



Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

Policy Owner	Board of Governors
Last reviewed by Date	Asst Head Safeguarding & Wellbeing August 2027
Last approved by Date	Board of Governors 2 September 2026
Frequency of review	Termly – Safeguarding Forum Meeting
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Circulation:	All Staff & Governors Inspection Portal School Website Parent Portal Senior & Sixth Form Pupils
Related Policies:	Anti-Bullying Policy EVC Policy Children Missing from School Policy Health and Safety Policy
Regulatory Body	Department for Education Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant legislation/guidelines	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, section 3 Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and Crime and Policing Act 2026 Revised DfE RSHE statutory guidance (effective 1 September 2026)

KCSIE 2026 update

Merchant Taylors' School recognises and acknowledges the changes made in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The amendments have been reflected in this policy and will inform the School's safeguarding practice from 1 September 2026.

Summary of key changes in KCSIE 2026

1. Staff safeguarding information

All staff, including staff who do not work directly with children, must read Part One in full. The former condensed version of Part One has been removed.

School leaders and staff who work directly with children should also read Annex A, which now contains further information about safeguarding issues.

2. Family Help and support before statutory intervention

The guidance distinguishes universal services and community-based Early Help from targeted early help delivered through Family Help and statutory support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

3. Online safety and artificial intelligence

The four categories of online risk have been expanded; generative artificial intelligence, AI-generated explicit imagery, mobile-phone-free expectations, filtering and monitoring, and cyber security are addressed explicitly.

4. Child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and serious violence

The guidance strengthens prevention, risk assessment, support for victims and alleged perpetrators, responses to weapons and serious violence, and the requirement for a safeguarding response to all incidents involving nudes or semi-nudes.

5. Children who may be at greater risk

There is additional guidance on mental health, young carers, SEND and medical conditions, children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and children who are questioning their gender.

6. Safer recruitment and regulated activity

The definition of regulated activity changed on 1 September 2026 following removal of the supervision exemption. The School will apply the current Department for Education guidance on working or volunteering in regulated activity with children and the Disclosure and Barring Service eligibility guidance published for the new arrangements.

7. Alternative provision and use of premises

Schools retain safeguarding responsibility for pupils placed in alternative provision and must strengthen due diligence, location checks and ongoing review. Safeguarding requirements also apply to external organisations using school premises.

8. Annex structure

Annex A contains further safeguarding information; Annex B sets out the role of the designated safeguarding lead; and Annex C summarises the substantive changes made in KCSIE 2026. Detailed regulated-activity and safer-recruitment requirements are set out in Part Three and should be read alongside current DfE and DBS eligibility guidance.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 is in force from 1 September 2026 and replaces the September 2025 version. This policy reflects the KCSIE 2026 requirements and the Sefton September 2026 template, together with relevant guidance brought into effect or published on 1 September 2026.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR Merchant Taylors' School Crosby
APPROVED BY GOVERNORS September
POLICY TO BE REVIEWED After the next meeting of the Safeguarding Forum

School	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
MTS	Mr R Yates r.yates@merchanttaylor.com 0151 939 3308	Mrs V Mee v.mee@merchanttaylor.com Mr S Sheen s.sheen@merchanttaylor.com Mrs N Houghton n.houghton@merchanttaylor.com Mr T Collins t.collins@merchanttaylor.com
Stanfield	Mrs S Curwen s.curwen@merchanttaylor.com 0151 924 1506	Mrs C Trainor c.trainor@merchanttaylor.com 0151 924 1506
Ian Robinson Sports Centre & Holiday Clubs	Mr K. Brennan k.brennan@merchanttaylor.com	
Designated Governors for Child Protection & Safeguarding	Mr Matthew King m.king@merchanttaylor.com	

Additional safeguarding roles

Additional safeguarding role	Named lead
Designated Teacher - Looked After Children	Mr R Yates
Early Help Lead	Mr R Yates
Senior Mental Health Lead	Mr R Yates
Prevent Lead	Mr R Yates
Nominated Attendance Champion	Mr G Ion
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Mr Matthew King
Chair of Governors	Mr P Marshall

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1. Policy Statement

At Merchant Taylors' School, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued, and they can recognise when they are at risk and how to access help when they need it. We are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, governors, volunteers and contractors.

Staff working with children at Merchant Taylors' School will maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child, and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act immediately. Safeguarding of children is a central thread of the culture at Merchant Taylors' School.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures will be made available through our school's websites, reviewed and ratified annually by the Governing Body. We will ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local and national guidance. Parents/carers can request a copy. We are also able to arrange for our policy to be made available to parents whose first language is not English, upon request.

Our governing body recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation, and this policy has regard to statutory guidance; Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), Key statutory and non-statutory guidance and any locally agreed inter-agency procedures. Appendix 1 - Key Statutory and non-statutory guidance

The school will ensure we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of adults to deter and reject unsuitable people from entering the workplace. Appendix 2 - Safer Recruitment, selection and pre-employment vetting (Part 3 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - KCSiE)

Merchant Taylors' School will work in partnership with Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area, and follow relevant local arrangements, policies and procedures as set out under the local safeguarding strategic partnership arrangements.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- **Prevention:** positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.
- **Protection:** following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection and safeguarding concerns whether they arise in school, outside of school or online.
- **Support:** for all children, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific interventions are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
- **Working with parents and other agencies:** to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and this includes those members of the School who are 18 years of age. Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents. Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

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.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online

Child protection refers:

- To the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

3. Implementation

This Policy, and supporting procedures apply to all who encounter children in the school, including: teachers, supply teachers, learning support staff, teaching assistants, lunchtime/breaktime supervisors, admin staff, meals supervisors, caretakers, cleaners, visiting students, parent helpers/volunteers, governors, contractors and other visitors.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies and procedures including:

- Staff code of conduct
- Whole school behaviour policy, including rewards and sanctions
- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusion policy
- Relationships - Sex and Health Education
- Policies and guidance related to Mental and Physical Health
- Guidance for NPCC helpline and usage - when to call the police guidance from the NPCC)
- Attendance policy and procedures
- Online policy and procedures
- Health and Safety policy and procedures
- Safer Recruitment, Selection and Pre-Employment Vetting Policy and Procedures
- School Single Central Record (restricted access)
- Single Equality Scheme/Objectives
- Accessibility Plan
- Data Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical/Health Conditions Policy and Procedures
- SEND Special Educational Needs Policy
- Whistleblowing Procedures
- Intimate Care Procedures

- Educational Visits Procedures (including procedures for assessing risks)
- First Aid and Accident Procedures
- Missing Child Procedures
- Guidance on the use of Photographic Images
- Guidance the use of mobile phones and cameras
- Procedures for protecting children when contractors are working in educational settings
- Code of Conduct for adults visiting or working on a school site (leaflet)
- Risk Assessments (incl. Fire Safety)
- Premises Management including security measures (formal inspections and Buildings Register)
Lettings arrangements
- Sefton Level of Need Guidance (assists schools to respond appropriately and make timely decisions about how to respond to the needs of the child/children and families they are working with. **Appendix 3 - Summary of the level of need.**
- Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Policies and Procedures Online Manual can be found at: <https://seftonscp.procedures.org.uk/>

4. Equality statement

Our school recognises childrens' diverse circumstances and are committed to the legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. We understand that children, regardless of their background, could be a victim of child abuse and therefore are entitled to the same degree of protection and support regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children:

- Who have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions
- Who are young carers
- Who may experience discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, disability or because they are questioning their gender
- Who have English as an additional language
- Who are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Who are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Who are asylum seekers
- Who are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Who are looked after or previously looked after
- Who are missing from education
- whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information, resources and support services in community languages and accessible formats.

5. Policy compliance, monitoring and review

Merchant Taylors' School will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt. The policy will also be revised following any national or local updates, significant local or national safeguarding events and/or learning, and/or any changes to our own procedures.

All staff, including temporary staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors, will be provided with this policy and Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 at induction. All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, must read and understand Part One in full. The former condensed version of Part One is no longer available as an alternative. School leaders and staff who work directly with children should also read Annex A. The School will maintain induction, training, briefings and opportunities to ask questions so that staff understand and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the school's Child Protection Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed via the school's websites.

The policy forms part of our school development plan and will be reviewed annually by the governing body who has responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems.

The DSL and Headteacher will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the governing body.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Role of all staff including supply staff, volunteers and contractors

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff including those not directly employed by the school, such as contractors, volunteers, and governors in the school(s). This policy will be read by all staff as part of their induction.

The Governing Body will be collectively responsible for ensuring that child protection and safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and in the school's day to day safeguarding practice. They will ensure:

- All staff, whether or not they work directly with children, will read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- School leaders and staff who work directly with children will also read Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The School will ensure that mechanisms are in place to help all staff understand and discharge their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- That staff, including volunteers, undergo annual safeguarding training delivered by a DSL or DDSL. This training will be in line with Sefton SCP advice and will include Prevent Training, training in online safety and other informal updates as required.
- That staff will be aware of the School systems that support safeguarding, including the current Guidance for Safer Working Practice, the role of the DSL, the staff code of conduct, the behaviour policy, online-safety arrangements and the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education.
- All staff understand the local arrangements for universal services and community-based Early Help, targeted early help delivered through Family Help, support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and referrals to local authority children's social care where section 47 enquiries may be required.
- All staff will understand that a child's experiences, such as abuse, neglect, trauma and adverse childhood experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour & education
- All staff are clear about the process for making referrals to local authority Children's Social Care (CSC)
- Staff understand if there are concerns about a child's welfare, they will firstly speak to the DSL, DDSL or head teacher (in the absence of a DSL), to agree a course of action. In the absence of a DSL or head teacher being available, staff must not delay in directly contacting Children's social care or the police if they believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm

- All staff know what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue, or a child discloses to them that they are being abused or neglected
- All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school. Staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families and speak to the DSL
- All staff will use school procedures for recording any cause for concerns and passing information on to DSLs in accordance with school's recording systems
- All staff understand the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery and recognise that safeguarding issues rarely occur in isolation and may overlap.
- Staff will speak to the DSL if they have a concern about a child's mental health

As part of their induction, staff will also be provided with the following policies and will be expected to fully understand their contents:

- Behaviour policy including rewards and sanctions
- Staff code of conduct
- Low Level Concerns for Adults who work with Children policy
- Staff ICT Acceptable Use and Social Media policy
- Training in online safety

6.2 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

The School has members of the senior leadership team designated by the Governing Body as the Safeguarding Leads, who will provide support to staff members and other adults to carry out their safeguarding duties, and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and other services that support children – see table of DSLs and Deputies on Page 1 of this policy. The role of the DSL is explicit in the role-holder's job description as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Annex B

During term time, the DSL and/or a trained deputy will always be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. The School will maintain robust cover arrangements during absence, leave, off-site visits and activities outside normal school hours. Cover arrangements will include a secure and confidential method, such as CPOMS, a shared safeguarding mailbox or an equivalent system, monitored by trained DSL or DDSL staff so that concerns are received and acted upon without delay.

The DSL will have knowledge and skills for recognising and acting upon Child Protection concerns, having received appropriate training. As a minimum, this will include the biennial training on Working Together to Safeguard Children and The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Education), provided by Sefton SSP. The DSL is also the 'Prevent Single Point of Contact' (SPOC).

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at the School. The DSL will work with the senior leader responsible for filtering and monitoring and with IT staff to review the effectiveness of these arrangements at least once every academic year.

Liaison and Referrals

The DSL will:

- Liaise with Children social care and other agencies in Sefton (If children live in another area liaise with the relevant agencies)
- Refer cases to local authority children's social care where the relevant threshold is met. If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, the School will contact the police and/or emergency services without delay.
- Liaise with staff and act as a source of support, advice and expertise within school when deciding to make a referral using [the](#) relevant local authority pathway.
- Liaise with the Head teacher (where this is not one and the same person) to inform them of issues under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and Police investigations
- Ensure the most relevant trained person attends strategy discussions, case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, team around the family (TAF), contributes to assessments, and provides a report which has been shared with the parents where necessary
- Ensure that any child currently on a child protection plan who is absent from school without explanation is referred to Sefton Council School Attendance First Day Response Scheme, and contact is made with the social worker, in their absence, a Team Manager
- Be responsible for responding to domestic abuse notifications from the Operation Encompass Initiative and provide support to children and their families as appropriate
- Refer concerns about child-on-child abuse including allegations of sexual violence and sexual harassment and accessing multi-agency support when appropriate
- Refer concerns about missing children or any transfer concerns to Sefton Children Missing Education cme@sefton.gov.uk or 0345 140 0845
- Understand, advise and support the school and staff regarding the requirements of the Prevent Duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation
- Refer cases, and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern
- Inform the Independent Schools' Inspectorate of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working with a child (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse, committed on the premises or elsewhere) and of the action taken in respect of the allegations
- Where required to do so, liaise with the "Case Manager" and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in cases of allegations against a member of staff or another adult
- Refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not voluntarily left the school
- Refer to the Police, cases where a crime may have been committed
- Hold information on which children have a social worker, so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes
- Access a range of advice to help identify children in need of additional mental health support.
- Liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. 'When to call the police', should help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do. (NPCC 2020)

Training

The DSL will:

- Receive appropriate [DSL] training, including '**Working together**', updated every two years, and other training associated with the role including '**Prevent**' awareness
- Attend the DSL network, and link with Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) arrangements to ensure staff are aware of training opportunities and the most recently published local policies on safeguarding arrangements

- Understand the local assessment processes and thresholds for universal services and community-based Early Help, targeted early help delivered through Family Help, support and services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and child-protection enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- Ensure each member of staff, including new and part-time staff and volunteers, contractors and students has access to and understands the school's child protection policy, staff code of conduct & whole school behaviour policy
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and disability, health conditions, young carers and those at risk of radicalisation, modern slavery and child sexual/criminal exploitation
- Keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of concerns, discussions, decisions, actions and referrals, including the rationale for decisions and for instances where a referral was or was not made to another agency.
- Arrange training relating to specific safeguarding issues that may occur inside school, the neighbourhood and online
- Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and are confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst online at school
- Recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, e.g. online bullying, grooming and radicalisation, and be confident and have the capacity to support SEND children to stay safe online
- Encourage a culture among all staff and other adults of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in measures the school may put in place to protect them

Raising Awareness

Our DSL will:

- Ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, working with governing bodies or proprietors and staff, regarding this
- Ensure that, during induction, all staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors understand the Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Whole School Behaviour Policy and are provided with Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. School leaders and staff who work directly with children will also read Annex A.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know referrals may be made about suspected abuse or neglect, and the role of the school in this
- Promote educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff. This will ensure that our staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort. We will support teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. All DSLs and DDSLs must read and comply with Annex B.

N.B. Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as DSLs and will be able to support the DSL as necessary. The DDSLs will also deputise for the DSL if s/he is unavailable through absence.

6.3 The Role of the Head teacher

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to:

- Ensure that staff (including temporary and supply staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction
- Ensure policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented and are understood and followed by all staff
- Ensure that all staff receive an induction to the work they are to undertake in the school. Communicate this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the DSL and DDSL, as referenced in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, are reflected in their job descriptions.
- Ensure that the DSL has appropriate time, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensure that they attend any briefings for head teachers/principals on safeguarding and child protection and that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training
- Act as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer, where appropriate
- Ensure that all recommendations made by the Local Authority in relation to strengthening the school's safeguarding arrangements are actioned in a timely fashion
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors can raise concerns about unsafe practice in relation to children

6.4 The Role of Teachers

Teachers, including the Headteacher, will safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties in line with the Teachers' Standards 2012, as amended.

6.5 The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible and accountable for ensuring:

- The School facilitates a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- The School has appointed an appropriate senior member of staff from the school leadership team to the role of DSL with a named deputy
- Evaluation and approval of this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Appointment of a governor to lead on child protection/safeguarding to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board
- That the lead governor accesses the designated safeguarding governor training and any associated briefings
- All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe. For example, 7 minute briefings which can be found at: <https://seftonscp.org.uk/p/7-minute-briefings>
- The School has recruitment and selection procedures in place
- Any child-protection files are maintained as set out in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

- The School undertakes an annual safeguarding audit of the school's procedures, processes and practice and ensure any actions that have been identified in areas that need improving are put into place
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the Head, the chair of governors acts as the 'case manager'
- The school has appropriate IT filtering and monitoring systems in place and should be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty in order to limit children's exposure to online risks
- The School has procedures in place for supporting pupils with medical/health conditions
- Where the School places a pupil in alternative provision, it remains responsible for safeguarding that pupil. Before placement, the School will undertake and record appropriate due diligence, obtain written confirmation of required safeguarding checks, know the precise location at which the pupil will be educated, require notification of staff or location changes, and review the placement at least half-termly. Written assurance will not replace the School's continuing oversight and professional curiosity. The governing body and senior leadership will also obtain appropriate assurances from organisations using School premises and ensure safeguarding requirements are included in letting or transfer-of-control agreements.
- The governing body will supply information as requested by the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)
- Governors with designated responsibility for safeguarding carry out regular reviews of safeguarding practice at the School, typically through termly meetings of the Safeguarding Forum and an annual Safeguarding Walk.

(The full responsibilities of the governing body are set out in Part Two of KCSIE 2026– The management of safeguarding. The governing body will ensure that the school is fully compliant with their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.)

6.6 The Role of the Senior Mental Health Lead

The Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for creating a whole-school approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing by:

- Developing a whole-school approach to support mental wellbeing.
- Promoting good mental wellbeing and preventing the onset of mental illness for pupils and staff.
- Ensuring clear processes to report mental health concerns.
- Ensuring clear processes for managing mental health concerns.
- Delivering appropriate training.
- Liaising with the DSL where a mental health problem could indicate that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. This could include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide.
- Observing pupils and identifying early those who may be experiencing mental health problems or be at risk of developing one.
- Ensuring early targeted support is provided and liaising with, or referring to, specialist services where needed.

