply with the locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Named Safeguarding Governor.



## INTRODUCTION

The Education Act 2002, Section 175 (2) states:

“The Governing Body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.”

Hadleigh Community Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children’s physical or mental health; 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.

Our policy applies to all staff, supply teachers, parents, governors and volunteers and contractors working in the school as well as the wider school community. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection and safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed Child Protection Plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

The staff and governors of Hadleigh Community Primary School are committed to protecting and safeguarding all their pupils. The school will ensure, as far as possible, that they are free from harm. The school recognises that children sometimes suffer abuse from those who should be caring for and protecting them. Abuse can take place within any socio-economic group and can occur in any context.

This document sets out the procedures, which Hadleigh Community Primary School has in place for exercising its duties in relation to safeguarding pupils.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.

We will also include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### The DSL/Alternative DSL and Safeguarding Governor

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



Hadleigh Community Primary School has a DSL who is responsible for coordinating safeguarding issues within the school and for liaising with other agencies as stated in Working Together to Safeguard Children. The DSL will have the appropriate status, authority and time to carry out the duties of the post. There is also an alternate DSL who acts in the DSL's absence and a member of the Governing Body with responsibility for safeguarding. The DSL is a member of the Senior Management Team and is given the time, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil his role in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

At Hadleigh Community Primary School, the above roles are undertaken by:

**Eluned Beaumont-George (Deputy Headteacher) - DSL**  
**Gary Pilkington (Headteacher) – Alternate DSL**  
**Matt Paisley – Named Safeguarding Governor**

These people's names will be given, when requested, to the Local Education Authority.

It is the DSL's responsibility to ensure that all staff, teaching and support, paid and volunteers know who the DSL and Alternate DSL are and that they all receive, on a termly basis, information, which enables them to identify safeguarding matters and respond appropriately. It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that all safeguarding issues raised in school are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency. There is always a DSL available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. The DSL must make arrangements for adequate and appropriate cover for out of hours term time activities. The DSL will liaise with the headteacher to inform them of issues and in particular ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.

The DSL and Alternate DSL will be released from school to attend specialised child protection/safeguarding training, which will be up-dated yearly. The named Governor will also receive training every two years. They are also responsible for arranging whole school safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers who work with children and young people in our school and that this training takes place every three years.

The DSL is also required to complete a Self-Review Assessment Report annually which demonstrates that the safeguarding arrangements in the school are being met. If the self-assessment highlights any areas for improvement, this will be detailed in the action plan which will be signed off and monitored by the Named Governor for Safeguarding to ensure these improvements are implemented. The self-review assessment is to be shared annually with the Local Authority, who will have an auditing role in ensuring the school is meeting its safeguarding requirements under Sec 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 for both maintained and independent schools.

All Child Protection concerns need to be acted on immediately. If school staff are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, they should tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

All adults, including the DSL, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to children's social care or the police. Where a disclosure is made to a visiting staff member from a different agency, e.g. School Nurse, it is the responsibility of that agency staff to formally report the referral to the DSL in the first instance. Where the disclosure is made by a child attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or alternative provision, the referral should be recorded and referred to the on-site DSL and a formal notification made to the school's DSL where the child is on role for information or to agree the appropriate action to be taken. Any records made should be kept securely on the child's main school/child protection file. A referral should not be delayed in order to discuss with the schools DSL if it is felt/identified that a child is at immediate risk.



## **Governing Body**

The governing body has a strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. The governing body has a legal responsibility to make sure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place, which have regard to statutory guidance, in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare. The governing body expects that all staff will have read and understood the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy as well as part one of KCSIE and Annex B. They can also insist that members of staff may have to read additional sections if this impacts their role. The governing body will also ensure that the policy is made available to parents and carers by publishing this on the school website or in writing if requested.

