



**MERCHANT  
TAYLORS'  
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls  
aged 4 to 18 years

# Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

**Safeguarding Children and  
Child Protection Policy**

Author: Executive Team

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meeting of Safeguarding Group

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## **POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES**

The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm. The Governors have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. In particular the policy and procedures aim to meet the requirements of DFE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' KCSIE September 2019 and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' July 2018.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- the Schools' responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- safer children make more successful learners
- policies will be reviewed at least once a term (at meetings of the joint schools' safeguarding group) unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

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

### **DESIGNATED PERSON(S):**

Each of the four Schools within Merchant Taylors' has a senior member of staff who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with the authority and working with other organisations as necessary and should remedy without delay any deficiencies or weaknesses in its arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare that are brought to its attention. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (and any Deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person(s) to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

### **LIAISING WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will usually be the person who deals with External Agencies on matters of Safeguarding and Child Protection. The Schools are in the Sefton Local Authority and, as a result, most of our dealings will be with Sefton LSCB (as the Safeguarding Partnership is known) and DOLA. However, due to the wide catchment area of the Schools, Designated Safeguarding Leads will often be in contact with other Local Authorities. A full list of Local Authorities and contact details can be found on page 37 of this policy.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Key Personnel

| School   | Designated Safeguarding Lead   | Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead  |
|--|--|--|
| MTBS   | Mr. Deiniol Williams<br>d.williams@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 949 9328 / 07982 628620 | Mr. Jonathan Green<br>j.green@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 928 9348   |
| MTGS   | Mr. Francis Lawell<br>f.lawell@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 924 3140                    | Mrs N. Houghton<br>n.houghton@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 924 3140<br>Mrs J. Mayne<br>j.mayne@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 924 3140                         |
| MTJBS  | Mrs. Janet Thomas<br>j.thomas@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 949 9331                     | Mrs. Yvette Bonfante<br>y.bonfante@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 949 9331  |
| MTPS   | Mrs. Emily Cooney<br>e.cooney@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 924 1506                     | Mrs Sarah Curwen<br>s.curwen@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 924 1506<br>Mrs Elaine Williams (DSL for EYFS)<br>e.williams@merchanttaylors.com<br>0151 924 1506 |
| Designated Governors for Child Protection & Safeguarding | Dr Jenny Fox<br>j.fox@merchanttaylors.com  | Mrs Sandy Gascoigne<br>s.gascoigne@merchanttaylors.com   |
| School Nurse   | Miss Anne Dalton<br>a.dalton@merchanttaylors.com<br>07825 910783                       |  |

## **The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies using procedures outlined by LA.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. These may include Channel, CAMHS, LSCB MASH Teams, Early Help or members of the medical profession. If a criminal offence is suspected or reported, DSLs will always make contact with the police.
- Liaise with the relevant Head teacher to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role
- As necessary, liaise with the “case manager” and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member)
- Identify signs of abuse and when appropriate to make a referral
- Have a working knowledge of Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute when required to do so
- Recognise that it may be necessary to reassess concerns if a child’s situation changes or does not improve
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the Schools’ safeguarding and child protection policy especially new or part time staff who may work with different educational establishments
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the requirements of KCSIE September 2019, Part 1: ‘Safeguarding information for all staff’ and those in positions of leadership and those who work directly with children are familiar with the requirements of KCSIE September 2019, Annex A: Further Information
- Ensure all staff have induction training and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise and ensure refresher training delivered by Children’s Social Services is undertaken every three years
- Ensure that all temporary and voluntary staff are made aware of the Schools’ safeguarding procedures and receive the appropriate training and information
- Ensure that all staff are trained in new Government/DfE/LSCB policies and procedures (this will include the Head teacher and all volunteers)
- Ensure that their own training is updated as appropriate – at least biennial DSL and Working Together to Safeguard Children Training.
- Understand and support the schools with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- Be able to keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals and/or concerns. Information is on a need to know basis only
- Be aware of any children who are being looked after by the Local Authority. Work with the Heads to appoint a designated teacher for LACs and ensure that s/he has the required knowledge and training to be able to support LACs at the Schools and to liaise effectively with external agencies, in particular, the child’s social worker.

- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses as above at least every two years. This will be in accordance with locally agreed procedures, from the LSCB. Such training will ensure that the DSL maintains an up to date knowledge of local and national child protection procedures. It will also allow him/her to engage in inter-agency work from a position of knowledge and experience.
- Ensure child protection policy is reviewed and updated at least annually with the governing body. Ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of the policy and relevant action plans have clear and specific outcomes.
- Ensure that the child protection policy is available publicly and parents have access to information, which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later. (leaflets and prospectus)
- Ensure a child's child protection file is copied and transferred to any new establishment as soon as possible separately from the main file
- Work with ICT staff to implement adequate filtering systems to keep children safe when accessing the internet at school (via wired or wireless networks)
- Work with ICT staff, pastoral staff and others to ensure that pupils and staff are aware of how to keep themselves safe online
- Establish and monitor the protocols for checking and supervising visiting speakers who are invited to the school to address pupils
- Be available during school hours for staff in school to discuss any safeguarding concerns – availability via telephone, Skype or similar is acceptable.