7. [Checking the identity and suitability of visitors](#)

The School receives a range of visitors, including professionals, educational visitors, guest speakers, performers, contractors, family members and people attending events. Visitors attending in a professional capacity will have their identity checked and the School will obtain assurance that the appropriate DBS check has been completed by their employer where required. The School will not normally ask to see a DBS certificate where appropriate employer assurance has been received. Ordinary visitors, such as relatives or people attending a sports day, will not be asked for a DBS check solely because they are visiting. The

Headteacher or delegated senior leader will determine appropriate escorting and supervision. Speakers, performers and external organisations will be assessed for suitability, age appropriateness, the nature of contact with children and the checks or supervision required. All visitors must follow signing-in, identification, safeguarding and supervision procedures.

We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities, is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise children or staff.

8. Children reporting safeguarding concerns

Our school recognises that concerns raised by children need to be taken seriously. We recognise the importance of ensuring children feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations. To address this, we have put into place systems that are well promoted, easily understood and accessible for all, including those children who have additional needs.

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).

All staff should reassure victims of abuse 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.

The following guidance will act as a framework for a staff response. Reporting a disclosure to the DSL 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 handwritten notes and submit them to the DSL . Make a referral to the DSL using CPOMS.
- 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 DSL (or a Deputy) and Children's Social Care.

DO NOT

- Delay in passing your concern to the DSL
- 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 DSL is unavailable, any member of staff may seek advice from, or make a referral to, local authority children's social care via Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT). They must inform the DSL 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 via CPOMS
- Immediately contact the DSL who will meet with you to discuss the case. You should bring any handwritten notes which you made during the disclosure.

Remember that any member of staff can contact CHAT directly or make a referral to Children's Services. Contact numbers can be found in this policy.

What will happen next?

- If you have not already done so, the DSL will immediately discuss the case with the CHAT 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. However, consent is not required for referrals to statutory agencies.

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).

SHARING OF INFORMATION

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is as problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care. It is the responsibility of all staff to be familiar with the information sharing arrangements laid out in this policy and to share information around concerns about the safety and welfare of children with the DSLs, Head Teacher or Governors without delay.

The School is aware of its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and of the duty on the School and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold secure.

The principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 include:

- Being confident of the processing conditions which allow us to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.
- Understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows us to share special category personal data. This includes allowing us to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that we gain consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- For schools, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met, they must withhold providing the data in compliance with the School's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Where in doubt, the School will seek appropriate advice.

Data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools>

9. Opportunities to teach safeguarding

Our school plays an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe' both online and offline, to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.

The governing body ensures our children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety), and through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our curriculum will provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making, so that children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others. Systems have been established to support the empowerment of children to talk to a range of staff when they are in difficulty and to raise comments, complaints and feedback about their school experience and any other external issues which affect their wellbeing. Children will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate. Records will be kept of reported incidents in line with guidance.

We encourage the safe use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our children. We will, however, positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who are invited by the school staff or by the children themselves to ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages, or that are inconsistent with, or are in complete opposition to the school's values and ethos.

Our school will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to children are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals
- Any messages communicated to children do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise children through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture or other ideologies
- Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication
- Activities are matched to the needs of children

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our school is to encourage children to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, understanding and abilities, and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate.

Specific systems outside of expected day to day classroom interaction and support will include:

- School Council;
- School Counsellors;
- Listening Service (Stanfield))
- Buddy and peer-mentoring systems;
- PSHE events;
- Regular feedback questionnaires with groups of children, especially around bullying;
- Think U Know;
- ChildNet.
- Whisper

The School's RSHE Policy details the Scheme of Work for Relationships, Sex and Health Education and is aligned with the revised Department for Education statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, which came into effect on 1 September 2026. This

content is delivered through timetabled PSHE/Cornerstone lessons at age-appropriate levels. The RSHE Policy can be found on the School's website.

10. Our role in supporting children who are vulnerable and at risk through a child-centred and coordinated approach

Our school recognises that while all children have a right to be safe some children may be more vulnerable to suffering abuse. We understand that no single person can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who encounters them at our school has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

10.1 Children who may require universal or community-based Early Help or targeted Family Help

Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention. Support may be provided through universal services and community-based Early Help or, where needs are more complex, through targeted early help delivered through Family Help.

Universal services and community-based Early Help provide support when problems first emerge. This may include education and health services, family hubs, youth services, voluntary and community organisations, housing support and other locally available services.

Family Help includes targeted early help coordinated by the local authority and/or its partners and support and services provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Targeted early help is voluntary and normally requires the consent and participation of the family. Practitioners who begin working with a family at the targeted early help stage may continue to lead the work if the child is subsequently assessed as a child in need under section 17.

Staff should discuss emerging needs with the DSL or a deputy. This must not delay a direct referral to local authority children's social care or the police where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child who:

- Is disabled or has a health condition and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs, whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviour
- Is showing signs of being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement, organised crime or county lines
- Is frequently missing or absent from education, home or care
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion or is attending alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- Is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery or trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Lives in family circumstances involving drug or alcohol misuse, adult mental health difficulties or domestic abuse
- Is misusing alcohol or drugs
- Is at risk of honour-based or faith-based abuse, including female genital mutilation or forced marriage
- Is privately fostered

The DSL and relevant staff will be familiar with Sefton's published threshold document and local assessment and referral arrangements. When staff are unsure, they should speak to the DSL or a deputy. The absence of the DSL must not delay appropriate action.

10.2 Children in need with a Social Worker

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL, leadership team and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a child has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the child's safety and welfare. Our school are committed to maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort to ensure the children reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Our school will respond to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks by working in partnership with Sefton Council and participating in the first day response system.

10.3 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

At Merchant Taylors' School, we will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. Our DSLs have details of all the children's social workers and Virtual Heads. Appropriate staff in school have relevant information about looked after children's legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.

Our school will designate an appropriately experienced teacher who will take lead responsibility. This will involve them helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked-after children learn and achieve.

Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities (Feb 2018) is [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the high expectations and aspirations of how looked after children learn. They are responsible for the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans, including prioritising one-to-one tuition arrangements and working with carers to understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- The designated teacher and DSL will work with the Virtual School Head to promote the attendance, attainment and progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children and, where applicable, children with a social worker and children in kinship care. Attendance will be treated as an important safeguarding indicator. Where attendance concerns arise, the School will work with the Virtual School Head, social worker and relevant local authority to establish ambitious and appropriate attendance expectations and support.

10.4 Young carers

The School recognises that caring responsibilities can affect a child's attendance, attainment, behaviour, emotional wellbeing and ability to participate fully in school life. Staff will remain alert to indicators that a child may be providing care or support to a family member. Where a young carer is identified, the DSL and pastoral staff will consider the child's wishes, assess the effect of their caring responsibilities and work with the family, local authority, health services and relevant young-carer services to secure appropriate support.

10.5 Children requiring support with their mental health

Mental health difficulties can, in some circumstances, develop into safeguarding concerns. This may include self-harm, an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or a risk of suicide. Mental health difficulties may also indicate that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should diagnose a mental health condition. School staff are nevertheless well placed to observe children and identify changes that may indicate a concern. Potential warning signs may include significant changes in behaviour, ongoing difficulty sleeping, withdrawal from social situations, loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, physical signs of self-harm or a child neglecting their own care.

Not every child displaying these behaviours will have a mental health condition or be suicidal. Staff must nevertheless exercise professional curiosity and report concerns promptly. Support or interventions offered by the School will be evidence-based, safe, appropriate to the child's needs and suitable for their age and phase of education.

Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must report it to the DSL immediately. Where a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, staff will call 999 or arrange attendance at Accident and Emergency. Where urgent mental-health support is required but the situation is not an emergency, advice may be sought through NHS 111 using the mental-health option or through the relevant local service.

Parents and carers will normally be involved unless doing so would place the child at additional risk. The School will provide appropriate pastoral support, consider a safety and support plan where necessary and make referrals to health, mental-health, Family Help or children's social care services according to the child's needs and level of risk.

School Counsellors

The School has a full-time and a part-time qualified counsellor who provide support to pupils with mental health and other pastoral concerns. Pupils can refer themselves to our counselling services or members of staff may make a referral on their behalf.

Counselling is provided on a confidential basis, unless the issues discussed meet a safeguarding threshold, when a referral to the DSL will be made via CPOMS.

10.6 Children with SEN, disabilities or health conditions

Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health conditions may face additional safeguarding risks and barriers to recognising or reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation. These can include:

- Assumptions that changes in behaviour, mood or injury relate to the child's disability or health condition without further exploration
- Greater risk of isolation, prejudice-based bullying or discriminatory bullying
- Being disproportionately affected by bullying without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers or difficulty understanding, recognising or reporting abuse
- Increased vulnerability associated with intimate care, isolation or dependency upon adults
- Cognitive difficulties in distinguishing fact from fiction, particularly online
- Not understanding that behaviour directed towards them is abusive
- Difficulties accessing reporting systems or trusted adults

The DSL, SENCO, School Nurses and relevant pastoral staff will work closely together and consider whether additional support, communication methods, reasonable adjustments or opportunities to communicate with trusted adults are required.

10.7 Safeguarding children with medical conditions

An incident relating to the management of a child's medical condition or allergy will not, by itself, require a safeguarding referral. A referral will be considered where the incident indicates that the child may be at increased risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation because of their medical condition. Examples include relevant medical information being withheld from the School or a child repeatedly being sent to school without essential medication, placing them at risk.

10.8 Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself a safeguarding risk. However, children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, or who are perceived by others to be so, may be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. The School will challenge such bullying promptly, apply appropriate sanctions and provide suitable pastoral support.

10.9 Children who are questioning their gender

The School will not initiate action relating to social transition. This section applies where a child or their parent or carer requests support or asks the School to make changes relating to the child presenting as the opposite biological sex.

Staff must not make changes relating to social transition independently. Any request will be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the child's welfare and best interests, the effect upon other children, relevant safeguarding concerns, any wider health or neurodevelopmental needs and appropriate professional advice. The decision-making process and reasons will be recorded.

Parents and carers will be actively involved as a matter of priority and their views will be given significant weight. In the rare circumstances where involving them may place the child at greater risk, the DSL must be consulted before parents are contacted or any decision is made.

The School must not permit a pupil to use toilets, changing rooms or, where applicable, boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex. Appropriate alternative private facilities or arrangements will be considered. Where sport is organised on a single-sex basis for safety or fairness, pupils will not participate in the category designated for the opposite biological sex where this would compromise safety or fairness.

School records will accurately record a child's biological sex. Relevant staff will have access to this information where necessary to safeguard the child or others. Any agreed arrangements will be communicated appropriately, documented and kept under review.

A child who later decides to cease or reverse a social transition will be treated respectfully and provided with appropriate support.

10.10 Contextual safeguarding - extra-familial harm

We recognise safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, especially the DSL (or deputy), should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. Assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. It is important that staff provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. Additional information regarding contextual safeguarding can be found here:

<https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/> Extra-familial harm may include sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation; domestic abuse within children's own intimate relationships, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and stalking; criminal exploitation, including financial exploitation; serious youth violence; county lines; modern slavery; trafficking; and radicalisation.

10.11 Children who live in private fostering arrangements

Many adults find themselves looking after someone else's child without realising that they may be involved in private fostering. A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 or under 18 if disabled), by someone other than a parent or immediate relative. If the arrangement is to last, or has lasted, for 28 days or more, it is categorised as private fostering. The Children Act 1989 defines an immediate relative as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a stepparent. People become involved in private fostering for all kinds of reasons. Examples of private fostering include:

- Children who need alternative care because of parental illness
- Children whose parents cannot care for them because their work or study involves long or antisocial hours
- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children
- Teenagers who stay with friends (or other non-relatives) because they have fallen out with their parents
- Children staying with families while attending a school away from their home area

Our school will fulfil the mandatory duty to inform Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) of a private fostering arrangement. A Social Worker will undertake:

- An assessment of the needs of the child, and consider whether there is any help that should be provided
- Check that private fostering carers are suitable people to care for children, and that the accommodation where children will be cared for is adequate
- Decide whether the private fostering arrangements are satisfactory and can go ahead;
- Visit children who are privately fostered to ensure their needs are met, and they are being properly looked after

10.12 Children living in poverty

The School recognises that children living in poverty may face additional challenges that affect their wellbeing, attendance, learning and achievement. While poverty is not in itself a safeguarding concern, it can increase vulnerability and the need for early help and support. Staff should be alert to unmet needs and ensure concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) so that appropriate support can be provided.

Staff will:

- Be alert to signs that poverty may be impacting a child's wellbeing, attendance or development.
- Report concerns to the DSL in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Consider and access Early Help where appropriate.
- Work with families and partner agencies to secure support.
- Take steps to reduce barriers to learning and participation.
- Treat children and families with dignity, respect and without stigma.
- Maintain a child-centred approach at all times.

11. Recognising and identifying abuse, neglect and significant harm

To ensure that children are protected from harm, staff must understand the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery. Safeguarding issues rarely occur as isolated events and multiple concerns and forms of harm may overlap.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical and the impact of seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of the ill treatment of others. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting, by adults or by other children. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may also cause harm to other family members, sometimes referred to as child-to-parent or child-to-caregiver abuse. Further definitions and indicators are set out in Appendix 4.

11.1 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.

11.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which causes severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying that a child is worthless, unloved or inadequate; persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling; preventing a child from expressing their views; deliberately silencing them; or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may include developmentally inappropriate expectations, overprotection, restriction of exploration and learning, preventing normal social interaction, seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another person, serious bullying including cyberbullying, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, although it may occur alone.

11.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not violence is involved and whether or not the child understands what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape, assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing or touching outside clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual images, watching sexual activity, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse may occur online and technology may facilitate offline abuse. It is not solely perpetrated by adult males: women and other children may also commit sexual abuse. Sexual abuse by another child is a specific safeguarding issue.

11.4 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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. **If our school suspects a child may be experiencing neglect, we will use the neglect screening tool to identify areas of concern.**

11.5 Children missing or absent from education*

The school ensures that pupil attendance at school is continually monitored. Any trends in absence patterns are identified and appropriate support strategies are implemented in consultation with parents. The school recognises that poor attendance at school is an indicator of neglect and wider-reaching safeguarding concerns. The school is committed to working with external agencies where attendance becomes a concern.

The School recognises the document [Working Together To Improve School Attendance \(2024\)](#) and the statutory framework underpinning this – to monitor punctuality and attendance. The School already has robust measures in place for this.

Where a child has been removed from the school's roll either by parents or the school itself, the school recognises that the child becomes a "most vulnerable child". The school will ensure that:

- a. The parent gives 1 term's notice
- b. During this period, the school will formally write to the parent to obtain confirmation of the proposed school to which the child will attend upon leaving Merchant Taylors
- c. A member of the admissions team will make contact with the proposed school to confirm that the child has been offered a place.
- d. A CME form will be submitted to the local authority, either confirming the details of the proposed school or advising that the child does not have a planned future education provision.

*This process is not applicable at the key transition years of 6,11,13.

12. Specific Safeguarding Issues

12.1 Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated images

For the purposes of this policy, making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes includes the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude visual content by or involving a person under 18. Visual content includes photographs, videos and livestreams. Images may have been taken by the child, taken or created by another person, digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including deepfakes or "deep nudes". All incidents, whether apparently consensual or non-consensual, require a safeguarding response and must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Staff will **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it (if a member of staff have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

Staff will explain that they need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support.

Initial Review Meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to child(ren)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)

- What further information is required to decide the most appropriate response?
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms. (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services.
- Any relevant facts about the children involved which would influence risk assessment.
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the children involved. In most cases we will contact parents/carers.

The DSL will make an immediate referral to Police and/or Children's Social Care if:

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

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further Review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks. This may involve holding interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). If at any point in the process there is a concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing Parents/Carers

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the child at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through local existing arrangements, e.g. a Safer School's Officer, Police Community Support Officer, Local Neighbourhood Police, dialing 101].

Recording incidents

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded using CPOMS

Addressing nudes and semi -nudes through the curriculum

Children in our school are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our RSE Curriculum and computing/ICT programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is.
- How it is most likely to be encountered.
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment.
- Issues of legality.
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation.
- Children also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage.
- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images.
- The receipt of such images.

Advice and guidance can be located at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

The NSPCC also provides support where children have been involved in making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/sexting-advice-professionals>

12.2 Online safety and the use of mobile technology and cameras

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they can reap the benefits of the online world.

Advice about teaching online safety can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811796/Teaching_online_safety_in_school.pdf

There are four categories of online risk:

- **Content:** exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, including pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact:** harmful interaction with other users or generative artificial-intelligence applications that simulate such interaction, including peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of or causes harm, including making, sending or receiving explicit images, including images generated using artificial intelligence, and online bullying.
- **Commerce:** risks including online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and financial scams.

Generative artificial intelligence

- Where generative artificial intelligence is used by staff or pupils, the School will consider and mitigate associated safeguarding, ethical, data-protection, intellectual-property and information-security risks. Staff and pupils will receive guidance on safe and responsible use, including the risks of simulated relationships, deepfakes, misinformation and the creation of explicit images.

The School will:

Provide safeguarding and online-safety training at induction and regular updates, including cyberbullying, online radicalisation and the safe and responsible use of generative artificial intelligence.

Educate the whole school community in the safe and responsible use of technology.

Operate as a mobile-phone-free environment for pupils by default throughout the school day, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes, having regard to the statutory Mobile phones in schools guidance that schools should follow from 1 September 2026. Any exceptions will be expressly authorised and managed through the School's mobile-phone policy.