The governing body will ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development, and that all systems, processes and policies are transparent, clear and easy to understand and operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

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

The governing body will ensure that the school contributes to any multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and that the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The governing body must ensure that staff and volunteers are properly vetted, to make sure they are safe to work with the pupils who attend our school. The school must also have procedures for appropriately managing allegations of abuse, including low level concerns, made against members of staff (including the headteacher and volunteer helpers).

The governing body will ensure that there is a named governor for safeguarding, a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, and a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Pupil Premium Plus or previously looked after, and will ensure that these people have the appropriate training.

The governing body will inform Suffolk County Council and the SSP annually about the discharge of their safeguarding duties by completing the safeguarding self-assessment audit.

## **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and that sufficient resources and time and training are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

## **All staff**

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

All staff must read and ensure they understand Part One of KCSiE and Appendix B.

All staff must ensure they are familiar with the systems within school which support safeguarding, including the child protection and safeguarding policy, the code of conduct/staff behaviour policy, the behaviour policy,



the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, and the role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any Alternates).

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff should maintain a belief that 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and if staff have concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately.

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

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

All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 that may follow a referral, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

All staff should be aware of the [early help process](#) and understand their role within it, for all services at both a local authority and school level. This includes providing support as soon as a problem emerges, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals in order to support early identification and assessment, focussing on providing interventions to avoid escalation of worries and needs. In some cases, staff may be asked to act as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

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

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



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

## **TRAINING and INDUCTION**

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

All new staff members will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This will include training on the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, online safety, the code of conduct, low-level concerns guidance, the behaviour policy, the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, and the role of the designated safeguarding lead.

Copies of the school's policies, procedures and Part One of KCSiE (or Annex A for those staff who do not work directly with children) will be provided to new staff at induction. The governing body will ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

Our Governing Body will have access to safeguarding training and our Named Governor for safeguarding will also undertake additional training at least every two years to support their school in handling allegations made against adults who work with children and young people, including our staff and volunteers.

The DSL and alternates will undertake a range of training in line with their role and ensure that this is kept up to date and any additional training is disseminated across the staff.

In considering safeguarding training arrangements the governing body will also have regard to the Teachers' Standards which set out the expectation that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment, and require teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with mental health needs.

## **RECOGNISING CONCERNS – signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation**

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect, and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Staff must understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school and the home as well as online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with their DSL. The witnessing of abuse can also have a damaging effect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse and this could also have a significant impact on the physical health and mental health of the child.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place





concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the consensual or non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including linked to county lines) radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

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

The school will strive to create an atmosphere in which children feel able and safe to talk about their worries and fears. Staff will listen carefully to anything children want to tell them. They will:

- **Not** ask leading questions.
- **Not** promise to keep the matter secret.
- **Not** attempt to investigate a situation themselves.

## PROCEDURES

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our school's safeguarding policy and told who our DSL/Alternate DSL is. They will also be shown the recording format, given information on how to complete it and who to pass it to.

Every new member of staff or volunteer will have an induction period that will include essential safeguarding information. This programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child and how to record issues of confidentiality. The induction will also remind staff and volunteers of their responsibility to safeguard all children at our school and the role of the DSL.

New staff who have not had any safeguarding training or staff who have had training more than three years ago will be trained by the DSL/ADSL for a minimum of two hours.

When new pupils join our school, all parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. The policy is on the school's website. The document will be offered to parents should they request a copy. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to Customer First. Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education will be made available to all parents/carers who request a copy.

Any disclosure, suspicion of abuse, observations or reports of incidents of a child protection nature, will be recorded as soon as possible after the disclosure has been made. Staff should be aware of the possibility that their records might have to be used as evidence in court and must therefore be aware of the need to distinguish fact from opinion and the legal requirement to report concerns. The matter should be referred immediately to the DSL or, in his absence, the Alternate DSL.

The majority of safeguarding information is kept on an online platform provided by CPOMS and managed by both DSL and the Alternate DSL. Where it is still suitable some safeguarding information is kept in a loose-





leafed file in a locked drawer in the Deputy Headteacher's office; both the Alternate DSL and Named Safeguarding Governor are aware of its location.