### **The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the DSL, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

### **The Designated Governor for Safeguarding**

The role of the Safeguarding Governor is to report to the board that the Schools' policies and procedures comply with regulations for safeguarding and child protection by an annual review.

## The Responsibilities of all Staff

All teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the protection of children from abuse and from inappropriate and inadequate care, and are committed to responding in all cases where there is concern. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. All staff who come into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all staff should make sure that their approach is **child-centred**. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child. Staff are advised to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here".

What all school staff need to know:

- This Child Protection Policy
- The Behaviour Policy (including Rewards and Sanctions)
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 (September 2019)
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

School leaders and those who work directly with children should also know Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex A (September 2019)

Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults, upskirting and sexting.

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that 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.

**EYFS** - each child must be allocated a key person. This is usually the class teacher, however, may be a nursery nurse who can ensure that the child's care is tailored to meet his or her individual needs.

**EYFS** - mobile phones are not allowed to be used by any adult in the school setting and school-only cameras and recording equipment should be used. A separate Policy on the use mobile phones and cameras is available.

If a member of staff, whether teaching or non-teaching, including volunteers, has a child protection concern about a pupil or a concern about self-harming of a pupil, he/she will **immediately** inform the designated person, and record accurately the events giving rise to the concern. The action to be taken is detailed in the safeguarding referral process as outlined in the LSCB procedures (available on the Safeguarding Noticeboard in each School). All staff must have access to and have knowledge of the procedures and follow them.

## **EARLY HELP**

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behavior, including gang involvement and association with organized crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- is a privately fostered child.

If Early Help is appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early help assessment. Such cases will be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse .

If a member of staff feels that a concern should be acted upon and it is not referred then he/she has the right to refer directly to social care (see contact details for LSCBs on page 37 If this is the case he/she should inform the relevant Head teacher of their action. If any person (member of staff, parent or pupil) has a safeguarding concern about a pupil at the Schools, they can make a referral to Children's Social Care on the telephone numbers on page 37. If at any time there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral must be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately. In this instance, the member of staff making the referral should inform the designated person of Head Teacher of their action.

**N.B. Parental consent is not required for a referral to a statutory agency**



## **CHILDREN IN NEED**

Children are defined as being 'in need', under the Children Act 1989 section 17, when their vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services (s17(10) of the Children Act 1989), plus those who are disabled. The critical factors in deciding whether a child is in need are:

- What will happen to a child's health or development without services being provided, and
- The likely effect the services will have on the child's standard of health and development

For children who have not suffered or who are not at risk of suffering serious harm but are likely to need additional support from one or more outside agencies then the Designated Person should consult the Sefton LSCB Multi-Agency Threshold Pathway to Provision Handbook to determine the appropriate level of intervention (eg, CAF, Team Around the Child, Early Help)

## WHAT IS ABUSE?

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

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases issues will overlap with each other. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually assaulted/touched and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

### **Physical Abuse:**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. May also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms or, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Where one young person physically abuses another, it is important to understand why this behaviour has taken place before considering the action or punishment to be taken.

Signs of physical abuse may include:

#### *Bruising*

- commonly on the head but also on the ear or neck or soft areas - the abdomen, back and buttocks
- defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet
- clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body
- bruises with dots of blood under the skin
- a bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently
- bruises in the shape of a hand or object.

#### *Burns or Scalds*

- can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals or electricity
- on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks; scalds may be on lower limbs, both arms and/or both legs
- a clear edge to the burn or scald
- sometimes in the shape of an implement for example, a circular cigarette burn
- multiple burns or scalds.

#### *Bite Marks*

- usually oval or circular in shape
- visible wounds, indentations or bruising from individual teeth.

#### *Fractures or Broken Bones*

- fractures to the ribs or the leg bones in babies
- multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing

### *Other Injuries or Health Problems*

- scarring
- effects of poisoning such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

### **Emotional Abuse:**

Persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. May involve conveying to children 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 them. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse in younger children may include:

- being overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long
- a lack of confidence or becoming wary or anxious
- not appearing to have a close relationship with their parent, e.g. when being taken to or collected from nursery etc.
- being aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals.

Signs of emotional abuse in older children may include:

- using language, acting in a way or knowing about things that you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- struggling to control strong emotions or having extreme outbursts
- seeming isolated from their parents
- lacking social skills or having few, if any, friends.

### **Sexual Abuse:**

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

grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education – see page 20 of this policy.

Sexual harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

Signs of possible sexual abuse may include:

*Staying away from certain people*

- they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends
- they could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them.

*Showing sexual behaviour that's inappropriate for their age*

- a child might become sexually active at a young age
- they might be promiscuous
- they could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.
- 

*Having physical symptoms*

- anal or vaginal soreness
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- pregnancy.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology.

Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);

- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

All staff must be aware of the warning signs.