Maintain appropriate information-security and cyber-security arrangements, including access control, backups, incident management, response and recovery, and review these arrangements regularly in light of emerging risks.

Maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on School devices and networks without unreasonably restricting access to material needed for education or safeguarding.

- Embed online safety throughout safeguarding policies, curriculum, staff training, DSL responsibilities and parental engagement, with regard to Part Two and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Ensure staff, children and parents are aware that staff have the power to search children's phones.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Staff can bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when children are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils. Staff will not take pictures or recordings of children on their personal phones or cameras. We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

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 – staff ICT Acceptable Use and Social Media Policy.

Filtering and Monitoring

The governing body will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on School devices and networks. Their effectiveness will be reviewed at least once every academic year by the senior leader responsible for filtering and monitoring, with support from the DSL and IT staff.

The annual review will include checks that filtering and monitoring operate appropriately on all internet-connected devices and in all relevant locations. A written record will be retained of the checks undertaken, findings, actions and subsequent verification.

Roles and responsibilities for filtering and monitoring will be clearly assigned and understood.

Harmful and inappropriate content will be blocked without unreasonably affecting teaching, learning or access to safeguarding material.

Effective monitoring strategies will be maintained and concerns will be escalated promptly.

Arrangements will be reviewed with IT staff and service providers whenever risks, systems or School practice change.

12.3 Remote learning and safeguarding

If children are being asked to learn online at home, for example because of the coronavirus pandemic, we will follow advice from the DfE on [safeguarding and remote education \(DfE, 2021b\)](#) and continually monitor the evolving situation through regular emails from the DfE.

Where children are remote learning and the DSL has identified a child to be vulnerable, on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Details of this plan and any contacts must be recorded.

If children are open to social care, we will report to Sefton Council through the School Attendance First Day Response Scheme. We will also inform the child's allocated social worker.

12.4 Children who are unexplainably and/or persistently absent from education

A child who is absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. All staff should be aware that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse, neglect and exploitation, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become absent 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

Our attendance procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. The School 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 2026. The School will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the School and the Local Authority.

Our school will hold at least **two** contact numbers for every child. These will be used as part of the First Day Calling process. We also ask parents for additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education, is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Notifying the Local Authority

Our school notifies the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days

or more. The school (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any child who is to be deleted from the admission register.

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered missing from education.

Where a child leaves the school without a destination or another school is not identified, our school follows Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures and they can be found at:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-children-missing-education/>

The school will liaise with the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator who can be contacted on 0151 934 3181 or CME@sefton.gov.uk.

12.4A Children who attend alternative provision

The School remains responsible for safeguarding every pupil it places in alternative provision.

Before placement, the School will undertake and record due diligence and obtain written confirmation that the provider has completed the safeguarding checks that the School would otherwise perform.

- The provider must notify the School promptly of staff changes and any arrangement or development that may place the pupil at risk. The School will satisfy itself that appropriate checks have been completed for replacement staff.
- The School will know the precise location at which the pupil is educated, including any subcontracted provision, satellite site or change of location.
- The placement will be reviewed at least half-termly, considering attendance, safety, educational progress, welfare, the pupil's views and whether the provision continues to meet their needs. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be reviewed immediately and may be suspended or terminated.

Children who are on a managed move supported by the in- year fair access/transfer protocol

Our school will work with the receiving school to monitor attendance. We will attend all the reviews and if the decision is taken for the child to return, we will ensure they are fully supported.

Elective Home Education

If a parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove their child from our school's roll to home educate them, we will work together with key professionals including the Complementary Education Service to coordinate a meeting with the parent or carer to discuss the reasons and options. This is particularly important if a child has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), is vulnerable or has a social worker.

Non-collection of children

Members of staff are on duty at the end of the day at each School. If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Supervise that child until he/she is collected
- Make contact with parents to arrange collection/gain permission for the child to make their own way home (if appropriate)

12.5 Missing: Children who run away or go missing from home or care

We recognise that children who run away or go missing - and are thus absent from their normal residence - are potentially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, offending and placing themselves in situations where they may suffer physical harm.

As soon as the Local Authority receives notification that a child has gone missing from home or care, contact will be made with parents/carers seeking their consent for a Return Home Interview (RHIs) with their child. Direct contact will then be made with parents/carers and the child, to plan for the interview.

To fulfil the timescale of within 72 hours, it is essential that all opportunities to interview children and young people, including times during the school day are utilised. When necessary and in conjunction with the Local Authority, the school will facilitate RHIs, both in terms of releasing the child from their normal timetable to participate in an interview and in providing an appropriate and safe space on the school/college site for the interview to take place.

RHI's are intended to ascertain the factors that triggered the child's absence. Those factors may include difficulties at home, in school and in the community. The short timescale of 72 hours is imposed to ensure that the RHI remains relevant to the child and enables any required action to be initiated at the earliest opportunity. RHI's are undertaken by professionals who are independent, to facilitate a discussion with the young person that is as open as possible.

The school will check with the Local Authority whether parents/carers have given their consent to the interview. However, children aged 16 and 17 years old are generally considered to be able to consent and withhold consent to their own information being shared and therefore to participate in a RHI or not.

12.6 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse as defined under the DA Act 2021 is:

Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is "domestic abuse" if:

A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive. The Act says behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. The Act recognises impact of DA on children as victims in own right, if they see, hear or experience effects of abuse. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. Types of domestic abuse include:

- intimate partner violence
- abuse by family member

- teenage relationship abuse
- child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

Teenage Relationship Abuse is when there is actual or threatened abuse within a romantic relationship or a former relationship. One partner will try to maintain power and control over the other. This abuse can take many forms: physical, sexual, financial, emotional or social. This includes coercive and controlling behaviour.

In Sefton, we have many agencies who support people who are experiencing domestic abuse:

- **Sefton Independent Domestic Violence Advisors [IDVA]**- they offer free crisis intervention support to high-risk victims of domestic abuse, provide practical help including safety planning for the whole family, support through the Criminal Justice System, and home security checks. They work with male and female victims aged 16+ and work with victims even if they choose to remain in their relationship. They can be contacted by phone on 0151 934 5142 between Monday and Friday 9.00am until 5.00pm or at IDVA.Team@sefton.gov.uk
- **Sefton Women & Children's Aid [SWACA]** – they help women, young people and children survive the impact of domestic violence and abuse by giving free practical and emotional support. SWACA will see people in the community, including the family and well-being centres. They also work with young people who are experiencing relationship abuse. They can be contacted on 0151 922 8606 or help@swaca.com
- **Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (RASA)**- they provide **essential** crisis and therapeutic support to individuals of all ages who have been affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives. This includes specialised counselling, support and an Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service, which includes support through the Criminal Justice process. They also provide an opportunity to give anonymous intelligence in relation to sexual violence if an individual does not want to make a formal complaint. They operate a help line on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6pm until 8pm, Friday 12noon until 2pm, Sunday 10am until 3pm. They can be contacted on 0151 558 1801 or sefton@rasamerseyside.org
- **Operation Encompass Scheme**- Sefton in partnership with Merseyside Police are part of the Operation Encompass Scheme. As Operation Encompass schools, we are alert to the indicators of abuse, and we have a planned approach to supporting children in a proactive way. We do this by meeting with the pupil(s) identified by an Operation Encompass Alert to understand how the (alleged) incident of domestic abuse impacts upon them. Operation Encompass Alerts are treated as a safeguarding concern and are dealt with, in the first instance, by DSLs. All alerts are recorded using CPOMS.
- Other advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at: <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/crime-and-emergencies/domestic-abuse.aspx>
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12.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation are forms of abuse in which an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Exploitation may be committed or facilitated by an individual, an organised network or a gang; it may involve trafficking and may constitute modern slavery. A child cannot consent to exploitation, abuse or trafficking. Victims may not recognise that they are being exploited and may be criminalised for actions carried out under coercion. Where a potential victim is identified, the DSL will make the relevant child-protection referral and, where appropriate, a modern-slavery referral through the National Referral Mechanism.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs when 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. CSE does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, CSE can:

- Affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex
- Still be abused even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- Include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity
- Take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- Involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- 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)
- 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
- Be 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.
- Most child sexual abuse is committed by a person already known to the child. A child may believe that they are in a genuine romantic relationship and may not recognise the behaviour as exploitation.

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 children and 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

12.8 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation is a form of child abuse. 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 professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of CCE too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Indicators of CCE may include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- Go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- Are found in accommodation 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 have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate. If the potential victim is under 18 a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral should be considered. This is usually undertaken by the Police or Local Authority.

Further advice on this issue may be found in the Home Office document 'Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

12.9 Serious violence

Serious violence may include carrying, threatening with or using weapons; serious physical assault; harmful peer conflict; bullying; and violence connected with child criminal exploitation. A child involved in committing violence may also be a victim of abuse or exploitation.

- Any information that a child is carrying a weapon or intends to use a weapon must be reported to the DSL immediately. The DSL will assess the risk to the individual child and to others, considering all available information and concerns. Depending on the assessed risk, the DSL will put in place an appropriate safety and support plan and, where relevant, take action to de-escalate peer conflict.
- Staff should be alert to indicators that a child is at risk of or involved in serious violence. Risk may be greater for children whose education has been disrupted through repeated removal from class, suspension, permanent exclusion or time in alternative provision, or who have a history of offending. Staff should also consider points during the school day when risk may be greatest, including immediately after school.
- Early, evidence-based support is essential. This may include access to trusted adults, work on social and emotional skills, mentoring, therapeutic support, Family Help and referrals to children's social care or the police. Any response will recognise the need to safeguard victims and those at risk of committing violence, who may themselves have experienced harm.

Abuse and Exploitation can:

- Affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years
- Affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years
- Still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual
- Involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- Be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children, young people or adults; and
- Be 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.

Where there are concerns that a child or young person may be or is at risk of becoming involved in gang related activity and being exploited, we will complete the checklist in accordance with the local procedures. See: **Appendix 5 – Child exploitation checklist**

The school understands that Early Help can be crucial in the early identification of children who may need additional support due to gang related activity and as such will provide an early help response when concerns are raised about indicators of gang activity.

If, however information suggests a child may be at risk of significant harm due to gang related activity, a referral will be made to Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT)

The child in question will be discussed at the **Multi- Agency Child Exploitation Panel. [MACE]** The school will be invited to the meeting to support and contribute to the plan that is put into place.

The **MACE** is a multi-agency professional meeting. It is aimed at preventing children and young people from being exploited, by working together to gather, share and understand information and intelligence to identify potential risks, and for agencies to use their resources to protect the child or young person.

Our school will use advice produced by the Home Office for staff to have an understanding of the risks associated with gang related behaviour and what measures can be taken to address these issues. The guidance can be found at:-

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf.

12.10 Modern Slavery Trafficked Children

Our school recognises that trafficking is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to be moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for sexual and criminal exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic slavery, forced labour, committing crime like theft, county lines.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a new statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency (NCA) (section 52 of the Act) on observing signs or receiving intelligence relating to modern slavery. The public authority (including schools) bears this obligation where it has 'reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking', we will report our concerns in relation to the above and contact the DSL should we suspect or receive information that either parents or their children may be victims of modern slavery. Our DSL will speak to the CHAT Team and consider whether a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be undertaken in order to safeguard that child and/or other children. National NRM guidance available at:

https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/learn-more/frontline-professionals/nrm-overview-and-form?gclid=EAlalQobChMIInpLM0pm66wIVeU7tCh2YwAbQEAAAYASAAEgKrKfD_BwE.

12.11 Homelessness

Merchant Taylors' School recognises that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL is aware of contact details and referral routes into 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, the family being asked to leave a property.** Our school will work closely with the Housing Options Team and other services if children in our school are homeless or are at risk from becoming homeless.

The Housing Options Team can be contacted on 0151 934 3541.

Temporary accommodation notification duty

From 1 September 2026, local housing authorities in England have a statutory duty, where the required agreement has been given, to take reasonable steps to notify a child's educational institution when the child is placed in temporary accommodation following a homelessness application. The notification should be made within 14 days of the latest relevant trigger specified in the statutory guidance.

On receipt of such a notification, the DSL or a deputy will ensure that the information is recorded securely, consider whether the child requires additional pastoral, attendance, welfare or safeguarding support, and liaise with the family and relevant agencies as appropriate. Receipt of a notification does not replace the School's existing safeguarding duties or the need to refer to local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

12.12 Children and the court system

Staff are aware that any child involved in legal proceedings should be made known to the DSL. Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Where there is a family break up, making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. 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 special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. 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.

12.13 Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children 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 <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>. Staff must inform the DSL if they know a child has a family member in prison. The School will consider support through universal or community-based Early Help or a referral to targeted early help delivered through Family Help where the family needs additional support.

12.14 Bullying, including Prejudiced based abuse, Racist incidents and Cyber bullying

Merchant Taylors' School has an anti-bullying policy which acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms, e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying.

We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with and analysed by the Governing Board. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences or perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied or victims of child abuse.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Head teacher and DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PHSE education.

Prejudice Based Abuse

Prejudice based abuse or hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's real or perceived: Disability; Race; Religion; Gender Identity; Sexual Orientation;

Although this sort of crime is collectively known as 'Hate Crime', the offender doesn't have to go as far as being motivated by 'hate', they only should exhibit 'hostility';

This can be evidenced by:

- Threatened or actual physical assault
- Derogatory name calling, insults, for example racist jokes or homophobic language;
- Hate graffiti (e.g. on school furniture, walls or books)
- Provocative behaviour e.g. wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known right wing, or extremist organisations
- Distributing literature that may be offensive in relation to a protected characteristic
- Verbal abuse
- Inciting hatred or bullying against children who share a protected characteristic
- Prejudiced or hostile comments in the course of discussions within lessons teasing in relation to any protected characteristic e.g. sexuality, language; religion or cultural background
- Refusal to co-operate with others because of their protected characteristic, whether real or perceived
- Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend or influence the behaviour of others;
- Attempts to recruit other pupils to organisations and groups that sanction violence, terrorism or hatred

Racist incidents

Our policy on anti-bullying covers racist incidents, and online racist incidents and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Cyberbullying

Central to our School's anti-bullying policy is the principle that *'bullying is always unacceptable'* and that *'all pupils have a right not to be bullied'*.

The school recognises that they must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school, and so we will respond to any cyber-bullying we become aware of carried out by pupils when they are away from the site.

Cyber-bullying is defined as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself".

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in on-line forums

Cyber-bullying may be at a level where it is criminal. If we become aware of any incidents of cyberbullying, we will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The school will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate or are required to do so.

12.15 Gaming

Online gaming is an activity that many children and adults get involved in. The school will raise awareness by:

- Talking to parents and carers about the games their children play and help them identify whether they are appropriate
- Supporting parents in identifying the most effective way of safeguarding their children by using parental controls and child safety mode
- Talking to parents about setting boundaries and time limits when games are played;
- Highlighting relevant resources
- Making our children aware of the dangers, including grooming and how to keep themselves safe
- Making our children aware of how to report concerns

12.16 Child abuse linked to Faith and Belief

The term 'belief in spirit possession' is the belief that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling him or her. Sometimes the term 'witch' is used and is the belief that a child is able to use an evil force to harm others. There is also a range of other language that is connected to such abuse. This includes black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah, demons, and child sorcerers. In all these cases, genuine beliefs can be held by families, carers, religious leaders, congregations, and the children themselves that evil forces are at work. Families and children can be deeply worried by the evil that they believe is threatening them and abuse often occurs when an attempt is made to 'exorcise', or 'deliver' the child. Exorcism is the attempt to expel evil spirits from a child. The belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread. It is not confined to countries, cultures or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country. Any concerns about a child which arise in this context must be taken seriously.

Where the concerns about abuse linked to witchcraft and spirit possession for the welfare and safety of the child or young person are such that a contact to Sefton CHAT Team must be made. Information for those who work with children to help raise awareness, and prevent child abuse arising from religion or superstition, a national action plan has been developed. This can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175437/Action_Plan_-_Abuse_linked_to_Faith_or_Belief.pdf

12.17 Gender Based Violence / Violence against Women and Girls

The government have a strategy looking at specific issues that women and girls face. Within the context of this safeguarding policy the following sections are how we respond to violence against girls. Female genital mutilation, forced marriage, so-called honour-based abuse and teenage relationship abuse all fall under this strategy. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls>

12.18 So-called 'Honour-Based' Abuse (including FGM, Forced Marriage and Breast Ironing)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. When staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing is where young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down using hard or heated objects for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. The custom uses large stones, a hammer or spatulas that have been heated over scorching coals to compress the breast tissue, or an elastic belt to press the breasts to prevent them from growing, in girls as young as 9 years old. When staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM and what procedures they need to follow.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/child already being known to children's social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable

- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

The girl's family having a history of practicing FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider). FGM being known to be practiced in the girl's community or country of origin. A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out. A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues.

A girl:

- Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
- Having limited level of integration within UK society
- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to consider the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18, and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health, or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a child under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a child is *at risk* of FGM, or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine children

<https://www.seftonscp.org.uk/scp/policy-and-guidance/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-1>

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the ‘**one chance**’ rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them. If a member of staff suspects that a child is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the child about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the child about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmf@fco.gov.uk;
- Refer the pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published [statutory guidance](#) and [Multi-agency guidelines](#), with pages 35-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges.

12.19 Preventing radicalisation (training)

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 to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorists”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools’ and colleges’ wider safeguarding obligations. DSLs and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the **Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales**, especially paragraphs 57-76 which are specifically, concerns with schools (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: Risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces;

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 of terrorism 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.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk. We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our children to stay safe online at school.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period. Staff will be alerted to changes in children's behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a child is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities, they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

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 alerted to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need 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 DSL (or deputy) making a referral to the Channel Programme.