Allegations against a member of staff should be reported immediately to the Headteacher, who will put into place the necessary procedures (See Allegations Against Staff).

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES – DISCLOSURES**

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

### **What to do if you are concerned.**

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

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

The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership advise that the following bullet points need to be taken on board with regard to recording any disclosure:

### **ACCURATE RECORDING IS ESSENTIAL**

- Where were you in school?
- Who disclosed?
- What did they say?
- Record what you heard. If you add an opinion, make sure you record it as such and why you are giving this opinion.
- Was there an injury?
- If there was an injury, where was it? Did you see it? Describe it.
- Is the disclosure sexual abuse?
- Was anyone else with you?
- Who are you passing the information onto?
- Who are you? Ensure you include your full name and position in the school.



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

When a concern is passed to the DSL, they will assess the concern and, taking into account any other safeguarding information known about the child/young person, consider whether it suggests that the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm, has been reached. If the DSL is unsure whether the threshold has been met they will contact the MASH Professional Consultation Line for advice (0345 606 1499). Where appropriate, the DSL will complete and submit the SSP multi agency referral form (MARF) ([available on the SSP website](#))<sup>1</sup>.

Where the DSL believes that a child or young person may be at imminent and significant harm or risk of harm they should call Customer First immediately and then complete the SSP MARF within 24 hours to confirm the referral. In these circumstances, it is important that any consultation should not delay a referral to Customer First.

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

School staff might be required to contribute to multi-agency plans to provide additional support to children. This might include attendance at child protection conferences or core group meetings. The school is committed to providing as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible, including submitting reports for child protection conferences in advance of the meeting in accordance with SSP procedures and timescales. Staff will be asked to comment on the academic progress of the child as well as commenting on the child's wellbeing.

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

## **CONTACTING THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Alternate can be contacted out of school hours by school staff who have safeguarding concerns. For example, if a school trip or after school sporting event has taken place and the member of staff in charge of the event needs to contact the DSL urgently, as they have concerns about pupil not having been picked up, the member of staff should contact the DSL directly on their mobile telephone number which they will have been given.

## **CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCES**

From time to time staff members may be asked to attend a Child Protection Case Conference on behalf of the school in respect of individual children. The person attending from school will be either the DSL or ADSL. The DSL will prepare a report for these conferences drawing up the information held in school to give an accurate picture of how that child is performing and any concerns we may have. All reports for Child Protection Case Conferences will be prepared in advance. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents



before the conference and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development. A risk assessment relating to the continuing risk of harm to the child may also be included.

A Child Protection Case Conference will be convened if a referral has been made and following an investigation the findings have considered the child to be at risk of harm, or if the child is already subject to a Child Protection Plan. This Child Protection Case Conference is held every 6 months to monitor the safety of the child.

The school recognises that Child Protection Case Conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Services or whose child is subject to a Child Protection Plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents whenever possible. The school is clear that the welfare of the child is paramount.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS**

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

As part of meeting a child's needs, the school understands that it is critical to recognise the importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies and will contribute to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Staff will have regard to the Government guidance: [Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services](#) which supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL or the Alternate.

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

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

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

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



The school will always undertake to share its intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. It would be legitimate to share information without consent where; it is not possible to gain consent; and, if appropriate the police, if in doubt, staff will consult with the MASH Professional Consultation Line on this point.

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

Information on safeguarding cases will only be shared within the school with those who need to know it, in order to ensure the safety of the children concerned.

The majority of school records on safeguarding concerns and referrals are kept on CPOMS. However, there is a small amount of information kept in a locked filing cabinet in the DSL's office, separately from the main pupil files. Only the DSL and Alternate DSL have access to these files. No other information of a safeguarding matter will be kept anywhere else in the school.