The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse: living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, mental health issues, parental criminality), history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect), recent bereavement or loss, gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang associated CSE only), learning disabilities, unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose their sexual orientation to their families, friends with young people who are sexually exploited, homeless, lacking friends from the same age group, living in a gang neighbourhood, living in residential care, living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer, low self-esteem or self-confidence, young carer. (see separate Young Carer's policy in the Pastoral section)

Signs and behaviours of children who are already being sexually exploited are: missing from home or care, physical injuries, drug or alcohol misuse, involvement in offending, repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations, absent from school, change in physical appearance, evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites, estranged from their family, receipt of gifts from unknown sources, recruiting others into exploitative situations, poor mental health, self-harm, and thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is “a collective term for all procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for cultural or other non – therapeutic reasons”.

In the UK this is considered to be child abuse. FGM is illegal. The Designated Person should be aware of guidance that is available in respect of FGM and should be vigilant to the risk of it being practised. School staff will need to be aware of the potential risks.

All staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) with regard to any concerns about Female Genital Mutilation, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. From October 2015 it is mandatory for teachers who discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence\*) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 to report this to the police. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

Signs, symptoms and indicators (see below)

- Student talking about getting ready for special ceremony
- Family arranging an extended break abroad
- Child’s family belonging to one of “at risk “communities (Afghanistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Togo ,Senegal, Yemen, Oman, Iraqi Kurdistan, India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia.)
- Knowledge that older sibling has undergone FGM
- Young person talks about going abroad to be “cut” or get ready for marriage

Indicators:

- Prolonged absence from school or other activities
- Behaviour change on return from holiday abroad, being withdrawn and subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit, looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between their legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinary tract infection
- Disclosure

\* It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils. However, they must act if they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Information on when and how to make a report can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/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’s designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and involve 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.

### **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 communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. The Schools will follow the statutory guidance and multi agency guidelines from the Forced Marriage Unit when handling cases of Forced Marriage.

### **Neglect:**

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

Children who are neglected may have:

#### *Poor appearance and hygiene*

They may:

- be smelly or dirty
- have unwashed clothes
- have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- seem hungry or turn up to school without having breakfast or any lunch money
- have frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants.

#### *Health and developmental problems*

They may have:

- untreated injuries, medical and dental issues
- repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision
- recurring illnesses or infections
- not been given appropriate medicines

- missed medical appointments such as vaccinations
- poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- anaemia
- tiredness
- faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)
- poor language, communication or social skills.

#### *Housing and family issues*

They may be:

- living in an unsuitable home environment for example dog mess being left or not having any heating
- left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of carer for other family members.



## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. These additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children and can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

## **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION**

The Schools will ensure that they work together with Sefton Council, Schools and Families, alongside other partners, to track any students believed to be out of school for any reason until they are registered in a new school or other education provision by following the guidelines set out in the DfE document: Children Missing Education (September 2016) and KCSIE (September 2019). The Schools will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the Schools' permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the Schools and the Local Authority.

A list of reasons why pupils may be missing from education is given below. (This list is not exhaustive):

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System –
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children or runaways
- Children of new migrant families
- They do not start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the education system
- They are removed from school by their parents
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Family breakdown
- Children who do not make the transition between key stages (e.g. nursery to primary, primary to secondary)

## **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: COUNTY LINES**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (National Crime Agency, Human Trafficking) should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

### **Domestic abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological;
- physical;
- sexual;
- financial; and
- emotional

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

## HOMELESSNESS

Being homeless or being 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, and in accordance with local procedures, 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. (See Government factsheets at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-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 parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the 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 published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/ or require accommodation – see website above.

### **So-called ‘honour-based’ violence**

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (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 that might be at risk of HBV or who has suffered from HBV, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and 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 section on FGM on page 14 of this policy).

### **SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WHO ARE VULNERABLE TO RADICALISATION / EXTREMISM**

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Merchant Taylors’ Schools value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society’s values. Both pupils/students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Merchant Taylors’ Schools are clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist related activity.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of difference faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations.

While it is rare for children and young people to become involved in terrorist activity, young people from an early age can be exposed to terrorist and extremist influences or prejudiced views. As with other safeguarding strategies, early intervention is always preferable.

### **Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation.**

Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

- Identity Crisis – the student / pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- Personal Crisis – the student / pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student / pupil's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- Unmet Aspirations – the student / pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
- Special Educational Need – students / pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

This list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism. More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking remove space element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations;
- Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

Merchant Taylors' Schools seek to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Any member of staff who has a concern that a pupil is at risk of being radicalised into extremist activity must raise this concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. They must document their concerns along with the evidence of indicators on the Recording a Concern Form. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may make a referral to the LSCB or to the Channel Programme.

Designated Safeguarding Leads will undergo training to allow them to recognise indicators. This may include training offered by the LSCB or WRAP training offered by the police or other agencies. They will also undertake the online training available to raise awareness of the Channel Programme.

## **Prevention**

The schools work to prevent the radicalisation of pupils by actively promoting fundamental British Values. There is an SMSC policy which advises staff. Fundamental British values are promoted through PSHE, School Assemblies and through the ethos of mutual respect that underpins behaviour management at the schools.