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages. Guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel Guidance](#), and a Channel awareness e-learning programme is available for staff at: [Channel General Awareness](#).

Our DSL (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral. As a Channel partner, the school may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred, to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required.

Appendix 6 – Channel flow chart

12.20 Parental Mental Health

The term "mental ill health" is used to cover a wide range of conditions, from eating disorders, mild depression and anxiety to psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Parental mental illness does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child's developmental needs, but it is essential to always assess its implications for each child in the family. It is essential that the diagnosis of a parent/carer's mental health is not seen as defining the level of risk. Similarly, the absence of a diagnosis does not equate to there being little or no risk.

For children, the impact of Parental Mental Health can include:

- The parent / carer's needs or illnesses taking precedence over the child's needs
- Child's physical and emotional needs neglected
- A child acting as a young carer for a parent or a sibling
- Child having restricted social and recreational activities
- Child finds it difficult to concentrate - impacting on educational achievement
- A child missing school regularly as (s)he is being kept home as a companion for a parent / carer
- Adopt paranoid or suspicious behaviour as they believe their parent's delusions
- Witnessing self-harming behaviour and suicide attempts (including attempts that involve the child)
- Obsessional compulsive behaviours involving the child.

When staff in our school become aware of any of the above indicators, or others that suggest a child is suffering due to parental mental health, the information will be shared with the DSL who will undertake an assessment of the situation and seek support from Children's social care or other relevant agencies.

12.21 Self-Harm

Self-harm is a coping mechanism which enables a person to express difficult emotions. Young people who hurt themselves often feel that physical pain is easier to deal with than the emotional pain they are experiencing, because it is tangible. But the behaviour only provides temporary relief and fails to deal with the underlying issues that a young person is facing. For some people, self-harm may last for a short time. For others, it can become a long-term problem. Some people self-harm stops for a while, and return to it months, even years, later, in times of distress.

Risk factors that indicate a child or young person may be at risk of taking actions to harm themselves or attempt suicide can cover a wide range of life events such as: bereavement, bullying, cyber bullying, mental health problems including eating disorders, family problems such as domestic violence, any form of abuse or conflict between the child and parents.

The most common forms of self-harm are:

- Cutting
- Biting self
- Burning, scalding, branding
- Picking at skin, reopening old wounds
- Breaking bones, punching

- Hair pulling
- Head banging
- Ingesting objects or toxic substances
- Overdosing with a medicine

Self-harm is usually a secretive behaviour, but signs may include:

- Wearing long sleeves at inappropriate times
- Spending more time in the bathroom
- Unexplained cuts or bruises, burns or other injuries
- Unexplained smell of Dettol, TCP, etc
- Low mood - seems to be depressed or unhappy, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness
- Any mood changes - anger, sadness
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Losing friendships, spending more time by themselves and becoming more private or defensive
- Withdrawal from activities that used to be enjoyed
- Abuse of alcohol and or drugs

Merchant Taylors' School recognises that any child who self-harms or expresses thoughts about self-harm and/or suicide, must be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention will be offered at the earliest point. Any member of staff who is made aware that a child has self-harmed or is contemplating self-harm or suicide will record and report the matter to the DSL as soon as possible as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will contact the relevant agency. Where a child has suffered harm or is at risk from significant harm a referral will be made to the CHAT Team.

12.22 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.

If the School has concerns about risks posed to pupils, we will contact the nominated person in Sefton Council who deals with the community safety incidents. If the risk is immediate, we will contact the police.

12.23 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 and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (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.

12.24 Single-sex facilities, sport and overnight accommodation

The School will provide and manage toilets and changing facilities in accordance with statutory requirements and safeguarding guidance. Pupils will not use toilets or changing rooms designated for the opposite biological sex. Where appropriate, a self-contained private facility or other suitable arrangement may be offered.

Children aged 11 and over must not be required to undress or change in the presence of children of the opposite biological sex. Alternative enclosed changing arrangements or separate times will be provided where necessary.

Where sport is organised on a single-sex basis for reasons of safety or fairness, the School will consider biological differences in strength, stamina and physique. No exception will be made where participation in the opposite-sex category would compromise safety. Requests will otherwise be considered carefully in accordance with the section on children questioning their gender.

Children will not share overnight accommodation with children of the opposite biological sex. Where a child is questioning their gender, alternative arrangements may be agreed which protect the safety, privacy and dignity of all children. Arrangements will be documented, communicated to relevant staff and kept under review.

13. What to do when staff are concerned about a child's welfare

When staff members have concerns about a child, they should raise these with the DSL. This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members.

All staff are required to report any concerns in writing, via CPOMS. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm; it is crucial that staff record and pass on their concerns in accordance with school procedures to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child in question.

The DSL will decide whether to make a referral to Sefton CHAT Team, but it is important to note that where a staff member feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may refer their concerns to the Sefton CHAT Team directly. Alternatively, the NSPCC have a whistleblowing advice line for professionals who have concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in either theirs or another organisation

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Where a child or family would benefit from coordinated support, the DSL will consider the most appropriate route through universal services and community-based Early Help or targeted early help delivered through Family Help. Assessments should identify the child and family's needs, the support required and the practitioner best placed to coordinate it. Where the threshold for statutory intervention is met, a referral will be made to local authority children's social care.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Sefton CHAT Team immediately. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and serious case reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be acting.

14. Dealing with disclosures/Listening to children/Notifying parents

The way in which a member of staff talks to a child who discloses abuse could influence the evidence that is put forward if there are subsequent proceedings, and it is important that staff do not jump to conclusions, ask leading questions, or put words in a child's mouth. If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or other adult working in school s/he should write a record of the conversation as soon as possible, stating exactly, in the child's words, what has been said, noting any action taken in cases of possible abuse. This must be signed and include the day of the week, date, time and place of the disclosure. A body map needs to be used when appropriate. All records must be logged on to CPOMS

Inform the (DSL), who will evaluate the assessment and concern record Initial contact will be made with the CHAT Team where necessary. The DSL can have a consultation with the CHAT social worker to outline their concerns and the CHAT Team will give advice. If it is the case that a referral must be made the DSL will complete the on-line form.

If a referral needs to be made, or consultation with any other agency is deemed necessary then we recognise that it is good practice to inform parents and child of actions to be taken, unless this puts the child at further risk of harm.

Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) Tel: 0151 934 4013

Staff must be aware that:

- It is not the responsibility of teachers, other staff or volunteers to investigate suspected cases of abuse
- They should not take any action beyond that agreed in the procedures established by the school and Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)
- They cannot promise a child complete confidentiality - instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe

Listening to Children

Experience and consultation with children show that a child will talk about their concerns and problems to people they feel they can trust, and they feel comfortable with. This will not necessarily be a teacher. It is therefore essential that all staff and volunteers in a school or establishment know how to respond sensitively

to a child's concerns, who to approach for advice about them, and the importance of not guaranteeing complete confidentiality.

Any member of staff or volunteer in our school who is approached by a child wanting to talk will listen positively and reassure the child. They will record the discussion with the pupil as soon as possible and act in accordance with the school's child protection procedures.

If a child chooses to disclose, the member of staff or other adult in the school will:

- Be accessible and receptive
- Stay calm listen carefully at the child's pace
- Accept what is said - take what is said seriously
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell
- Tell the child that this information must be passed on
- Make a written record, which should be signed and include the time, day, date, and your position in school
- Pass to the DSL or deputy with no delay

Staff or other adults must **never**:

- Make the child feel they are creating a problem or feel ashamed for reporting abuse
- Take photographs or examine an injury
- Investigate or probe, aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse, never ask leading questions;
- Make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets'
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action
- Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror
- Speculate or accuse anybody
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved
- Offer opinions about what is being said or about the person/s allegedly involved
- Forget to record what has been said;
- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person;
- Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

It is good practice for staff who are listening to children not to ask leading questions. Open questions for clarification are acceptable.

For children with communication/language difficulties or who use alternative/ augmented communication systems, staff and other adults may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in the same manner as for other children. In some cases, it may be appropriate to seek the services of a professional interpreter.

Notifying Parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the CHAT Team.

Where there are concerns about fabricated illness, forced marriage or so-called honour-based abuse, parents should not be informed a referral is being made as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk.

15. Making a referral

Concerns about a pupil or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL who will help decide whether a referral to the CHAT Team is appropriate. If a referral is needed, then the DSL should make it. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn't been made, they can and should consider making a referral themselves.

If a pupil is at significant risk of harm, a referral should be made to CHAT and to the police if a pupil is in immediate risk of harm or if a crime has been committed. Anybody can make a referral.

Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

CHAT Team contact number: 0151 934 4013

The person making the referral should provide the following information if available - note - absence of information must not delay a referral:

- Full name, any aliases, date of birth and gender of child/children
- Full family address and any known previous addresses
- Identity of those with Parental Responsibility
- Names, date of birth and information about all household members, including any other children in the family, and significant people who live outside the child's household
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of children and parents/carers
- Any need for an interpreter, signer or other communication aid
- Any special needs of the child/ren
- Is the child registered at a school or regularly attending a school? If so, identify the school
- Any significant/important recent or historical events/incidents in the child or family's life
- Has the child recently spent time abroad or recently arrived in the area?
- Cause for concern including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location
- The identity and current whereabouts of the suspected/alleged perpetrator
- The child's current location and emotional and physical condition
- Whether the child is currently safe or needs immediate protection because of any approaching deadlines (e.g. child about to be collected by alleged abuser)
- The child's account and the parents' response to the concerns if known
- The referrer's relationship and knowledge of the child and parents/carers
- Known current or previous involvement of other agencies/professionals
- Information regarding parental knowledge of, and agreement to the referral

Children's Social Care should make a decision within one working day of a referral being made about what course of action they are taking, and they should let the referrer know the outcome. The DSL will follow up on a referral should that information not be forthcoming. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will press for re-consideration using Sefton Escalation Policy and Procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

The escalation policy can be found at:-

<https://seftonscp.org.uk/p/sefton-scp-escalation-procedure>

16. Child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence

The School recognises that children can abuse other children and that this can occur inside or outside school and online. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for the victim, the alleged perpetrator and any other children affected. It is also preventable: timely, evidence-based intervention may prevent inappropriate or harmful behaviour from escalating.

The School adopts a zero-tolerance approach. Abuse will never be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up”, “boys being boys” or “girls being girls”. Dismissing abusive behaviour may create an unsafe culture, normalise misogyny, misandry or other abuse, and prevent children from reporting concerns.

The School recognises that some forms of child-on-child abuse are gendered and that girls are more likely to be victims of certain forms of sexual abuse and boys more likely to be alleged perpetrators. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. The absence of reports does not mean that abuse is not taking place.

Staff will remain alert to times and locations where children may be at heightened risk, including online, during less structured periods and immediately after the school day.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical abuse, including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- Serious physical assault or harm, or the threat of harm using a weapon
- Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or sexual harassment, including misogyny or misandry
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, including forcing them to strip, touch themselves sexually or engage in sexual activity with another person
- Consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including images altered or generated using artificial intelligence
- Upskirting
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals

Online child-on-child abuse may include abusive, harassing, misogynistic or misandrist messages; non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, including AI-generated images; sexualised bullying; coercion or threats; and sharing abusive images, pornography or explicit content with a person who does not wish to receive it.

Pupils should feel confident to speak to any trusted member of staff. Reports will always be taken seriously and children will be supported and kept safe.

Response from the School

All concerns about child-on-child abuse must be reported to the DSL. The DSL or a deputy will lead the response and make decisions case by case, using professional judgement and seeking advice from external agencies where necessary.

- The DSL will consider the wishes of the child who has reported the concern, the nature of the alleged behaviour, the ages and developmental stages of the children, any power imbalance, whether the incident is isolated or part of a pattern, the risk of further harm and the effect upon other children.
- Available responses may include managing the incident internally with safeguarding, pastoral and behaviour measures; support through universal services or community-based Early Help; referral for targeted early help or support through Family Help; referral to local authority children’s social care;

and/or a report to the police where a criminal offence may have been committed. These routes are not mutually exclusive.

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, a referral to local authority children's social care will be made. Immediate safeguarding action will not be delayed while awaiting the outcome of a police or social-care investigation.
- A written risk and needs assessment will be considered for the victim, alleged perpetrator, other children directly involved and the wider School community. All concerns, discussions, decisions, actions and the rationale for decisions will be recorded.

Even where child-on-child abuse has not been reported, staff must remain professionally curious and must not assume that it is not happening.

Supporting the victim:

- The School will consider the age and developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the abuse and the potential risk of further abuse
- The School 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 alleged perpetrator

- There may be school sanctions imposed in order to reinforce the need for the alleged perpetrator to modify their behaviour. These will be proportional and comply with each School's rewards and sanctions policy.
- If there is any criminal investigation, the School will continue to support and educate the alleged perpetrator, subject to any conditions imposed by the police or courts (e.g. bail conditions)
- The School will carry out necessary risk assessments to allow the alleged perpetrator to continue with education in our settings
- If the alleged 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 the CHAT Team, the police, local charities or other agencies or specialist services in order to commission the best and most suitable support for the alleged perpetrator.

Procedures which minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse are employed by the School. These include:

- Updating staff on what to look for as early signs of possible child-on-child abuse and what to do if they have a concern about a child
- staff challenging inappropriate behaviour
- providing educational opportunities which address issues with child-on-child 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 child-on-child abuse.

17. Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence

The School will respond to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence in accordance with Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. These behaviours exist on a progressive continuum and may occur face-to-face, online or through a combination of the two.

We recognise that sexual violence and/or sexual harassment can happen anywhere including educational settings. Where concerns of sexual violence or sexual harassment are witnessed, disclosed or reported to the school (including those that have happened online or outside of school) the concern will be taken

seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable at our School. Behaviours such as making sexual remarks, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia is not 'banter' or 'having a laugh' and will never be tolerated.

At our school, if a child (victim) reports an incident, our staff will reassure the child that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment and nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

We recognise that the following children can be especially vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- Children/young people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Gender Questioning (LGBTQ) or who are perceived to be LGBTQ by their peers.

Sexual Violence:

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual assault occurs where a person intentionally touches another person, the touching is sexual, the other person does not consent and the person carrying out the touching does not reasonably believe that consent has been given. Sexual assault covers a broad range of behaviour: a single non-consensual kiss or touching a person's bottom, breasts or genitalia may constitute sexual assault.**
- **Consent must be freely given, relates to the specific activity taking place and can be withdrawn at any time. A child under 13 can never consent to sexual activity and the legal age of consent is 16. Apparent agreement does not establish consent where there is coercion, exploitation, fear, manipulation or a lack of capacity or freedom to choose.**

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual 'jokes' or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment may include non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including images altered or generated using artificial intelligence; unwanted sexual comments; sexualised bullying; exploitation; coercion and threats. It may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment or sexual violence.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework>

Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour is an umbrella term applying to behaviour that occurs online, face-to-face or through both. It must always be considered in a child-protection context.

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum from developmentally expected behaviour to behaviour that is inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent. Behaviour that is problematic, abusive or violent is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental harm.

When assessing behaviour, the age and developmental stage of all children involved, any difference in age or development, disability, physical size, vulnerability, coercion and power imbalance must be considered. A younger child may abuse an older child where they hold power over them.

Early intervention is important because harmful behaviour may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour may themselves have experienced abuse or trauma and should receive appropriate assessment and support.

We have a clear set of values and standards and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The school has a Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. The PSHE and RSHE curriculum covers the following issues according to the age and stage of development of the children: healthy and respectful relationships:

- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

Up skirting

Merchant Taylors' School will ensure that all staff and children are aware of the changes to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which criminalise the act of 'up skirting'. The Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) defines 'up skirting' as: "a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks, short or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders". Incidents of up skirting in the school will not be tolerated.

Responding to allegations of sexual harassment and sexual violence

When staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them,

Merchant Taylors' School will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required. The management of children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour is complex and we will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community.

Our school will complete a risk and needs assessment for all reports of sexual violence that take place both on and offline. The need for a risk and needs assessment for reports of sexual harassment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them

See Appendix 7 Risk Assessment sexual harassment and sexual violence

We will ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard and support the victim, the alleged perpetrator and the school community.

All incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes require a safeguarding response, whether apparently consensual or non-consensual. The response will be proportionate and consider the age,

development and circumstances of the children together with any coercion, exploitation, power imbalance or vulnerability.

Depending on the circumstances, the School may manage the incident internally, obtain support through universal services or community-based Early Help, refer for targeted early help or other support through Family Help, refer to local authority children's social care or report the matter to the police. The School will not wait for the conclusion of an external investigation before taking proportionate action to safeguard all children affected.

The DSL will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

if a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation needs help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

if a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

Lucy Faithful Foundation provides support, advice, and information on how to prevent it, links to organisations and helplines, resources about HSB by children, internet safety, sexual development and preventing child sexual abuse. https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-persons-sexual-behaviour/preventing-harmful-sexual-behaviour/?utm_campaign=1540968_HSB%20Toolkit%20email_SOCIAL%20MEDIA&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Lucy%20Faithful%20Foundation&dm_i=48W7,X100,38NO7C,43A9L,1

All incidents will be recorded. The school will pay due regard to the Department for Education guidance: Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice 2018 which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

18. Partnership with parents

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly.

We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

The school will, in most circumstances, endeavour to discuss all concerns about their children with parents. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances when the school will discuss concerns with Children's Social Care and/or the Police without parental knowledge. The school will, of course, always aim to maintain a positive relationship with all parents.

The Child Protection Policy and procedures is available on request.

19. Working with professionals-multi-agency working

The School recognises its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies to meet children's needs and protect them from harm. We will identify children and families who may benefit from universal or community-based Early Help, targeted early help delivered through Family Help, or statutory support, and will enable appropriate referrals. Current information about Sefton's assessment and referral pathways will be obtained from the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership and local authority.