## **TRANSFER OF RECORDS**

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

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance has a very important part to play in safeguarding children. A child whose parents/carers repeatedly fail to provide adequate reasons for absence, or whose absence is ongoing without medical evidence will be referred to the EWO. Such absences will not be authorised by the school.

If a pupil is absent and parents fail to inform the school of this absence this will be noted. If there is then a second days absence, again without contact from a parent, then this must be investigated. If this is out of character for the child and that family then the DSL or Alternate will visit the property on the second day of absence to try and establish contact and the whereabouts of the pupil. If this child and family are regularly absent, the two days absence will be noted and if it then reaches a third day the visit will then be carried out. If no contact is made with the family on that visit then the police will be called to investigate further. Any incidents like this MUST be logged on CPOMS and added to this child's profile.

## **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION/FLEXI-SCHOOLING**

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

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

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



## **CURRICULUM**

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

Opportunities to teach safeguarding may include covering relevant issues through Relationships Education as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PHSE) Curriculum. This is a mandatory requirement of our curriculum. Through preventative education the school can help prepare young people for life in modern Britain and create a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

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

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

## **BULLYING AND CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE**

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

All staff should understand, that even if there no reports in school it does not mean it's not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child on child abuse they should speak to the DSL and record this on CPOMS.

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

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

- ✦ Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- ✦ Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (sometimes known as teenage relationship abuse)
- ✦ Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)



- ✦ Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- ✦ Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- ✦ Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- ✦ Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos<sup>1</sup> (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- ✦ Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- ✦ Homophobia-particularly if any child has disclosed any sexual preferences or is in the process of transitioning
- ✦ Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Any incidents of serious child on child abuse will be managed according to school procedures which detail measures to minimise the risk of child on child abuse, how allegations of abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with, and processes for how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child on child abuse will be supported.

Hadleigh Community Primary School will not tolerate bullying amongst its pupils and is committed to dealing with all complaints of such a nature. Strategies for dealing with bullying are explained in the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy as well as within the Online Safety Policy that looks at issues of cyber bullying.

## **ONLINE SAFETY & FILTERING AND MONITORING**

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

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

The governing body will ensure that an annual review is undertaken of the school's approach to online safety including the school's filtering and monitoring provision. The review should include a member of the senior leadership team, the DSL, the IT lead and a governor. The school should ensure they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Guidance on cyber security including considerations can be found at [Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

<sup>1</sup> UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings.





The school's online safety policy outlines the appropriate filtering and monitoring which take place on school devices and school networks. It also outlines the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

School staff can access resources, information and support as set out in Annex B of KCSiE.

The school has a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology. The policy reflects the fact that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children can sexually harass, bully and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups), view and share pornography and other harmful content.

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

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

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

School staff can access resources, information and support as set out in Annex D of KCSiE.

As part of the school curriculum, we offer pupils' access to the Internet. Before being allowed to use the Internet, all parents and children must sign an Acceptable Use Policy as evidence of their approval and acceptance. For our younger pupils a parent's signature will suffice but will be taken to assume they have discussed this with their children and that the importance of using the Internet in accordance to their teachers' instructions has been explained. We also implement a large range of restrictions and monitoring software to ensure all members of the school community are safe online.

As part of the Computing curriculum, internet safety and being safe online is featured throughout every single year group. We also include elements of this in our PSHE curriculum to ensure pupils are aware of the impacts of acts such as bullying, taking images and displaying them online etc.

The school's Online Safety Lead is Eluned Beaumont-George and Mr Pilkington is the Alternate. The named Governor for Online Safety is Sheena Broadbent.

## STAFF RECRUITMENT

In line with part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education the school and Governing Body is committed to preventing people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.





The school staffing regulations require Governing Bodies of schools to ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training. The DSL, Alternate DSL and Business Manager at the school have completed safer recruitment training.

Before confirmation of appointment, all staff (teaching and support) who apply to work at Hadleigh Community Primary School will be subject to a rigorous recruitment process to ensure, as far as possible, their suitability to work with children. References will be taken up and they will be required to give evidence of their qualifications, previous experience and history and proof of identity. A social media check will also be carried out.