## **LISTENING TO CHILDREN**

Some staff will have a particular contribution to make in listening to children who have been through the experience of abuse. It is important that this work is not undertaken at a time when it may impact on any legal processes through which the child may be involved, and that it does not clash with any therapeutic interventions provided by other agencies. All staff are aware that if they are selected by a pupil to hear a disclosure they **NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT** of the guidance given in the *Memorandum of Good Practice* (Criminal Justice Act 1991) – see overleaf

The following guidance will act as a framework for a staff response. Reporting a disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead takes priority over personal priorities and other professional duties.

- Be accessible and receptive, listen carefully and ask open questions to clarify eg. who, what, when, where, how
- Take it seriously (eg. this is very serious, I am sad that this has happened to you)
- Reassure the child they are right to tell (eg. I am glad you told me, that was the right thing to do)
- Reassure the child it was not their fault (eg. the big person/grown up knew it was very wrong to involve you in adult/this stuff/things)
- Negotiate getting help – tell the child you are going to get help for them and their family – prepare them for the fact that you must involve others
- Explain that you cannot personally protect them – but will support them in telling the right people to

make sure it does not happen again

- Report – all suspicions or disclosures immediately (particularly disclosures received at the end of the working day)
- Make careful records of what was said – immediately using the child’s own words and including questions you asked. Keep your hand written notes and submit them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, along with the reporting a concern form.
- Never promise a child that you will not tell anyone about the information in their disclosure – this may ultimately not be in the best interest of the child. However, bear in mind the need for an appropriate level of confidentiality and only share information with those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) and Children’s Social Care.

### **DO NOT**

- Delay in passing your concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Jump to conclusions or make promises you cannot keep. (Confidentiality)
- Try to get the child to disclose – let the child talk and ask only the questions you need to know to clarify immediate safety. The child should not be repeatedly interviewed and the police/social services interview will form the basis of evidence needed to protect the child
- Speculate or accuse anybody
- Ask any leading questions whatsoever e.g. was it daddy/mummy etc. or any questions requiring a YES/NO answer
- Attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse

(based on the Memorandum of Good Practice – Criminal Justice Act 1991)

If the Designated Senior Lead is unavailable, any person may seek advice from or make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board. In this instance, they must inform the Designated Senior Lead as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

### **Once you have received a disclosure or if you have a concern**

- Record the disclosure or your concern on the school’s reporting a concern form
- Immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will meet with you to discuss the case. You should bring your reporting a concern form and any handwritten notes which you made during the disclosure.

### **What will happen next?**

- If you have not already done so, the DSL will immediately discuss the case with the MASH Team and / or Designated Officer for the Local Authority, and always within one working day of receiving the concern
- The DSL will inform the Head Teacher and the Designated Governor for Safeguarding
- If the concern or allegation is against the Head Teacher, the DSL will inform the Designated Governor for Safeguarding and the Chair of Governors
- If the concern or allegation is against the DSL, you should inform the Head Teacher.
- If the concern or allegation is against the Designated Governor for Safeguarding, the DSL will inform the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors.

## **PARENTS**

It is good practice to inform parents of concerns and subsequent referrals to social care unless the child is at risk of significant harm by doing so. Meetings with parents will be held with the designated person and/or head teacher and/or a member of staff. (Two members of staff maximum)

## **ABUSE BY ANOTHER CHILD – Peer on peer abuse**

If the abuse reported is by another child (whether in or out of school), it is important to follow the usual guidelines given above. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm'. In such cases the school should report its concerns to the local authority social care department.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm;
- gender based violence;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- 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;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting/youth produced sexual imagery;
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Staff should treat cases of peer on peer abuse as they would any other safeguarding concern by reporting to the DSL in the first instance. There are different forms that peer on peer abuse can take, all of which are unacceptable, and which will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "having a laugh" or "part of growing up". Victims and perpetrators of peer on peer abuse will be supported.

Supporting the victim:

- The Schools will consider the age and developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the abuse and the potential risk of further abuse
- The Schools will consider the needs and wishes of the victim, listening to them in order to make them feel in as much control of the process as possible
- We will ensure that the victim is never made to feel as though they have done the wrong thing by making a report
- Interventions will be considered which target a whole year group or form in order to avoid drawing undue attention to the victim
- Encourage the victim to improve peer group relationships where bullying is a factor in the abuse
- Consider the opportunities for curriculum support – PSHE etc.



## Supporting the Perpetrator

- There may be school sanctions imposed in order to reinforce the need for the perpetrator to modify their behavior. These will be proportional and comply with each School's rewards and sanctions policy.
- If there is any criminal investigation, the Schools will continue to support and educate the perpetrator, subject to any conditions imposed by the police or courts (e.g. bail conditions)
- The Schools will carry out necessary risk assessments to allow the perpetrator to continue with education in our settings
- If the perpetrator is educated off site for any length of time, appropriate work will be set and marked until permanent alternative arrangements are made
- Advice will be sought, as appropriate, from MASH, the police, local charities or other agencies or specialist services in order to commission the best and most suitable support for the perpetrator.