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/children-and-young-people/early-help.aspx>

Schools are not the investigating agency when there are child protection concerns and thus, the school will pass all relevant cases to the statutory agencies, which we will support in undertaking their roles. Staff should understand that alongside this, the school may have a crucial role in supporting the child whilst investigations and assessments take place.

Multi-Agency Working -The School recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will ensure that staff are enabled to attend relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Group meetings, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings and Early Help/Team around the Family meetings.

We will also work with local partners, families and communities in our efforts to ensure our school understand and embrace our local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our children's experiences and horizons. We will help support pupils who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities, offering support and assistance from external agencies where required.

20. Supervision

At Merchant Taylors' School, supervision provides support, coaching and training for staff and promotes the interests of children and fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision provides opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Regular staff appraisals are carried out to review their practice to ensure they improve; identify any training needs and secure opportunities for continued professional development.

Staff will be supported and supervised by Heads of Department, Pastoral Leaders and SMT.

The DSL will be supported by the Designated Governors for Safeguarding and by termly meetings as part of the School's Safeguarding Forum.

****Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for a child's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL. The DSL can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish.***

Child Protection and Safeguarding advice and support is available from Tracy McKeating. LA Education Safeguarding Lead who can be contacted on 07837863075/tracy.mckeating@sefton.gov.uk

21. Confidentiality and information sharing

Effective, timely and proportionate information sharing is essential to identify needs, assess risk and protect children. The School will share safeguarding information in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children, local safeguarding-partnership arrangements and current government information-sharing guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

For the purposes of this policy, “data protection laws” means the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. Staff must not allow uncertainty about data protection or consent to prevent necessary action to protect a child.

Information shared will be relevant, necessary, accurate, timely, secure and proportionate. It will be clear and appropriately contextualised so that the recipient understands its significance. The DSL will use professional judgement when deciding what information should be shared, with whom, for what purpose and whether consent should be sought.

Information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and where seeking consent is not practicable, would delay necessary safeguarding action or could place a child or another person at increased risk.

Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of promoting welfare and protecting children. Appropriate organisational and technical safeguards will be used.

Where information is withheld in response to an access request, the School will act in accordance with data protection law, including where disclosure could place a child at risk.

A member of staff may seek safeguarding advice directly from local authority children’s social care when necessary to keep a child safe. The DSL must be informed as soon as practicable.

All staff are made aware that they cannot keep ‘secrets’ and absolute confidentiality with children, and that if a child discloses abuse or gives information that suggests they may be at risk, this MUST be passed on to the DSL as soon as possible. The child should be told who their disclosure will be shared with and what will happen next.

22. Record Keeping/Child Protection File

Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing as soon as possible. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded this should be clearly stated as such.

At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child’s person; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures. The body map should be used in accordance with the guidance. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services e.g. the CHAT Team or the child’s social worker if already an open case to social care.

A chronology will be kept in the main school file. Staff, particularly pastoral staff, will record any minor concerns on the chronology and will take responsibility for alerting the DSL should the number of concerns rise or, in their professional judgement, become significant.

Child Protection File

All child protection concerns and actions are recorded securely using the online database CPOMS. All staff are fully trained and CPOMS compliant. Safeguarding incidents of any severity should be recorded on the CPOMS platform at the earliest opportunity (including outside of normal school contracted hours). Written statements by any party should be scanned and uploaded to the specific incident log

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information will be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- A note of action taken, decisions reached, the outcome and the rationale for decisions, including decisions to make or not make referrals to external agencies.

DSLs should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two KCSIE 2026.

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

Where there is an existing risk management plan/assessment in place for behaviours that are deemed potentially harmful to the pupil or others (i.e. self-harming or harmful sexualised behaviour), this information must be shared with the destination provision prior to the pupil starting so that appropriate care and control measures can be put in place to mitigate the potential of any risk of further harm occurring. The DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving, for example prior to a transfer programme.

Where information indicates that a child may present a risk of harm to other pupils, including information relating to knives, weapons or serious violence, the DSL will share the relevant information with the receiving school or college in advance of the child's arrival. The receiving setting will be given sufficient time to undertake a risk assessment and establish an appropriate safety and support plan. Where necessary, the DSLs of the two settings will speak directly to ensure that the risks, protective measures and support needs are understood.

Why recording is important

Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is comprehensive and accurate and what the messages from previous serious case reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information. It is often when a chronology of information is pieced together that the level of concern escalates or the whole or wider picture becomes known.

We acknowledge without information being recorded it can be lost. This could be crucial information, the importance of which is not always necessarily apparent at the time. On occasions, this information could be crucial evidence to safeguard a child or be evidence in future criminal prosecutions.

Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the DSL to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging their safeguarding arrangements. Original notes will be retained (but clearly identified as such) as this is a contemporaneous account; they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect.

A record will be made of all incidents where pupils have expressed racist, homophobic, extremist or radical views which will be monitored at a senior level.

Our School will ensure all our files will be available for external scrutiny, for example by a regulatory agency or because of a serious case review or audit.

23. Safeguarding concerns or allegations about staff, supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors. See Appendix 9.

These procedures apply to safeguarding concerns or allegations involving employees, supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, governors, visiting professionals and any other person working in or on behalf of the School. They must be followed where an adult may have met the harm threshold, including where the adult has:

- a) Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- b) Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- c) Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children;
or
- d) Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
(This includes any behaviour that may have happened outside of school that might make the individual unsuitable to work with children. This is known as transferable risk.)

All adults working in our school have a duty to disclose to the head teacher (or chair of governors where appropriate), where their relationships and associations both within and outside of the workplace (including online) may have implications for safeguarding children in school.

Examples of behaviours that would warrant an allegation or safeguarding concern by a member of staff could include:

- Physical, for example intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects or rough physical handling.
- Emotional, for example intimidation, belittling, scapegoating, sarcasm, lack of respect for children's rights, and attitudes which discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, sex, disability or sexuality.
- Sexual, for example sexualised behaviour towards pupils, grooming, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, sending inappropriate messages through social media and other technologies.
- Neglect which may include failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to carry out appropriate/proper risk assessment etc.

A concern or allegation that may meet the harm threshold must be reported to the Headteacher, who will act as case manager. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will act as case manager. The case manager will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer without delay and, in any event, within one working day. Where a concern does not clearly meet the harm threshold, the case

manager will consider whether advice from or referral to the LADO is appropriate before categorising it as a low-level concern.

Where a Headteacher determines that a safeguarding allegation does not meet the harm threshold in line with the criteria above they will refer the matter to be managed in line with Part 4 KCSIE 2026 by a designated manager with appropriate safeguarding training. It is important for the Head teacher to carefully consider who in school is best placed to manage concerns that do not meet the harm threshold and ensure appropriate action is taken given the sensitive and confidential nature of the information relating to staff over time. In many cases the Head teacher may decide to retain this role if they have appropriate safeguarding training.

All staff must fully understand that any adult behaviours that deviate from the Guidance for Safer Working Practice, including inappropriate conduct outside of work are a concern, even if they are low-level. Low-level concerns are concerns that do not meet the harm test/allegations threshold. Examples of such behaviour as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 include:

- Being over familiar with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- Humiliating children

Such low-level concerns are dealt with by the School's Low-Level Concerns about Adults Working with Children Policy.

The School will consider seeking advice from or making a referral to the LADO where there is uncertainty about whether a concern meets the harm threshold or whether a pattern of concerns changes the appropriate response.

The case manager should ensure that the child is not at risk and where appropriate ensure that the child is referred to the local authority CHAT Team as referenced in Part 1 of KCSIE 2026.

The case manager should gather as much information about the alleged incident as necessary in order to establish whether there is substance to the allegation. In situations where the case manager determines that the harm test has not been met the case manager must ensure that there is a clear record of the incident, include any actions (including whether any HR advice had been sought and actioned) taken to address the concern raised. This record must be kept confidential, stored securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. All low-level concern records will be kept until the adult concerned leaves the School's employment.

In situations where the case manager has sufficient information to suggest that the harm test/allegations threshold has been met, the case manager must use the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) notification form (**see Appendix 8**) in order to assess the level of concern, **prior to contacting the LADO**. As part of this initial consideration, the case manager should consult with their school's HR Advisor/provider/contact or in the case of a supply member of staff the supply agency safeguarding lead/senior manager. The completed LADO notification form must be sent to SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk **within one working day of the allegation being made**. This will assist the case manager and HR/supply agency senior manager in consultation with the LADO to decide on the most appropriate course of action. This includes when to inform the member of staff of the concerns

raised. Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it.

Where an allegation concerns a supply teacher, trainee teacher or contracted worker, the School shares safeguarding responsibility with the agency, initial teacher-training provider or employing organisation. Because the incident occurred within or is connected with the School, the School will lead on gathering the facts and managing immediate safeguarding action. The employer or training provider will normally retain responsibility for employment, disciplinary or training decisions.

The School will not cease to use a supply teacher, trainee teacher or contracted worker solely as an alternative to addressing a safeguarding concern or completing the allegations-management process. The relevant agency or provider will be involved in discussions and decisions, subject to advice from the LADO, police or children's social care.

The case manager **must not** carry out an investigation or **directly interview** an individual about whom there is a concern until the above process has been duly completed and relevant partners have been consulted.

A multi-agency allegations management strategy meeting may be arranged to look at the allegation in its widest context. The case manager must attend this meeting, which will be arranged by the LADO. All issues must be recorded, and the outcome reached must be noted to ensure closure.

In many cases it may be appropriate to provide further training and support to staff/volunteers and ensure that they are clear about the expectations for their conduct.

In more serious cases, allegations may be investigated under the formal disciplinary procedures and, where allegations are upheld, formal warnings issued as well as specific training and support. In cases where children/young people may be at further risk and/or evidence/witnesses may be compromised and/or the allegations are so serious that they may, if upheld, constitute gross misconduct, suspension of the member of staff/volunteer may be appropriate and should be considered in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy.

Any staff/volunteers who are dismissed by the school for gross misconduct or cumulative misconduct relating to safeguarding of children/young people will be referred to the DBS for consideration of barring. Similarly, where the school has a reasonable belief that the member of staff/volunteer would have been dismissed by the school had they been employed at the time of the conclusion of investigations, they will be referred to the DBS. The school will keep written records of all the above. Teaching staff may also be referred to the TRA.

In our EYFS setting, we will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

LADO Contact: Tracey Holyhead 0151 934 3783

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they can contact:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Record Keeping – for all allegations, other than those found to have been malicious or false, the following information will be kept on the file of the person accused:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken and decisions reached and whether the allegation was substantiated, unsubstantiated or unfounded.
- A copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by children's social care or the police
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

24. Whistleblowing

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Adults working in the school may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or for fear of harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Staff must remember that it is often the most vulnerable child who is targeted. These children need adults they can trust to safeguard their welfare.

Reasons for whistleblowing:

- Everyone has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistleblowing?

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern:

- Voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is causing concern and why
- Approach the DSL
- Staff should ensure they get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest If a staff member feels their genuine concerns are not being addressed, the issue should be referred to Sefton CHAT Team
- Ideally, concerns should be put in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places wherever possible

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- The individual reporting the concerns will be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- The employer has a responsibility to protect individual members of staff from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against an individual if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Self-reporting:

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support:

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from senior managers, HR provider and/or your professional or trade union. The school has Whistleblowing procedures, a copy of which can be found in the Whistleblowing Policy.

25. Use of reasonable force in schools and colleges - see also the Staff Code of Conduct

The term “reasonable force” covers actions involving a degree of physical contact to control or restrain a child. There are limited circumstances in which it may be appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard a child or another person.

Any force used must be reasonable and proportionate, use no more force than is necessary and continue for the least amount of time necessary. Decisions will be based on the circumstances known to the member of staff at the time and their professional judgement.

A blanket “no-contact” policy may prevent staff from acting appropriately to safeguard a child or another person and will not be adopted. Staff will follow the Staff Code of Conduct, behaviour procedures and current government guidance on restrictive interventions.

When considering reasonable force involving a child with SEND, a mental-health need or a medical condition, staff will take account of the child’s additional vulnerability, the Equality Act 2010 and the need for reasonable adjustments.

Wherever possible, the School will use positive and proactive planning, including individual behaviour, safety or support plans agreed with parents and relevant professionals.

26. Use of school premises for non-school activities

When services or activities are provided by the governing body of our school under the direct supervision or management of our staff all arrangements for child protection and safeguarding will apply. Our school will seek assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe including a child protection

policy when the premises are hired, leased and rented out to organisations who provide activities and services and who are not part of the school.

We will inspect all associated documentation and ensure the organisation will liaise with the school when any concerns are raised. We will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

These safeguarding expectations apply whether or not the children attending the activity are pupils of the School. Organisations using the premises must have appropriate safeguarding and child-protection procedures, safer-recruitment arrangements, staff training and procedures for managing allegations.

The organisation must notify the School promptly of any safeguarding concern connected with the premises or activity. The School will have regard to Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition when assessing the suitability of arrangements. Failure to comply with safeguarding requirements, including failure to report a concern, may result in immediate suspension or termination of the letting or transfer-of-control agreement.

27. Safeguarding in PE and Sport

The School recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend to all PE lessons, sporting activities, clubs, fixtures and competitions. Appropriate supervision, risk assessments and behaviour expectations will be maintained to ensure children are safe, respected and supported.

All staff, coaches, volunteers and external providers involved in sport must maintain professional boundaries, follow the School's safeguarding procedures and report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The School will ensure that external sports providers have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place, including safer recruitment and safeguarding training where required. Any concerns arising during PE or sporting activities will be managed in accordance with this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

28. Complaints

Our school has a published complaints procedure available to parents/carers and anyone for anyone across the school community who wishes to report concerns. Any concerns that are related to an allegation against a member of staff including volunteers and contractors will be dealt with under the managing allegations against staff procedures that are in place.

29. USEFUL CONTACTS:

NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Sefton CHAT Team	0151 934 4013
Sefton FAST Team	0151 934 4545
Out of Hours Service	0151 934 3555
PREVENT (Single point of contact) Chris White	0151 934 3370
Merseyside Police	101 / Emergency 999
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Tracey Holyhead	0151 934 3783// 07814059604
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Vicky Lowndes	0151 0151 934 4272 07971623428
Children Missing Education Co-ordinator Clare Johannsen	0151 934 3181
CAMHS (single point of access)	0151 282 4527
Bully Busters	0800 169 6928
Sefton Women & Children's Aid (SWACA)	0151 922 8606
OPERATION ENCOMPASS -	
Independent domestic abuse advisors (IDVA)	0151 934 5142
VENUS	0151 474 4744
Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre [RASA] Sefton	0151 558 1801
Parenting 2000	01704 380047 / 0151 932 1163
Housing Options	0151 934 3541
Change Grow Live drug and alcohol service Bootle/Southport	0151 203 9755 Sefton.Services@cgl.org.uk
LSCB Business Manager Zara Hakobyan	0151 934 4706
LSCB Administrator Danielle.Cannon	0151 934 4706
SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service)	0151 433 7442 Email Sefton SENDIASS - Kids

Contacts for children who go to school in Sefton but live in neighbouring local authorities

Local Authority	Telephone number	Out of hours
Liverpool Children's Social Care / CASS	0151 459 2606.	0151 459 2606 (same as CASS)
Knowsley MASH	0151 443 2600	0151 443 2600 (same as MASH)
Lancashire Care Connect	0300 123 6720	0300 123 6722

Appendix 1: STATUTORY FRAMEWORK KEY STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Merchant Taylors' School will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> and the Governance Handbook.

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, section 3.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 is statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support and protect children and replaces the 2023 edition.

Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils

[The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques

Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school

[The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

[Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

[The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

Department for Education guidance: Working or volunteering in regulated activity with children, including the removal of the supervision exemption from 1 September 2026.
Disclosure and Barring Service guidance published on 1 September 2026 on eligibility for roles working with children and eligibility for Enhanced DBS checks with Children's Barred List information.

Statutory [Guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism

[The Use of Social Media for on-line radicalisation \(July 2015\)](#)

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (current edition). <https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/13ecce28-e8f2-49e9-83c6-c29337cd8071~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners and organisations. <https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/5aba001d-e2e6-42ee-b9cb-bd44831f65f0~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (current edition). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

Generative artificial intelligence in education; Mobile phones in schools; and current online-safety, filtering and monitoring guidance.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education: revised statutory guidance, effective from 1 September 2026.

Temporary accommodation notification duty: statutory and supporting guidance published on 1 September 2026.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Children Missing Education statutory guidance and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

When to call the police: guidance [https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children and Young people/When to call the police guidance for schools and colleges.pdf](https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf) for schools and colleges. [https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children and Young people/When to call the police guidance for schools and colleges.pdf](https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf)

Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and allergy-safety guidance.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040671/Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040671/Actions_for_early_years_and_childcare_providers_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic.pdf)

Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Crime and Policing Act 2026.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/16/contents/enacted>

Schools and colleges are under a statutory duty to cooperate with the published Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements.

The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2018](#) and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children

This policy also meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the current Statutory Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> for the Early Years Foundation

Appendix 2

Safer Recruitment, selection and pre-employment vetting

The school aims to create a culture of safe recruitment by adopting procedures that will help deter, reject or identify people who may be a risk to the safety of children.

European Economic Area (EEA) regulating authority teacher sanctions or restrictions

From 1 January 2021, the Teaching Regulation Agency's systems no longer maintain a list of sanctions imposed by EEA member states. The School will use the Department for Education's "Check a teacher's record" service and undertake any other overseas checks that are appropriate and available.