All potential staff and volunteers will be required to declare any criminal record. Moreover, all staff, Governors and regular volunteers (where a regular pattern of working in a school is established) will be DBS checked.

## **MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS**

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for our children. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made. The school will follow the SSP [Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust](#) if an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust.

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

- ✦ behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; ✦ possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- ✦ behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- ✦ behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

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

It may also be a culmination of low-level concerns. Low level concerns are not insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards the child does not meet the threshold of immediate harm but their behaviours could be seen as part of a grooming process. Examples of such behaviour could include but isn't limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs with a personal mobile device
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one bases in a secluded area or behind a closed door

If any member of staff has concerns that a colleague, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor might pose a risk to children, it is their duty to report these to the headteacher, including if these are low level concerns. The head must then record these and look for patterns of behaviour that may need to be passed onto the LADO. Where the concerns or allegations are about the headteacher, these should be referred to the Chair of Governors.



The Headteacher/Chair of Governors should report the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.

The Corporate Director for Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services, has identified dedicated staff to undertake the role of LADO. LADOs can be contacted via email on [LADO@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@suffolk.gov.uk) or by using the LADO central telephone number: **0300 123 2044** for allegations against all staff and volunteers.

Once contact is made with the LADO, the Headteacher must also consider:

- Safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser.
- Contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO.
- Consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation.
- Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary.
- Act on any decision made in any strategy meeting or evaluation meeting.
- Advise the Independent Safeguarding Authority where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations being founded.

If staff, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

All volunteers have a current DBS in place before they allowed to work with our children. If they don't volunteer in school for three months, then they not then permitted to volunteer again until a new DBS check has been completed. The office team regularly checks dates to ensure that this is monitored.

At Hadleigh Community Primary School we carry out DBS checks on all parents who help with camp and no parent is now permitted to help on camp, or any other residential trip like Kingswood etc. (under any circumstances) if the DBS result has not been received by the school before the beginning of the visit.

When the school has facilitated an alternative provision arrangement, for one or more of its pupils, then the member of staff working with that pupil will be aware of lone working procedures. A risk assessment would be carried out by the DSL to ensure the safety of both pupil and staff.

## **WHISTLEBLOWING**

The governing body recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

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

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

The governing body would wish for everyone in the school community to feel able to report any child protection/safeguarding concerns through existing procedures within school, including the whistleblowing procedure adopted by governors/proprietor where necessary. However, for members of staff who do not feel



able to raise such concerns internally, there is a NSPCC whistleblowing helpline. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (line available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **Use of school premises for non-school activities**

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

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

Where a lease or hire agreement is entered into the governing body will ensure safeguarding requirements are included as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; this will make clear that any failure to comply would lead to termination of the agreement. The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place.

## **Useful Contacts:**

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Professional Helpline: 0345 606 1499

MASH webchat facility

Customer First (Professional Referral Line) for use in emergencies only: 0345 606 6167

Customer First: 0808 800 4005

Police (emergency only): 999

Suffolk Police main switchboard: 01473 613500

Suffolk Police Cybercrime Unit: 101

Suffolk Local Safeguarding Partnership [www.suffolksp.org.uk](http://www.suffolksp.org.uk)

Suffolk County Council: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/staying-safe-online/e-safer-suffolk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/staying-safe-online/e-safer-suffolk)

LADO 0300 123 2044 or [lado@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lado@suffolk.gov.uk) or the LADO pages on Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website.



## **Appendix A – Definitions of Abuse from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024**

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

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

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

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or 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 (also known as child on child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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

(Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education)



## Appendix B – Further information on specific safeguarding issues (source: KCSiE)

### 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. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

Is it important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: [www.actionagainstabduction.org](http://www.actionagainstabduction.org) and [#www.clevernevergoes.org.#](http://www.clevernevergoes.org)

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

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim wants or needs.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

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

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

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited; they may believe they are in a genuine relationship.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)

## **County Lines**

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



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

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

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

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

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals.