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Allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be recorded as a safeguarding concern by the DSLs. Details of any interactions with external agencies will be kept along with a record of the progress made by both victim and perpetrator.

Procedures which minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse are employed by the Schools. These include:

- Updating staff on what to look for as early signs of possible peer on peer abuse and what to do if they have a concern about a child
- staff challenging inappropriate behaviour
- providing educational opportunities which address issues with peer on peer abuse – these come from PSHE, assemblies, etc
- being aware of the context of each young person's environment (family, community etc) which may influence their behaviour with regard to peer on peer abuse.

## **CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING**

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 school. All staff, but especially the designated Safeguarding leads (or Deputies) should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur (contextual safeguarding). Any referral for Children's social care assessments should include as much information about the context of any concern or behaviour.

## PROFESSIONAL ABUSE

It is essential that any allegation of abuse against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in an education setting is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. (Statutory guidance is given in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE September 2019). All allegations are to be reported immediately to the relevant Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors in the absence of the Head or if the Head is the subject of the allegation. Allegations of any sort against a member of staff will be immediately referred to the Designated Officer For The Local Authority or, in more serious cases, the police, who will decide if further action should be taken. The Chair of Governors will also be informed. The Schools will follow the procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff as set out in part four (paragraphs 184-234) of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE September 2019).

The Schools are committed to report promptly to the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used and the DBS referral criteria are met and, in the case of a member of the teaching staff, the Schools will decide whether to refer the matter to the TRA (Teaching Regulation Agency) to consider if a prohibition order may be appropriate. Such a referral may be made if the teacher has been dismissed or would have been dismissed had he or she not resigned.

Ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation; and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering.

A prohibition order may be appropriate because:

- The teacher was dismissed for unacceptable professional conduct
- The teacher was dismissed for conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute
- The teacher was dismissed as a result of being convicted for a relevant offence

In order to avoid unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them, staff should refer to the Code of Conduct Section 3, Paragraph 23 which deals with One to One situations. In summary, with respect of a one-to-one situation between a member of staff and a child:

- Avoid meetings in remote, secluded areas
- Always inform other colleagues and / or parents about the contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Avoid the use of "engaged" or equivalent signs wherever possible
- Carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child(ren) when in one to one situations.

## Use of mobile phones

Each of the schools in the Merchant Taylors' family have their own specific mobile phone policy. There is a school wide filtering system in place to prevent access to inappropriate material whilst phones are connected to the school network.

There are particular issues which might arise:

### **SEXTING - Background & Definitions**

The meaning of the term 'Sexting' has evolved over the last few years. Reports which have canvassed the opinions of young people suggest that 'Sexting' means writing and sharing explicit messages with people that they know. Similarly, many parents think of Sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

However, in other circles, Sexting has come to mean the sharing of explicit images. Many professionals consider Sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the internet'.

On the basis of advice from UKCCIS (the UK Council for Child Internet Safety), we will use the term "youth produced sexual imagery". This is the best term as it ensures clarity:

- "Youth produced" includes young people sharing images that they or another young person have created of themselves
- "Sexual" is clearer than "Indecent". A judgement of whether something is "decent" is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- "Imagery" covers both still photos and videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout these updates.

The types of incidents to which these updates refer are:

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

This policy does not cover:

- The sharing of sexual imagery of people under the age of 18 by adults (as this constitutes child sexual abuse and must be reported to the police)
- Young people under the age of 18 sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual text messages which do not contain imagery.

All incidents of youth produced sexual imagery should be dealt with in the same context as other safeguarding concerns. The Schools' response to such incidents will be guided by the principle of proportionality and the primary concern at all times will be the welfare and the protection of the young people involved.

The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children Act (1978) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales). Specifically:

- It is an offence to possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children<sup>1</sup>
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18.

<sup>1</sup> This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18

(Indecent is not defined in legislation. For most purposes, if imagery contains a naked young person, a topless girl and/or displays genitals or sex acts, including masturbation, then it will be considered indecent. Indecent images may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear).

Children under the age of 13 are given extra protection from sexual abuse under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This law makes it clear that children of this age can never legally give consent to engage in sexual activity. Any situations involving children under 13 and youth produced sexual imagery must be taken seriously as potentially being indicative of a wider safeguarding or child protection concern as being problematic sexual behaviour.

In some cases, children under the age of 13 (and indeed older) may create youth produced sexual imagery as a result of age appropriate curiosity, risk-taking behaviour or simply due to naivety rather than sexual intent. Within this context it is unlikely that police or social care involvement is required or proportionate but DSLs will need to use their professional judgement to consider the specific context and the children involved. DSLs will need to be mindful that behaviour which may not initially appear to be sexually motivated may have occurred as a result of risky or harmful behaviour or indeed sexual abuse being “normalised” for children.