Advert to recruit

Our advert will state:

- Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children
- **Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account**

Application forms

Our application forms will include:

- a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
- a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders

Shortlisting

When shortlisting candidates our process will:

- Involve at least 2 people
- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns

All candidates who are shortlisted will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they can share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:

- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list

- Whether they are prohibited from teaching
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
- Any relevant overseas information
- Signing a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

Employment history and obtaining references

We will obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references, we will:

- Not accept open references
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this

- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made

Pre-appointment vetting checks - We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff - All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken. An individual may join the DBS Update Service when applying for a DBS certificate or within 30 calendar days of the certificate's issue date.
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards

- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher

We will undertake additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. Where available, these will include:

- For all staff, including teaching positions: [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#)
- For teaching positions: obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked

Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state. Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual fall outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity

- A person will be engaging in regulated activity with children where, through paid work or volunteering, they teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children; provide advice or guidance relating to a child's physical, emotional or educational wellbeing; drive a vehicle used only for children; or undertake other paid work in a specified establishment, including a school, which provides an opportunity for contact with children, and the activity is carried out frequently, on more than three days in any 30-day period or overnight.
- Relevant personal care and healthcare provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated healthcare professional are regulated activity even if carried out only once.
- From 1 September 2026, supervision no longer determines whether teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children is regulated activity. Where the activity is carried out frequently (more than three days in any 30-day period) or overnight, the role is regulated activity whether or not the person is supervised. The School will use current DfE and DBS eligibility guidance to determine the correct level of check.

Existing staff and volunteers - in certain circumstances the School will carry out all relevant checks as if the individual were a new member of staff. These circumstances include where:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual move from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

The School will refer any employee, former employee or volunteer to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the statutory conditions are met, including where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

- The legal duty to make a DBS referral applies equally to volunteers, including where the person would have been removed from regulated activity had they not resigned, ceased volunteering or otherwise left.

Agency and third-party staff -We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors -We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

Where an individual working at the School is self-employed, the School will either obtain the appropriate DBS check or ask to see the certificate where the individual has obtained their own check. The School will verify that the check is at the level required for the work being undertaken and will not retain a copy for longer than permitted.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual fall outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers - Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

From 1 September 2026, any existing volunteer whose role is now regulated activity because the supervision exemption has been removed must have their children's barred-list status checked. The School will normally obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information and will follow current DfE and DBS guidance on the limited circumstances in which a standalone barred-list check may be available.

The School will:

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information for any volunteer undertaking regulated activity
- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or permit them to undertake regulated activity
- Complete and retain a written risk assessment for volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity

- Consider the nature and frequency of the work, what is known about the volunteer, available references and whether a basic or enhanced DBS check without barred-list information is appropriate
- Record the assessment, decision and rationale

Schools with pupils aged under 8 add:

- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under [section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#)).
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state. All governors will also have the following checks:

- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where the School places a pupil with an alternative-provision provider, it will obtain written confirmation of appropriate checks, undertake its own due diligence, confirm the exact delivery location and any subcontracting arrangements, require prompt notification of staff or location changes and maintain ongoing safeguarding oversight.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, the School will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

Where a person will teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise a child on work experience frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period or overnight, that person will be engaging in regulated activity and must not be included on the children's barred list. Other adults in the workplace do not undertake regulated activity solely because a child is on placement. The School cannot require a work-experience provider to obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred-list information for a person supervising a child aged 16 or 17, but will satisfy itself that appropriate safeguarding and health-and-safety arrangements are in place.

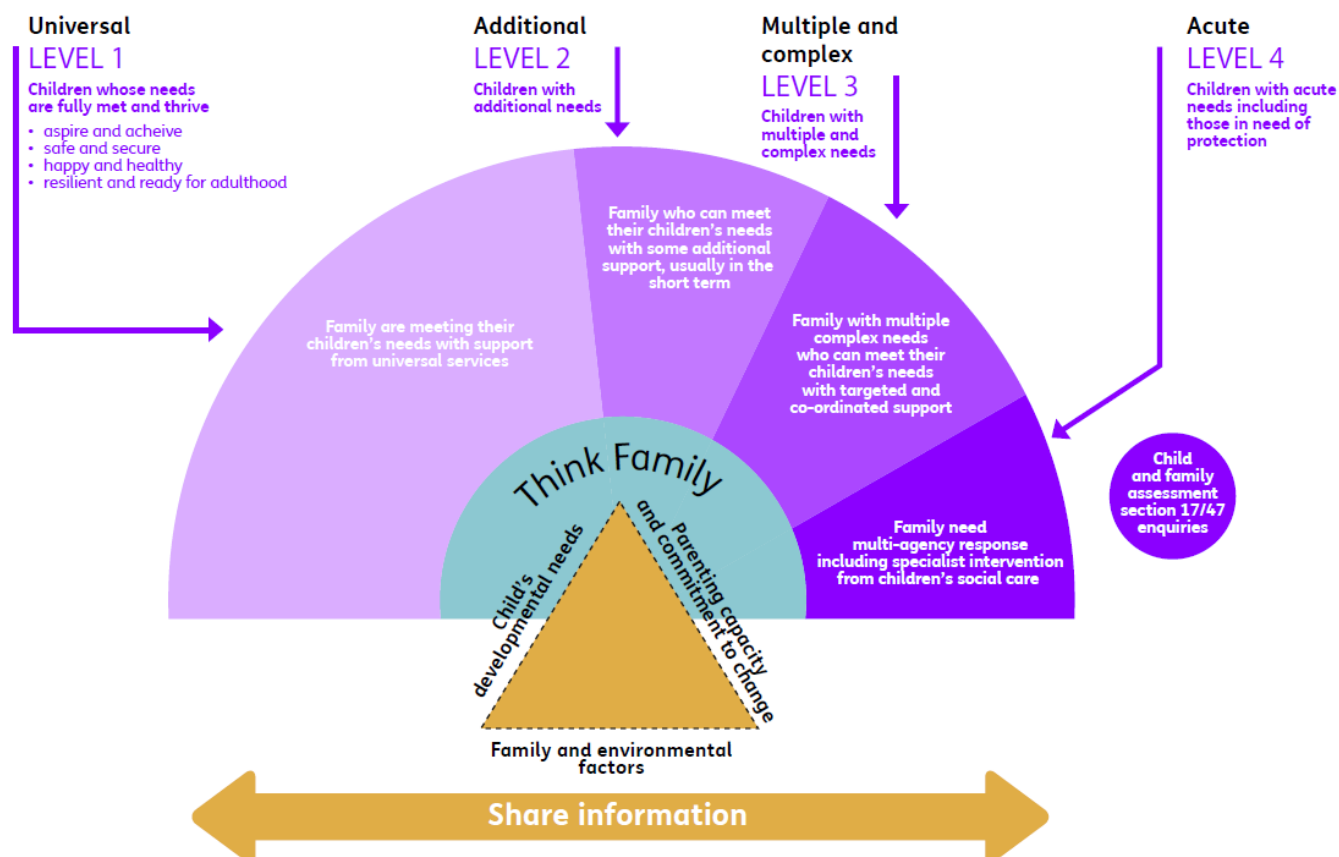
Pupils staying with host families

Where the School arranges for a visiting child to receive care and accommodation in the UK from a host family to whom they are not related, including where a third party makes the arrangements on behalf of the School, the responsible adults in the host household will be undertaking regulated activity for the duration

of the stay. The School will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information for those adults and will consider whether an enhanced DBS check should also be obtained for any other person aged 16 or over living in the household.

Where homestay arrangements are made overseas and DBS checks are unavailable, the School will work with its partner organisation to establish and document equivalent assurances. Parents will be informed of the arrangements and children will be told clearly whom to contact in an emergency or if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Appendix 3: Levels of Need – Level Descriptors



(REMEMBER: Levels of Need descriptors are to be used as a guidance only)

Where need is identified an appropriate response must be taken. As every child and family is unique descriptors of need provided are not prescriptive or exhaustive. All needs must be considered on a case by case basis and decisions should be made using professional judgement:

Level 1 – Children whose needs are fully met and thrive: Needs met through universal services Voice of the Child'; "Mum knows where to get help if she needs it and so I stay safe and warm in her womb".

Level 2 – Children with additional needs: Consider support through targeted early help delivered through Family Help Voice of the Child: "Most of the time I feel happy but sometimes my family need help from other people to keep me safe".

Level 3 – Children with multiple and complex needs: Initiate a Family Help assessment in line with current local arrangements Voice of the Child: "I'm struggling, I need help with many things, I need more help than my family can provide".

Level 4 – Children with acute needs includes those in need of protection - Social worker led specialist intervention required Voice of the Child: *“I am frightened when I go home, but if I don’t go back something will happen to mum or my brother. Someone make it stop.”*

Where a professional is unsure of the most appropriate response to identified needs, discussion with a manager, or a DSL, for support must take place to ensure and oversee that appropriate actions are taken.

Appendix 4: Definitions and indicators of Abuse

1. NEGLECT

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

The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Constant hunger
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness
- Frequently dirty or unkempt
- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather
- Poor school attendance or often late for school
- Poor concentration
- Affection or attention seeking behaviour
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers

2. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse 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.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt
- Bite marks
- Round burn marks
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred
- Bald patches
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- Fear of medical help
- Fear of changing for PE
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers

3. SEXUAL ABUSE

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

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- Reluctance to go home
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness
- Refusal to communicate
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia
- Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- Unusual compliance
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area

4. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It 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 children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies
- Behaviours such as rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches
- Self-harming, drug or solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis

NB: Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as “traumatic mutism”) can indicate maltreatment.

5. DISABLED CHILDREN

When working with children with disabilities, practitioners need to be aware that additional vulnerabilities to abuse, neglect and exploitation such as:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children with disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs. They are three times more likely to be abused by their peers.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, might be of concern on a non-mobile child
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment
- Poor toileting arrangements
- Lack of stimulation
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication
- Ill-fitting equipment for example, callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting
- Misappropriation of a child's finances; or

- Inappropriate invasive procedures

6. RESPONSES FROM PARENTS

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb)
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household

APPENDIX 5 – CE CHECKLIST

Signs of Child Exploitation Guidance Checklist

- This guidance checklist can be used by all professionals working with children aged 10+
- This guidance checklist can help you focus on the specific indicators of child exploitation and determine whether further advice and/or support is needed. The checklist could be used in supervision, in discussions with parents and carers, with other professionals and with the child
- Professionals need to exercise their own judgement when completing the checklist This includes capturing concerns about which they have some evidence **AND** concerns based on their “gut feelings” Staff should differentiate between the two and explain this in the notes section
- Where child exploitation is suspected the worker should discuss their concerns with their manager and should also inform their agency’s lead professional who will be monitoring the bigger picture for any emerging patterns
- Professionals should feel free to use the checklist creatively, including as part of awareness raising work with children or in engaging parents and carers in understanding the issues
- Once completed if it confirms concerns and/ or identifies risk of significant harm, you **MUST** make a referral to Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) / local authority children's social care
- Please add any intelligence you may have on to Tell Us <https://www.merseyside.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/soh/seen-or-heard/>

Child's Details



sefton.gov.uk
Search 'Sefton Council'

Sefton
2030



Child's Name:		DoB:	
Address:		Home Phone:	
GP Surgery:		School/College:	

Person completing this tool

Name and job title of person completing:		Date completed:	
Organisation:		Contact e-mail: Telephone:	

Lead Agency Involvement

No Lead Agency	Early Help	Child in Need	Child Protection	Looked After

Which of the following are applicable to this young person?

	Please provide any information you have in relation to any of these indicators
Has the young person gone missing regularly? This could be only a few hours or for longer periods Is there any pattern to these missing episodes?	
Are there any concerns that Parents / Carers are not reporting a young person missing?	
Are there any concerns about drug or alcohol misuse?	
Has extra money/new items/‘gifts’ that cannot legitimately be accounted for/received from unknown sources	
Has there been any changes in the young person’s physical appearance or behaviour?	
Has the young person been pregnant, had a termination or repeat testing for sexually transmitted infections?	

Has the young person been coerced to take/share indecent images?	
Has the young person been arrested/Involved in criminality?	
Has the young person been found / travelling out of Borough?	
Has the young person have multiple mobile phones?	
Does the young person feel indebted to an individual or group?	
Family or young person having to move or leave their home	
Are there items missing from the home?	
Young person carrying / concealing weapons	
Associates known to be involved in criminality or Organised Crime Groups (OCG's)	
Absent from school / Non-school attendance	

Services have not been able to engage with child	
Living in a chaotic / dysfunctional household	
Low self-esteem / self confidence	
Association with others who have been exploited	
Self-harm indicators and/or mental health concerns and/or suicidal thoughts/attempts	
Injuries – evidence of physical or sexual assault	
Has there been a recent relationship breakdown with family and or peers?	
Is the young person homeless?	
Association with older and/or risky peers – who are they?	
Is the young person a Young Carer?	

Change in education attendance/Change in education provider/Missing from education/Non-attendance in education	
Young person's sexuality increases their vulnerability as they feel unaccepted due to sexual orientation	
Is there any information about risky adults in the young person's life? If so, who are they? Nicknames? DOB? Car registrations or phone numbers? Please also submit this information to the police 'Tell Us Website'	
Any other information that professionals, family or young person feel is relevant? Any locations that are of concern? Addresses being attended by young people? Any parks, shops or other public spaces raised as a concern?	
Does the child have a trusted relationship with a safe adult? If so, who is it? It could be a professional, relative or family friend	
Are Parents / Carers aware of these concerns? What are their views?	
Does the young person have awareness of these concerns? What is their view?	

Appendix 6: Sefton Prevent Referral Process

Understanding Prevent and the Channel referral process

Radicalisation is defined in the Prevent Strategy as “the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism”.

Preventing Violent Extremism

What is Prevent?

The government's Prevent Strategy forms one element of the Counter-terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) and aims to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by preventing people from becoming influenced through extreme and radical ideology.

The aim of the Prevent Strategy is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by focusing on the following three objectives:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

The Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 defines extremism as “the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of our armed forces as extremist.”

What is Channel?

A key part of Prevent is Channel. Police work with public bodies, including local councils, social workers, NHS staff, schools and the justice system to identify those at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assess what the risk might be and then develop tailored support for those referred to them. The process is about supporting individuals identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism at an early stage.

The Sefton Channel Panel is a voluntary safeguarding programme. It draws on collaboration between local authorities, police, statutory partners and the local community. The individual may be discussed at a multi-agency meeting to review the referral, gain consent for engagement and plan appropriate bespoke support to reduce or mitigate vulnerabilities to radicalisation.

Your responsibility

If you suspect an individual is being radicalised, you must report it. Anyone can make a Prevent referral if they have concerns.

Notice - Check - Share

1. What have you noticed?

- Who was involved?
- Can the concern be dealt with in house or does it need wider checking?
- Does the incident relate to recent local, national or international events?
- Does the incident relate to local or national news stories?
- Has the individual been involved in similar incidents?
- Why do you feel the individual is vulnerable to radicalisation?
- Was it a one-off comment or statement and out of context for the individual?
- Are there any other apparent vulnerabilities or concerns that make the individual at risk of radicalisation?

2. Have you checked your concern with your Safeguarding Lead?

- From your checks has any other information come to light?
- Has the individual of concern been spoken to for clarity? If not, what are the reasons for this (for example, inappropriate or a safeguarding risk)?

- Do they offer a reasonable explanation and/or account?
- If under 18, have their parents been spoken to for clarity? Have they noticed a change in behaviour?
- Are any other agencies currently or historically working with the individual or family? Have they been consulted?
- Is the concern Prevent related, or is it more suitable under general safeguarding?
- Have there been any historical concerns, for example at a previous school?
- Could the concern be addressed in house? Is there a genuine radicalisation risk?
- Do you and/or the individual need additional support?

3. Having noticed the initial concern and carried out the appropriate checks, do you feel sharing the information as a referral is necessary?

The Sefton template encourages referrers to discuss their concerns with the individual and parents, where applicable, and make them aware of the referral to Prevent (with reasons), unless sharing this information places the individual or another person at serious risk of harm.

Record who you have consulted and what intervention, if any, you have put in place, including any other referrals or discussions with agencies.

Once the Notice - Check - Share process has been completed, the Sefton template directs the referral form to: prevent@merseyside.pnn.police.uk

Immediate safeguarding issues should be highlighted to and dealt with by the appropriate professional, following the usual Sefton local-authority safeguarding process.

Partner agencies

Health, education and further-education partners should use the Notice - Check - Share process above, check concerns with their own safeguarding team, and may contact Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) for concerns about young people or Adult Social Care as appropriate.

Appendix 7

*This risk assessment should be completed with reference to Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the School's child-on-child abuse procedures.

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, ALLEGED PERPETRATOR, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
What was the nature of the incident?				
Was it a crime?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.				
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the alleged perpetrator to the victim and/or others?				
Is either the victim or the alleged perpetrator at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)?				

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, ALLEGED PERPETRATOR, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
• Do they share classes?				
• Do they share break times?				
• Do they share transport to/from school?				
• Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?				
• How can such contact be limited?				
• Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?				

Further action taken by the school or college:

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to CHAT		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Appendix 8: LOW LEVEL CONCERN FORM

Low Level Concerns Form

Please use this form to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the school’s staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- Does not meet the allegation threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological, and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident

The record should be signed, timed and dated.

Name of Staff Member:

Concern:

Signed:

Name:

Date and Time:

Received by:

Date:

Time:

Action Taken:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 8A: ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT INITIAL CONSIDERATION/ENQUIRY FORM

Reference no. (From Database):

Date form was sent to LADO:	Name of person completing the form:
Position of person completing the form:	
Contact number:	
Email Address:	
Name & Address of Establishment	

**PLEASE KEEP INFORMATION CLEAR & CONCISE AND ENSURE THE FORM IS RETURNED
AS A TYPED WORD DOCUMENT**

(For data protection purposes at this stage please do not provide details of the child or alleged perpetrator)

DETAIL OF: ALLEGATION/INCIDENT/ENQUIRY (date and time of allegation)

CHILD'S ACCOUNT OBTAINED (Preferably with parent or carer present)

(Note: no leading questions should be asked, questions should be kept open and to a minimum, i.e., what was the incident, and how did they feel, did anyone witness this?)