## **Children and the court system**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children [5-11 year olds](#) and [12-17 year olds](#).

They explain each step of the process and support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online [child arrangements information tool](#) with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

## **Children missing from education**

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zone, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going





missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

## **Children who are absent from education**

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

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

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

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

It is important that the school's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education are followed, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to LA children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where absence from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. As such, all staff should be aware of the school's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures. The LA should be informed if a child leaves the school without a new school being identified and the school should adhere to requirements with respect to sharing information with the LA when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

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

## **Children with family members in prison**

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. [NICCO](#) provides



information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

## Cybercrime

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

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

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

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

Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, not other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at [Cyber Choices](#), ['NSPCC – When to call the Police'](#) and [National Cyber Security Centre – NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

## Domestic abuse

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

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further



information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

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

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

## **Operation Encompass**

[Operation Encompass](#) operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the DSL or deputy) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. More information about the scheme and how schools can become involved is available in the Operation Encompass website.

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

## **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

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

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

[NSPCC-UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects](#)

[Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children](#)

[Safelives: young people and domestic abuse](#)

[Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\) \(includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse\)](#)

[Home: Operation Encompass \(includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children\)](#)



## Homelessness

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

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

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

## Mental health

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff can speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead, Simone Last, the Mental Health First Aider; Mrs Beaumont-George or the SENDCo Mrs Cherrington for advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support.

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

More information can be found in the [Mental health and behaviour in schools' guidance](#), colleges may also wish to follow this guidance as best practice. Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See [Every Mind Matters](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.



## Modern Slavery and National Referral Mechanism

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

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK](#)

## Preventing radicalisation

Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new [definition of extremism](#) on the 14 March 2024.

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a school's or college's safeguarding approach.

[Extremism](#)<sup>2</sup> is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation<sup>3</sup> is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

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

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

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

The school's DSL (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

## The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard<sup>4</sup> to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".<sup>5</sup> This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

As defined in the Government's Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.

As defined in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents>

<sup>4</sup> According to the Prevent duty guidance 'having due regard' means that the authorities should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions.

<sup>5</sup> "Terrorism" for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act).



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

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

## **Channel**

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

The DSL should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of the child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme, and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#) and [Channel training](#) from the Home Office.

## **Additional support**

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

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

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

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

For advice specific to further education, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings to comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals.





The Safeguarding and Prevent - The Education and Training Foundation ([etfoundation.co.uk](http://etfoundation.co.uk)) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

## **Child on child abuse**

Children can abuse other children and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside school/college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

## **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

## **Serious Violence**

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

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

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





- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit sets out the evidence for what works in preventing young people from becoming involved in violence.

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

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

The Duty is not intended to replace or duplicate existing safeguarding duties. Local partners may choose to meet the requirements of the Duty through existing multi-agency structures, such as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, providing the correct set of partners are involved.

### **So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)**

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

### **Actions**

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding



lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers that requires a different approach (see below).

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

### **FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers**

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

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

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

### **Forced marriage**

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

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (chapter 8 provides guidance on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email [fm@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fcdo.gov.uk).

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are



not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

### **Children potentially at greater risk of harm**

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

### ***Alternative Provision***

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

[Alternative provision – DfE Statutory Guidance](#), and [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – DfE Statutory Guidance](#)

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

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

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

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

### **Looked after children and previously looked after children.**

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

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

Appropriate staff will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.



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

For children who are care leavers, the DSL should have details of the LA Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver and liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern.

### **Children with SEN and disabilities, or health issues**

These children can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline.

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

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

Staff also need to be mindful of children's cognitive understanding, for example, whether they are able to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and the consequences of repeating the content/behaviours in school.

As such, any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL and SENCO.