DSLs must ensure that they are familiar with and follow the relevant local policies and procedures (including contact with local authorities or Local Safeguarding Children Boards) available for recognising and responding to harmful behaviours and / or underage sexual activity when dealing with children under 13 who may have been involved in creating or sharing youth produced sexual imagery. This is essential to ensure that the children involved or identified are safeguarded and are not unnecessarily criminalised or labelled.

### **Handling Incidents**

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to the Schools’ attention:

- The incident must be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved, if appropriate
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is a good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern that a young person has been harmed or is a risk of harm, a referral should be made to children’s social care and / or the police immediately.

Remember – any direct disclosure by a young person must be taken very seriously. A young person who discloses that they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that the disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

The DSL will use the initial review meeting and interview to establish the facts and to consider initial evidence. The DSL will then make a decision about whether or not to refer the case to children's social care and / or the police. This decision must be taken after consultation between the DSL and the Headteacher and other members of staff if appropriate.

If an incident of youth produced sexual imagery is referred to the police, it is likely to be necessary to seize a mobile device. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that a teacher who has been formally authorised by the Head Teacher can seize a mobile device. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone or to search a young person if there are reasonable grounds for suspicion that that young person is in possession of a prohibited item, including pornography. A confiscated device should be turned off and placed under lock and key until the police are able to retrieve it.

However, adults should not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. Becoming aware that such imagery exists on a young person's device is not reason enough for adults working in schools to view the imagery. Wherever possible, responses to incidents of youth produced sexual imagery should be based on what DSLs have been told about the content of the imagery by colleagues, parents or young people.

## **Recording**

All incidents relating to youth produced sexual imagery will be recorded in school by the DSL and these records kept in a similar way to records of other safeguarding concerns. This recording will include incidents that have been referred to external agencies and those that have not.

## **Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will take a leading role in these decisions, using their professional judgement supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. 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. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

Victims must be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be appropriately supported and kept safe. Never give the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. A victim should never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Merchant Taylors' Schools are aware of sexual violence and the fact that children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence and sexual harassment in this policy, we do so in the context of child on child abuse.

When referring to sexual violence, this policy refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, as described below:

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

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

**Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: he or she intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another e.g. vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- The age of consent is 16;
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

**Sexual Harassment:** “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature” that can occur online or offline. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child’s dignity and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive and sexualized environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual comments about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualized names;
- Sexual jokes or taunting
- Physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawing of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment including non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos, sexualized online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and message, including on social media and sexual coercion or threats.

Reports must be handled as any other safeguarding concern. Effective safeguarding practice should be employed when handling a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, including:

- Not promising confidentiality to this initial stage as it is very likely that this concern will have to be shared further. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed on to;
- Listening carefully to the child in a non-judgmental way
- Not asking leading questions, prompting if necessary with open questions (where, when, what etc).
- Making a factual record of the report as soon as possible after receiving it, only recording the facts as the child presents them, not the personal opinion of the note taker (staff must be aware that such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by children’s social care and/or part of a criminal investigation)
- If possible, manage the report with two members of staff present, preferably one of them being the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy)
- Informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) as soon as possible if the DSL (or Deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

Where there has been a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case. Risk assessments will be written, recorded and kept under review. Most important will be to consider the risk(s) posed to all pupils and to put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved or impacted).



When managing a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with external agencies as necessary. These may include Children's Social Care and/or the Police. There are four likely scenarios to consider when managing any reports of this nature:

- Manage Internally
- Early Help
- Referral to Children's Social Care
- Reporting to the Police

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to Children's Social Care. At this stage, the School will generally inform parents, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer will put the child at additional risk).

Any report to the police will be in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point will be that this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police will remain.

The School will continue to work with the police and / or Children's Social Care in order to provide the best possible support to the victim and perpetrator. If and when the involvement of these external agencies ceases, the School will continue to engage with the affected children, enlisting specialist support as required.

## **MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN – THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED OFFICER FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY**

The Designated Officer For The Local Authority should provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process;

- any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within the organisation. The Designated Officer For The Local Authority should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police; and
- if an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

The Designated Officer For The Local Authority role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers. The Designated Officer For The Local Authority is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case.

Their role is to give advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaise with the Police, when necessary and other agencies, and monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with in a timely manner and consistent with a thorough and fair process.

The Designated Officer For The Local Authority helps co-ordinate information-sharing with the right people and will also monitor and track any investigation, with the aim to resolve it as quickly as possible.

The Designated Officer For The Local Authority should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

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

What does the Designated Officer For The Local Authority do?

Provides an 'Initial Discussion' which allows for the giving of advice and guidance relating to the most appropriate way of managing the allegation or concern, and most importantly will help establish what the 'next steps' should be in terms of investigating the matter further.

Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from personal records and records of all other allegations will be kept but any that are not substantiated or unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

## **HISTORICAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS FROM A CHILD**

Any historical abuse allegations from a child will be treated as if it was recent in terms of appropriate response to the child and their needs. In relation to the alleged perpetrator and other children who may be at risk, the same principles as above apply.