PARENTS'/CARERS' VIEW (what was their response and what action would parents like to see taken)

ANY WITNESSES?

(Note: if so do not discuss what the child has said, ask only if they are aware of any incident that has occurred involving the child and ask that they make a note of their account, sign and date)

IS THERE ANY CCTV FOOTAGE TO PROVE OR DISPROVE THE ALLEGATION?

(Please check this first and ensure a copy is kept)

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY HISTORIC ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THE CHILD?

(dates and outcomes)

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY HISTORIC ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS IN RELATIONS TO THE MEMBER OF STAFF?

(dates, what the allegation was and outcome)

Please send completed form to Sefton LADO Service
SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk

Office Use Only:**LADO ADVICE OR RESPONSE****POLICE ADVICE OR RESPONSE**

HR ADVICE OR RESPONSE

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ADVICE OR RESPONSE	

Office use only:

Completed by: _____

Signed by: _____

Position: _____

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AN ADULT WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT ARE NOT TO BE REPRODUCED, COPIED OR DIVULGED IN ANY WAY. INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE DISCUSSED WITH, OR REVEALED TO, PERSONS WHO ARE NOT REQUIRED IN THE INTERESTS OF A CHILD TO HAVE SUCH INFORMATION. ALL ENQUIRIES FOR THE USE OF ANY SUCH INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER

REFERRAL FORM

To be completed by the Senior Manager (or other designated person to provide the information) of the employing agency for the adult concerned. To be emailed directly to the SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk within 24 hrs of the allegation being made. **Form should be completed in detail; all yellow sections are mandatory.**

DATE ALLEGED INCIDENT HAPPENED	
DATE ALLEGATION RECEIVED BY REFERRING AGENCY	
DATE ALLEGED INCIDENT REFERRED TO CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING UNIT	

1. ADULT AGAINST WHOM THE ALLEGATION HAS BEEN MADE

NAME										
DOB		GENDER			ETHNICITY					
HOME ADDRESS										
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:				EMAIL:					
JOB TITLE										
EMPLOYER										
EMPLOYER ADDRESS & CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:				EMAIL:					
EMPLOYING AGENCY OF THE ADULT CONCERNED (WHERE ALLEGATION/INCIDENT OCCURRED)										
SOCIAL CARE		HEALTH		EDUCATION		CONNEXIONS		FOSTER CARERS		
POLICE		YOT		PROBATION		CAFCASS		SECURE ESTATE		
FAITH GROUP		NSPCC		ASYLUM/IMMIGRATION				VOLUNTARY YOUTH ORG.		
ARMED FORCES		OTHER		IF OTHER OR VOL. YOUTH ORG. PLEASE STATE WHICH						

2. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY PREVIOUS ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE ADULT? YES/NO

If YES, please provide details including dates and any previous referrals to the Children's Safeguarding Unit:

3. REFERRER

NAME	
JOB TITLE	
ORGANISATION	
CONTACT DETAILS (incl. Address, E-Mail & Telephone number)	

4. SENIOR MANAGER

IS THE SENIOR MANAGER OF EMPLOYING AGENCY OF THE ADULT CONCERNED AWARE OF THE ALLEGATION?
If no, please give reason why not:

5. CHILD'S DETAILS

NAME					
DATE OF BIRTH		GENDER		ETHNICITY	
CURRENT ADDRESS (Inc. post code)					
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL		EMAIL		
PARENTS/CARERS					
PARENTS/CARERS ADDRESS (Inc. post code)					
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL		EMAIL		

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY COMMUNICATION NEEDS?				
If so, please state what:				
IS THE CHILD KNOWN TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE?		YES	ICS ID NO.	
IF YES PLEASE INDICATE IN WHAT CAPACITY (Please tick):				
FAMILY SUPPORT		CHILD PROTECTION PLAN		LOOKED AFTER CHILD (see below also)
LEGAL STATUS IF LOOKED AFTER CHILD(Please tick):				

S.20 ACCOMMODATION		INTERIM CARE ORDER		CARE ORDER		PLACEMENT ORDER		SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP	
CHILD'S SOCIAL WORKER									
CONTACT DETAILS		TEL				EMAIL			
HAS THE CHILD'S SOCIAL WORKER BEEN INFORMED? YES									
If not, please give reasons why not:									

6. ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN INVOLVED IN THE ALLEGATION? (Please provide details below)

NAME & ICS No.	DATE OF BIRTH	ADDRESS & CONTACT DETAILS	PARENTS (Inc. address & contact details if different from child)

7. DOES THE ADULT CONCERNED HAVE CONTACT WITH ANY OTHER CHILDREN? YES/NO (Including their own children, grandchildren or via extended family networks/friends/youth groups/other employment etc)

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	RELATIONSHIP TO ADULT CONCERNED	ADDRESS & CONTACT DETAILS

8. NATURE AND DETAILS OF ALLEGATION

Please indicate the nature of the allegation (Please tick):							
PHYSICAL		SEXUAL		EMOTIONAL		NEGLECT	
DOES THE ALLEGATION INVOLVE THE USE OF COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY?							Yes
IF YES PLEASE INDICATE THE FORM OF COMMUNICATION USED: i.e. mobile phone imagery, text, social networking site, internet etc.							

PLEASE PROVIDE FACTUAL DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN OR HEARD AND BY WHOM:
--

9. DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIONS

RECORD OF DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

10. DECISION

DOES THIS MATTER MEET THE CRITERIA FOR INVESTIGATION UNDER LADO PROCEDURES IN WORKING TOGETHER?	YES/NO
ARE ENQUIRIES BEING MADE UNDER S.47 OF THE CHILDREN ACT (1989)?	YES/NO
STRATEGY MEETING TO BE CONVENED	YES/NO
STRATEGY DISCUSSION ONLY (PLEASE TICK)	

11. ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION PROVIDED / REQUIRED

--

12. PERSON RECEIVING INFORMATION

MEMBER OF STAFF RECEIVING INFORMATION		DATE:	
---------------------------------------	--	-------	--

MEMBER OF STAFF COMPLETING THIS FORM		DATE:	
--------------------------------------	--	-------	--

Please return the form, preferable via email to:

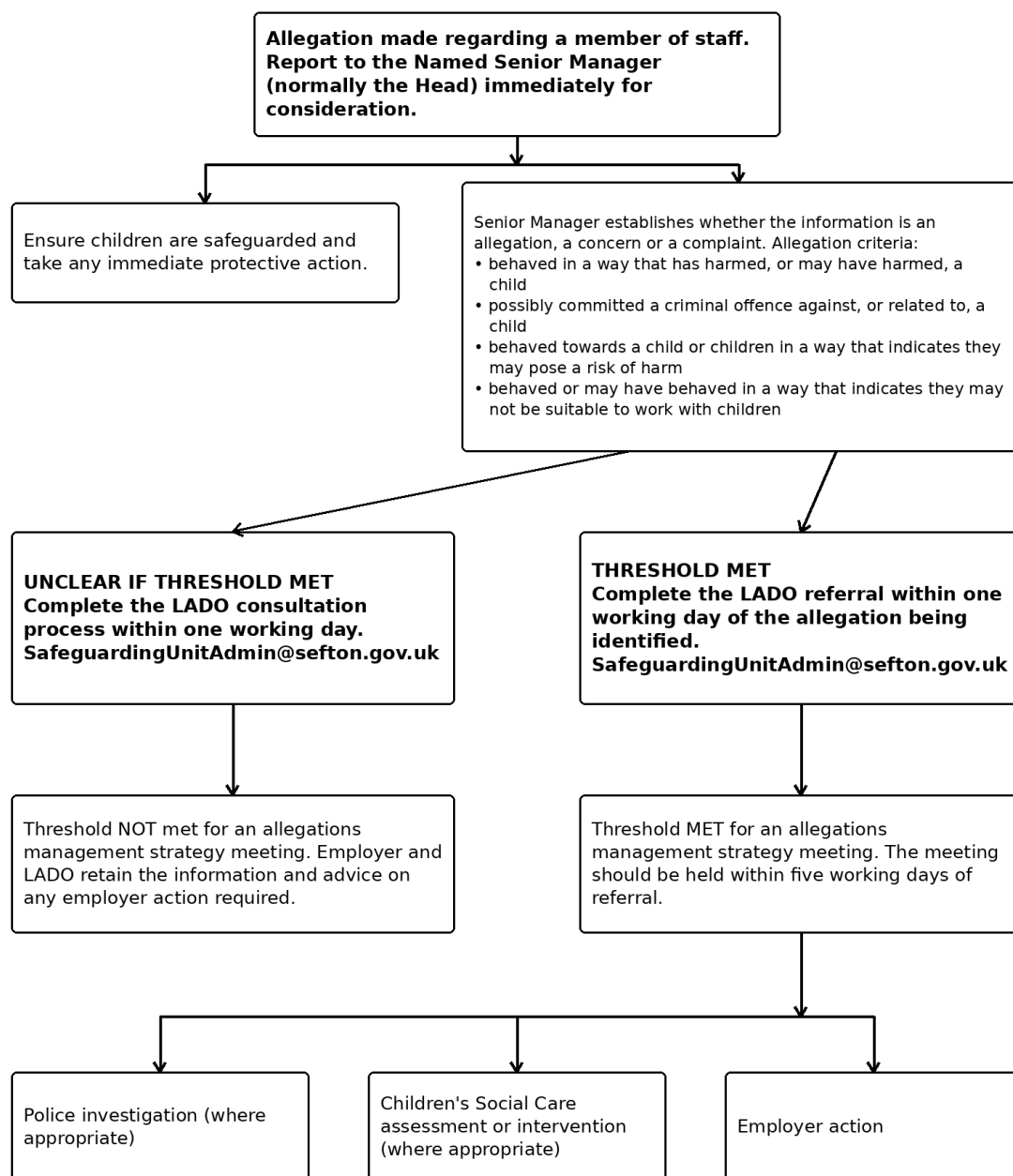
LADO
3rd Floor Magdalen House
Trinity Road
Bootle L20 3NJ

☎ ☎ 0151 934-3783

☎ ☎ 07814059604

☎ ☎ SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk

Appendix 9: Flowchart for Managing Allegations Information for All Staff



Where the threshold is not met, low-level concerns and conduct matters should still be managed under the School's relevant procedures. Safeguarding concerns must be recorded and the DSL informed as appropriate.

*Based on Sefton LADO allegations-management process; current contact:
SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk.*

Appendix 10: Social Care Flow Chart

Name of School Child Protection/ Safeguarding Flow Chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, at risk of harm or neglect'

Member of staff, volunteer has concerns about a child's welfare

- Be alert to signs of abuse and question unusual behaviour.

Where a child or young person discloses abuse or neglect

- Listen to what they say, keep calm, reassure they are right to tell, and you will take action to help keep them safe. **DO NOT DELAY take any immediate necessary action to protect the child.**
- Inform them you need to share the information and what you are going to do next
- Do not promise confidentiality, you will need to share/ report the information onwards.
- Do not question further or inform the alleged abuser.

Discuss concerns with the Snr Designated/ Named Safeguarding Lead

- The Safeguarding Lead will consider further actions including consultation with Children's Social Care / CHAT Team (if a new concern).
- Concerns and discussion, decisions and reasons for decision should be recorded in writing and a 'confidential concerns' or 'child protection' file should be opened, stored in line with the school child protection policy.

Still have concerns? Refer to CHAT (Children's Help and Advice Team) / Children's Social Care

Have child/ families' personal details to hand

Safeguarding concern Resolved /no longer held

Support has been agreed, record decision, any follow up actions.

Children's Social Care

During Office Hour, Monday to Friday
Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) Tel: 0151 934 4013.
Complete online form
If the child is at immediate risk
TEL: 999/101 and ask for assistance
Record all decisions and actions, working to agreed outcomes and within timescales. Escalate any emerging threats/concerns by adopting Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures

Out of hours
Emergency Duty Team
5.30pm – 9am
Mon to Thurs
Friday 4pm through to Monday 9am
Tel 0151 934 3555

Unmet needs identified
Decide what actions are needed to support the child.

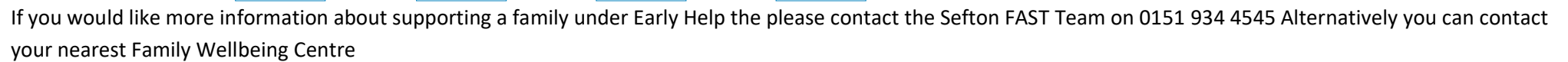
Consult with child young person, family and relevant agencies:
Consider Early Help Assessment

Contacts: For any allegations/concerns regarding an adult who works with (in either paid/ voluntarily) employment with children contact the LA Designated Officer (LADO) Tracey Holyhead [Tel:- 0151 934 3783](tel:01519343783)

Tracy McKeating – LA Safeguarding Children in Education Tel:- 07837863075

This flow chart is intended as a brief guide. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy School/Academy Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy

Early Help Front Door - Pathway Sefton Council



Appendix 11: Body Map Guidance for Schools

Medical assistance should be sought where appropriate

Body Maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries.

Always use a black pen (never a pencil) and do not use correction fluid or any other eraser.

Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment.

***At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person, this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures, the body map below should be used in accordance with recording guidance Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services, e.g. the CHAT Team or the child's social worker if already an open case to Children's social care.**

When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g. red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds and burns:

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek;
- Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches;
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line;
- Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so;
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly the date and time of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record Add any further comments as required.

Ensure First Aid is provided where required and record

A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's child protection file.

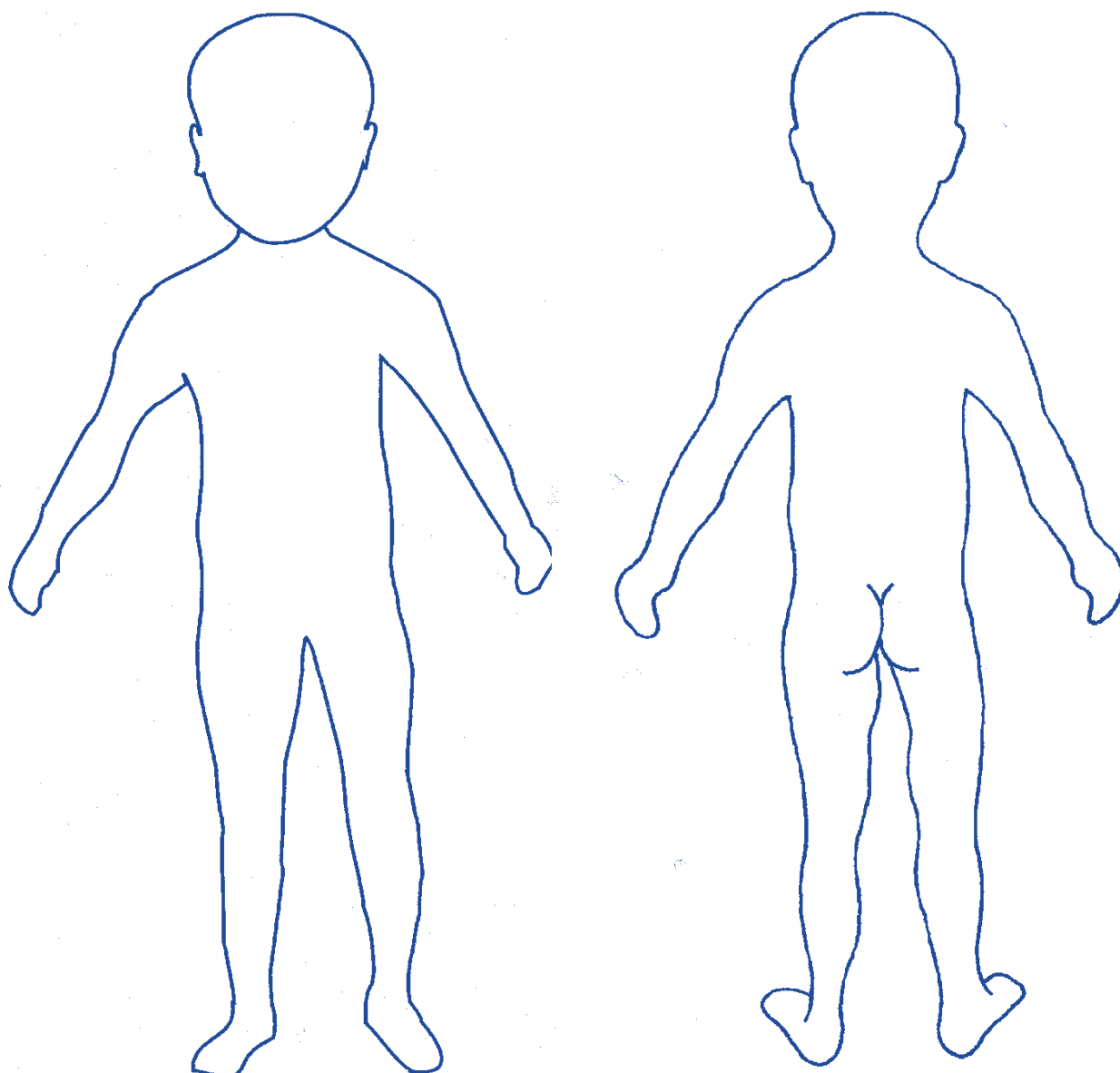
Appendix 12: Body Map

This must be completed at time of observation

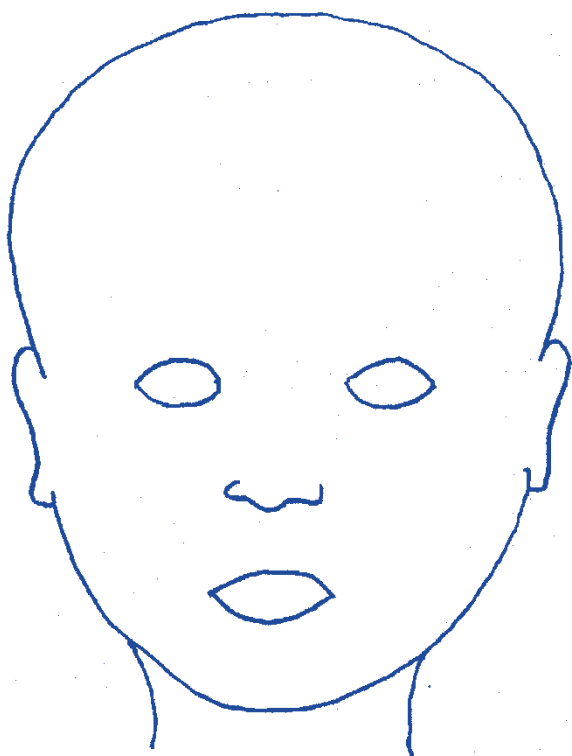
Name of Pupil: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Name of Staff: _____ Job title: _____