Further information can be found in the DfE's:

- [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years](#), and
- [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions](#)
- [Children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people](#)

### **Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning**

***N.B. This section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published.***

**The governing body** acknowledge that the fact that a child or young person may be lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.



isks can be compounded where children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. Staff should therefore endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

### **Additional advice and support**

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

<b>Abuse or Safeguarding issue</b>	<b>Link to Guidance/Advice</b>	<b>Source</b>
Abuse	<a href="#">Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse</a> - CSA Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse has free evidence-based practice resources to help professionals working with children and young people to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of child sexual abuse.	Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.
	<a href="#">What to do if you're worried a child is being abused</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Faith based abuse: National Action Plan</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Forced marriage resource pack</a>	Gov.uk
	<a href="#">Disrespect nobody campaign</a>	Home Office website
	<a href="#">Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy</a>	Home Office policy paper
	<a href="#">Together we can stop child sexual abuse</a>	HM Government campaign
Bullying	<a href="#">Preventing bullying including cyberbullying</a>	DfE advice
Children and the courts	<a href="#">Advice for 5-11-year-old witnesses in criminal courts</a>	MoJ advice
	<a href="#">Advice for 12-17-year-old witnesses in criminal courts</a>	MoJ advice
Children missing from education, home or care	<a href="#">Children missing education</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Children missing from home or care</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Children and adults missing strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
Children with family members in prison	<a href="#">National Information Centre on Children of Offenders</a>	Barnardo's in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advice
Child Exploitation	<a href="#">County Lines: toolkit for professionals</a>	The Children's Society
	<a href="#">Child exploitation disruption kit</a>	HO Guidance
	<a href="#">Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked</a>	DfE and HO guidance
	<a href="#">Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm</a>	The Children's Society
	<a href="#">Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims</a>	HO statutory guidance
Confidentiality	<a href="#">Gillick competency Fraser Guidelines</a>	NSPCC
Drugs	<a href="#">From harm to hope: A 10 year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives</a>	Home Office strategy



	<a href="#">Honest information about drugs</a>	Talk to Frank website
	<a href="#">Drug and Alcohol education – teacher guidance &amp; evidence review</a>	PSHE Association website
“Honour Based Abuse” including FGM and forced marriage	<a href="#">Female genital mutilation: information and resources</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance</a>	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
	<a href="mailto:fm@fcdo.gov.uk">fm@fcdo.gov.uk</a>	Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)
	<a href="#">Forced Marriage</a>	statutory guidance
(so called)	<a href="#">FGM resource pack</a>	Government MA Guidelines
Health and Well-being	<a href="#">FGM resource pack</a>	HM Government guidance
	<a href="#">Overview Fabricated or induced illness</a>	NHS
	<a href="#">Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience</a>	Public Health England resources
	<a href="#">Medical conditions: supporting pupils at school</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Mental health and behaviour</a>	DfE advice
Homelessness Information	<a href="#">Homelessness: code of guidance for LA</a>	Department for levelling up
	<a href="#">Government sharing advice</a>	Gov
Sharing Private fostering	<a href="#">Information Commissioners Office</a>	ICO
	<a href="#">Private fostering: local authorities</a>	DfE – statutory guidance
Radicalisation	<a href="#">Prevent duty guidance</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Prevent duty: additional advice for schools</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Educate Against Hate Website</a>	DfE and Home Office
	<a href="#">Prevent for FE and Training</a>	Education and Training
	<a href="#">Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding resources</a>	Foundation (ETF)
Violence	<a href="#">Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting</a>	DFE
	<a href="#">Serious violence strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
	<a href="#">Factors linked to serious violence and how these factors can be used to identify individuals for intervention</a>	Home office
	<a href="#">Youth Endowment Fund</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges</a>	Home Office advice
	<a href="#">Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
	<a href="#">Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims</a>	Home Office guidance

<sup>i</sup> N.B. The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for the teacher to report directly to the police, although the DSL should also be made aware.