## **RECRUITMENT & VETTING**

Adult access to pupils: via any school activities, the use of school premises or promotion of outside school activities will be assessed for level of risk and regularly monitored. In all circumstances all employed and voluntary staff should have undergone vetting by the Disclosure and Barring Service including application forms, references and interviews as outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019. The details of the Schools' recruitment process are set out in the Merchant Taylors' Schools' Recruitment Policy found in the staff shared drive.

The central principles of the Schools' Recruitment policy are to:

- attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants and identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- ensure the Schools are following best practice guidelines in recruitment according to National Standards

The Schools will ensure that all adults and pupils know any relevant procedures or codes of conduct. The Staff Code of Conduct Policy in the Staff Handbook provides clear guidance about behaviour and actions so as not to place pupils or staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil.

The Schools have a Visiting Speakers Protocol, which must be followed by any member of staff who is inviting an external speaker to address pupils. This protocol is available on the Staff Shred Drive, the Safeguarding Noticeboards and from the HR Department.

Any adult whose services are no longer used because s/he is considered unsuitable to work with children, will be reported to the DBS within one month of leaving the school. [PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA, 0300 200 190]

## **PROCEDURES MANUAL**

The online Sefton LSCB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures Manual will be referred to by DSLs when dealing with safeguarding cases. Information about this online manual will be made available to staff.

**Sefton Local Safeguarding Children's Board website : [www.seftonlscb.co.uk](http://www.seftonlscb.co.uk)**

## **CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES**

The schools will ensure that a member of staff who is properly informed about the immediate concerns as well as about the child and his/her history attends all child protection conferences. Full reports to conference in accordance with procedures, will be sent to Social Care in advance where possible, or multiple copies taken to the Conference where time given is limited.

## **STAFF SUPPORT**

The stress on staff involved in any aspect of child protection work is considerable, and the school will ensure that such staff are properly supported. The relevant Head teacher and Designated Person will be responsible for ensuring that support from outside the school is sought where appropriate.

The School promotes a culture of safety and encourages everyone to raise concerns immediately. The School values its staff and supports them to be reflective. The procedures for reporting and handling concerns, together with the Whistleblowing procedure are laid out in section 31 of CODE of CONDUCT: Merchant Taylors' Schools, Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People and within the Staff Employment Manual. Copies of these documents are available from the HR Department.

## **CHILD PROTECTION IN THE CURRICULUM**

The planned curriculum will include material and activities, mainly within Personal, Social and Health Education which are designed to help children to be less vulnerable to abuse, where this is possible, without in any way implying that the responsibility for child protection is the child's. This will include emotional health and wellbeing, relationships education, relationships and sex education, anti-bullying, online safety, drug education and all work that develops self-esteem and inter-personal skills.

## **COHERENCE**

The Child Protection Policy will be complemented and supported by other School policies and practice. In particular the Schools' policies related to personal, social and health education; behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, looked after pupils, welfare and guidance.

## **CO-ORDINATION**

Co-ordination of policy and practice is the responsibility of the Designated Person. This will be recorded in the DP file which will include: school policy, remit of DP pro-formas, list of contacts, information on level of staff training and an action plan.

This policy will be given to all staff members who must read and sign.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

MASH/Careline Teams are available to discuss safeguarding cases and offer advice ahead of a referral to Children’s Services. MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) contact details for our LSCBs/Safeguarding Partnerships:

| LSCB       | MASH team number<br>(office hours) | MASH team number<br>(out of hours) |
|------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sefton     | 0151 934 4013/4481                 | 0151 934 3555                      |
| Liverpool  | 0151 233 3700                      | 0151 233 3700 (24 hrs)             |
| St Helens  | 01744 676600                       | 0345 0500 148                      |
| Lancashire | 0300 123 6720                      | 0300 123 6722                      |
| Warrington | 01925 443400                       | 01925 444400                       |
| Halton     | 0151 907 8305                      | 0345 050 0148                      |
| Bolton     | 01204 331500                       | 01204 337777                       |
| Wigan      | 01942 828300                       | 01942 828300 (24/7)                |

**LA officer represented on the LSCB – Julie Palin/Tracy McKeating 0151 934 3359 – for concerns about inter-agency co-ordination**

**Welfare Officers – for support regarding assessments of individual cases and training on procedures – Julie Palin/Tracy McKeating  
Tel. 0151 934 3359**

**Professional Abuse – Paul Cunningham (HR) Tel. 0151 934 3209**

**Designated Officer for the Local Authority – Pauline Trubshaw Tel. 0151 934 3783**

**Non-emergency advice for staff on extremism (DfE Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group)  
020 7340 7264**

**counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk**

**Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 789321**

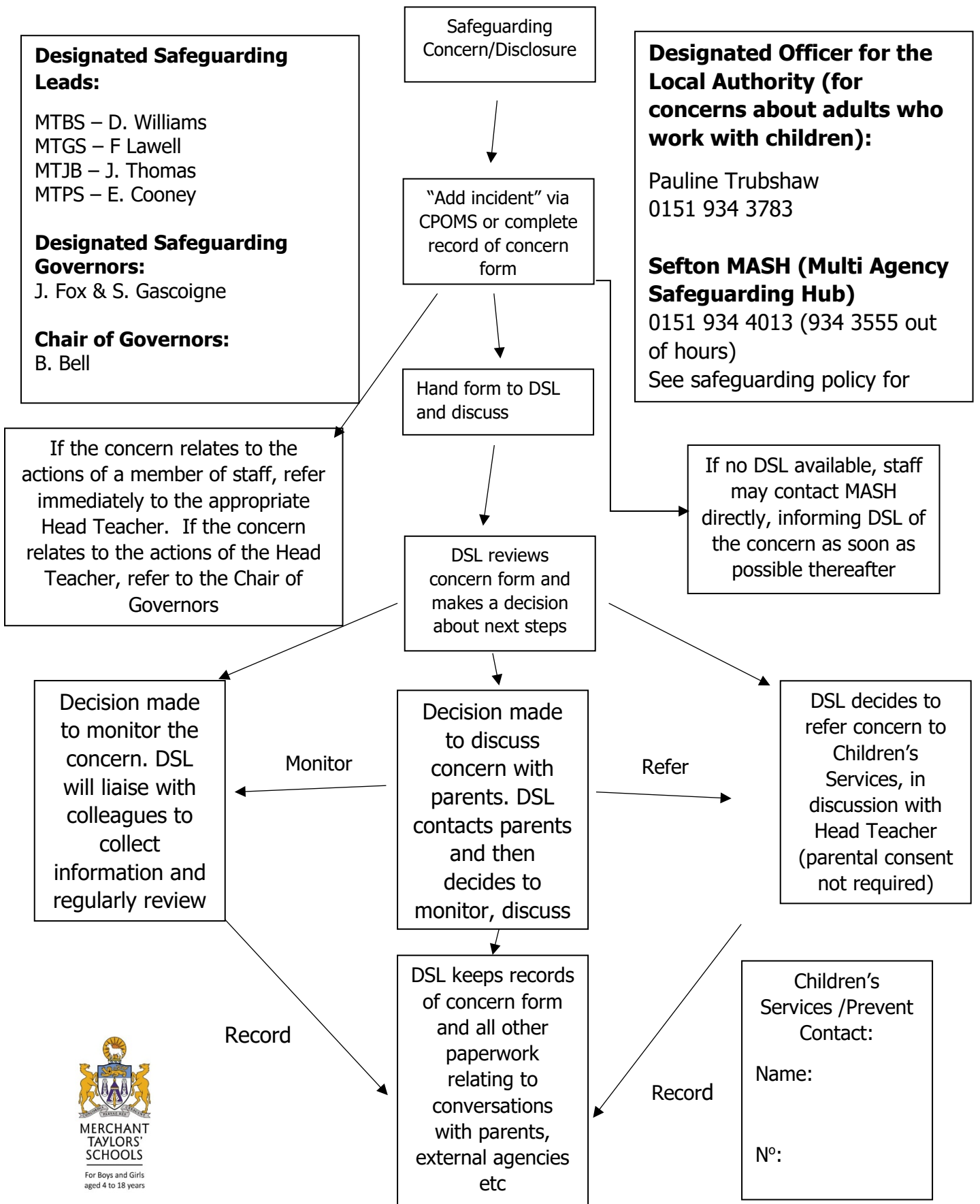
**Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151**

**Police Non-Emergency 101**

**NSPCC helpline for concerns about safeguarding practices within the School 0800 028 0285 or  
help@nspcc.org.uk**

Claire Tao – Headmistress Elizabeth Lynan – Acting Headmistress David Wickes – Headmaster Janet Thomas – Headmistress

# FLOW CHART FOR RAISING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN ABOUT A PUPIL OF MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOLS



## Documentation

The schools pay due regard to the following DfE guidance and other documentation :

- **Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges.:** DfE – Sept 2019
- **KCSIE incorporates the additional statutory guidance Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 :** Sept 2018
- **KCSIE also refers to the non statutory advice for practioners: What to Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused :** March 2015
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government :** July 2018
- **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges:** May 2018
- **The Right to Choose: Multi Agency Statutory Guidance for dealing with Forced Marriage:** June 2014
- **Multi Agency Practice Guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage:** June 2014
- **Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural Information from Home Office**
- **Non Statutory Advice: Information sharing:** July 2018
- **Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales :** July 2015
- **Prevent is supplemented by non statutory advice and a briefing note:**
- **The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders:** July 2015
- **The use of social media for online radicalization:** July 2015
- **Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement: Home Office**
- **Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults – County Lines Guidance. Home Office:** September 2018
- **Child Protection Procedures – Sefton LSCB <https://seftonlscb.safeguardingpolicies.org.uk/may-2017/procedures-manual>**
- **Level of Need Guidance: Sefton LSCB – October 2017**
- **Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children & Young People in Educational Settings. Safer Recruitment Consortium – October 2015**
- **Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation. HM Government - July 2014**
- **Government advice on whistleblowing <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>**

(Updated September 2019 – to be reviewed after each meeting of the Schools' Safeguarding Group)