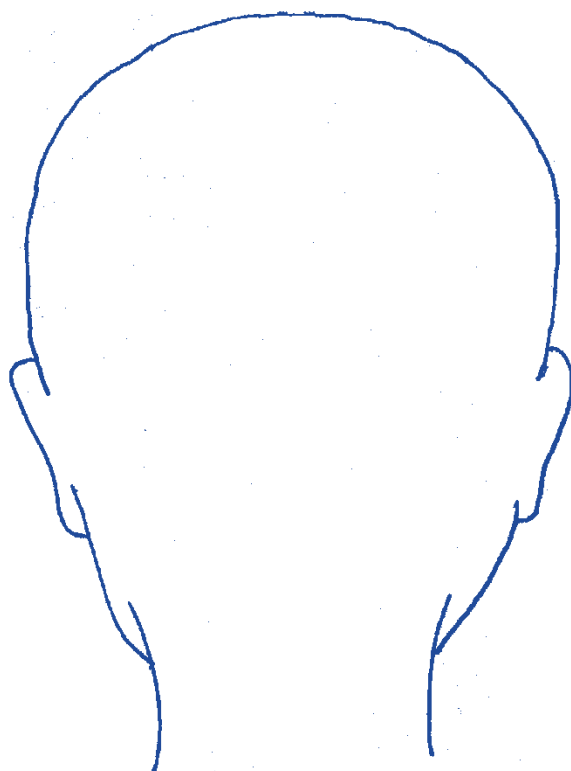
Date and time of observation: _____



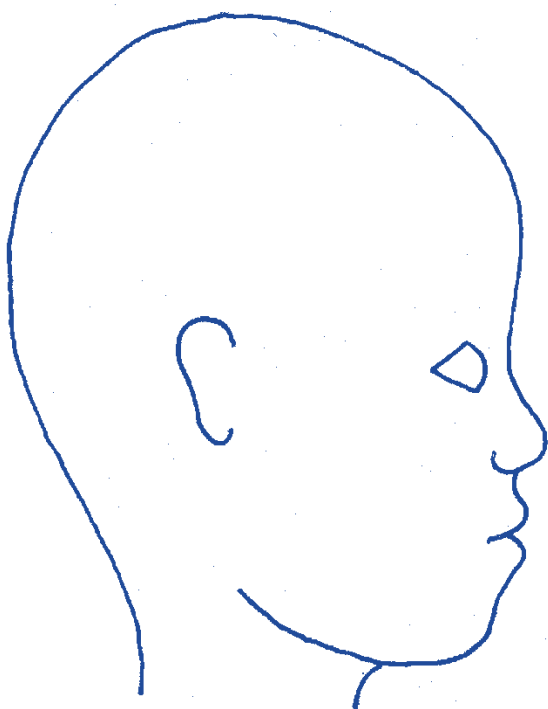
Name of pupil: _____ Date and time of observation: _____



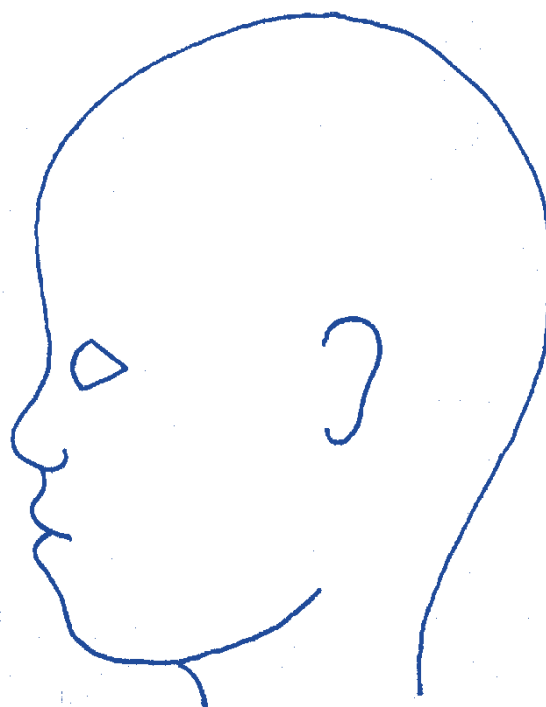
FRONT



BACK



RIGHT



LEFT

Name of pupil:

.....

Date and time of
observation:

.....



R



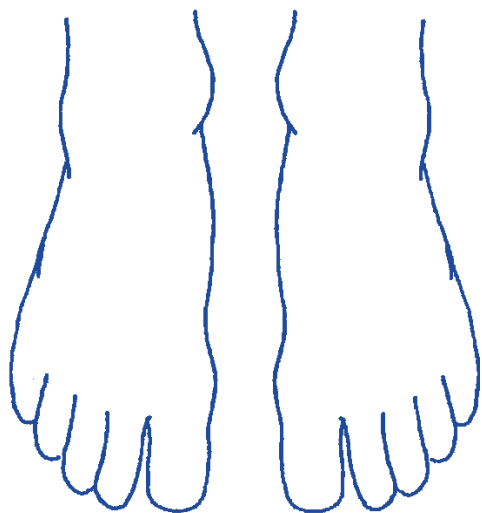
L

BACK



Name of Pupil: _____

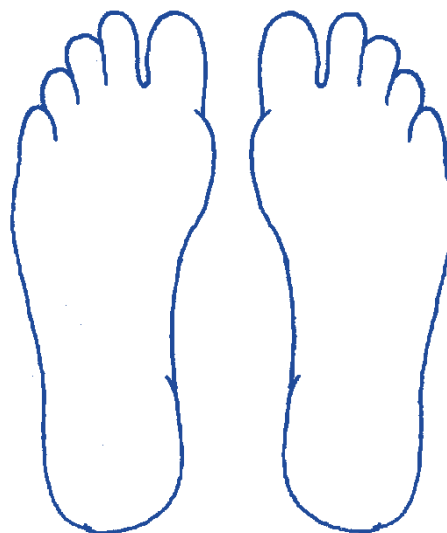
Date and time of
observation: _____



R

TOP

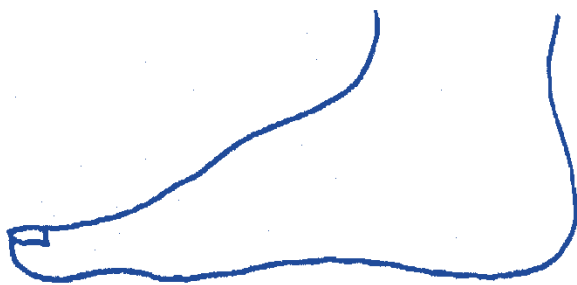
L



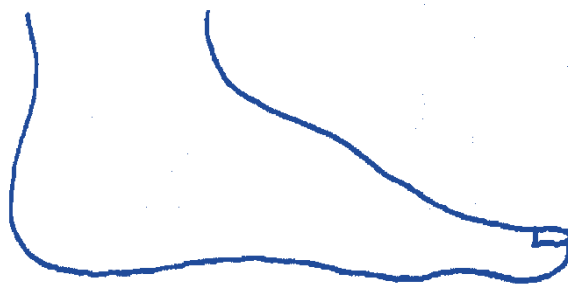
R

BOTTOM

L

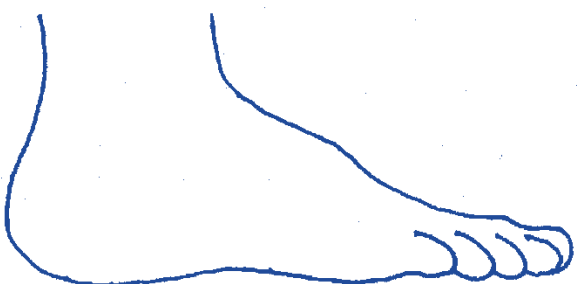


R



L

INNER



R



L

OUTER

Printed Name, Signature
and Job title of staff: _____





Appendix 13: Record of concern about a child/young person's safety and welfare

Part 1 (for use by any staff – must be handwritten and legible)

Pupil's name:		Date of birth:	Class/Form:
Date & time of incident:		Date & time (of writing):	
Name (print):		Job title:	
Signature:			
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc <i>(please include as much detail in this section as possible Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated Attach additional sheets if necessary)</i>			
What is the pupil's perspective?			
Professional opinion, where relevant <i>(how and why might this have happened?)</i>			
Any other relevant information Previous concerns etc <i>(distinguish between fact and opinion)</i>			
Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed and when			

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it

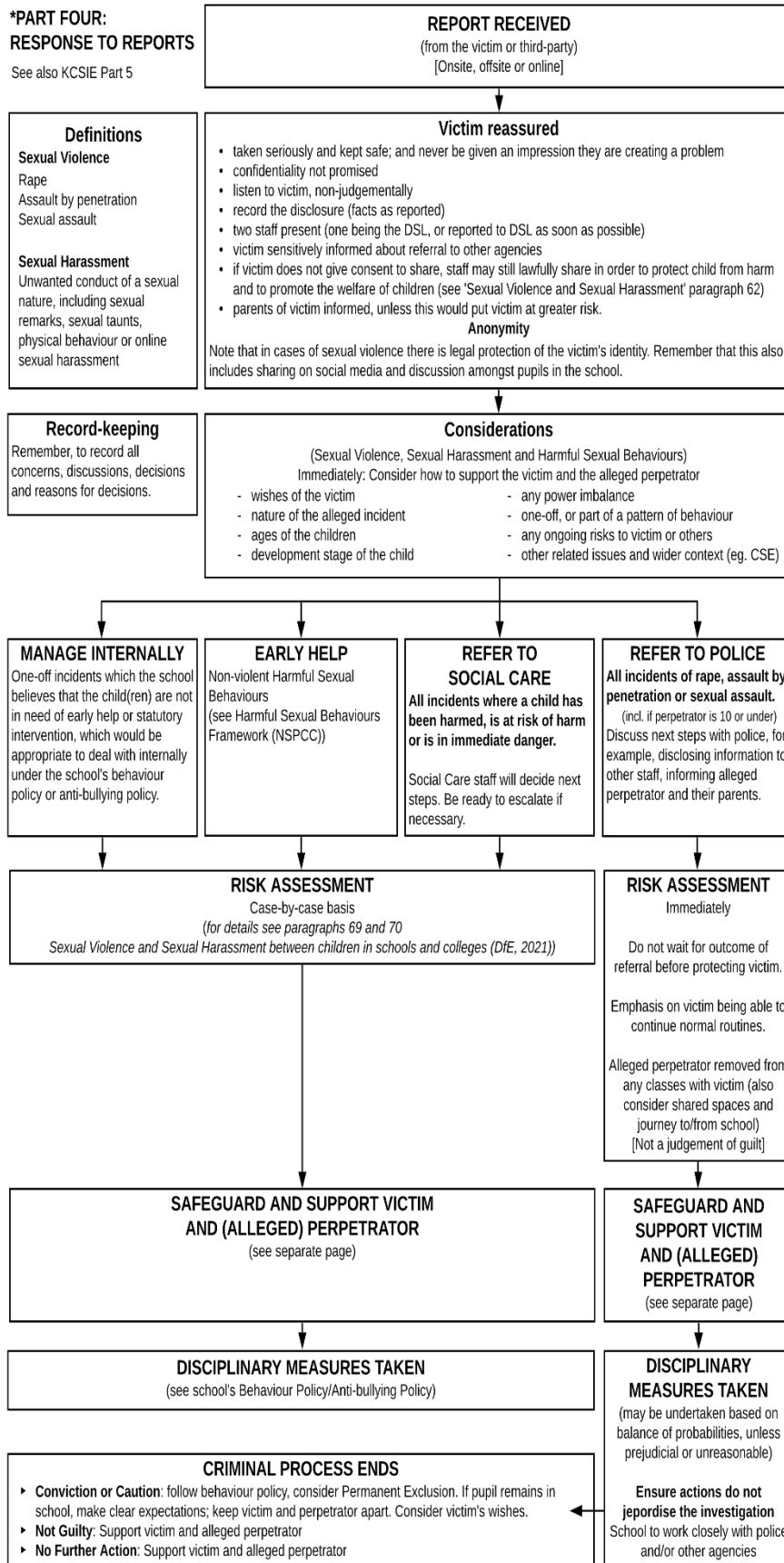
Please pass this form to your DSL without delay

Part 2 (for use by DSL)

Information received by DSL:	Date:	Time completed:	From whom:		
Any advice sought , if applicable	Date:	Time completed:	From: name/organisation:		
	Advice received:				
Action taken with reasons recorded <i>(e.g. MARF completed, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff,</i>	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
Outcome	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
Parent/carer informed?	Y	Who has been spoken to?	Date:	Time:	By whom:
	N	Detail reason:			
Is any additional detail held, if so where?					

Prior safeguarding history	No of previous records of concern:		
	Has the child been subject to an Early Help or Family Help assessment?		
	Currently on CP Plan (CPP) / Child in Need Plan (CiN)		
	Previously on CP Plan (CPP) / Child in Need Plan (CiN)		
	Is child known to other agencies?	Y / N	
Name of DSL:		Signature:	

Appendix 14: Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence or Sexual Harassment Flowchart



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Source:

*Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021)

SVSH Flow Chart for Schools 2021 v.1.0

Appendix 15: Learning from Serious Case Review in Sefton

Key Findings

- Limited evidence of professional curiosity
- Failure to recognise the impact on the children of the hostility and aggression displayed within the family
- Shortcomings in single and multi-agency practice, with a tendency to focus on what was observable, rather than taking a more analytical approach
- The lived experience of the children was not understood
- Early recognition and identification of the signs of neglect was lacking
- Little exploration of the link between the individual and joint histories of the adults involved in the children's lives
- Communication between different professionals, agencies and organisations was variable
- The risk of harm to the children was not effectively assessed
- The impact of the family and children's social isolation was not recognised
- Insufficient information was not gathered about important aspects of the family's living arrangements and daily life experiences
- Relationships between family members was not understood
- Professionals did not consider an array of missed health appointments as an indicator of neglect
- No evidence of formal professional challenge when decisions reached were not collectively agreed within the Child Protection process
- Differing expectations between professionals of what information can be shared between agencies

Lessons

- Actions agreed at strategy meetings should be understood in relation to Child Protection enquiries
- Using the Graded Care Profile (GCP) assessment tool will support the early recognition and identification of signs of neglect
- Partner agencies must contribute to the decision-making process before the Children in Need (CIN) plan is ended
- Professionals should follow the LSCB Escalation Procedure for formal challenge
- Information sharing between agencies should be shared willingly and legally
- The impact of drug misuse is a significant aspect of assessment of need and risk of abuse or neglect
- Professionals must consider the link between children's tooth decay and/or missed medical appointments as an alert for neglect
- Professionals must follow their duties and responsibilities in responding specifically to the needs of an individual, where (learning) disability is known
- Professionals must take time and be given the opportunity, to reflect on their practice through professional supervision

Report on Sefton LSCB website

SCRs

<https://seftonscp.org.uk/scp/about-us/learning-from-reviews-serious-case-reviews>

MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL LOW LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS POLICY

Principles

- The school is committed to the welfare, protection and safekeeping of all its pupils. If school staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, both physical and mental, they must act on them immediately.
- All children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and from all forms of neglect, abuse and exploitation and should feel safe and secure at school.
- Parents should be reassured that it is the aim of the school to always act in the best interests of their child and to encourage the fullest possible involvement and consultation with parents.
- Pupils should know that they have a means of raising issues of personal concern. They should feel that their concerns are taken seriously, that they are encouraged to talk and that they are listened to.

Purpose of Policy

The Policy focuses on low level concerns regarding adults' behaviour towards children.

- To treat and embed a culture of openness and transparency;
- Ensure staff are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, in accordance with the ethos and values of the School
- Empower staff to share any low level concern with the Head;
- Address unprofessional behaviour at an early stage;
- Identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour;
- Provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns;
- Help identify weaknesses in the organisation's safeguarding systems.

Concerns that are NOT covered by this Policy

1. Allegations

An 'allegation' means that it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Have behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not have to directly relate to a child but could, for example, include an arrest for possession of a weapon;
- Have, as a parent or carer, become subject to child protection procedures.

2. Safeguarding concerns

- Concerns about a child's safety or welfare;
- Concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.

Concerns that ARE covered within this Policy

Low level concern

The term “low level” concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern about an adult’s behaviour towards a child is one that does not meet the allegation threshold set out above, or is not otherwise serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. A low-level concern is any concern - no matter how small, and even if no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- Is not consistent with the School’s Code of Conduct, and/or
- Relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult’s suitability to work with children.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over-friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children that they work with on a personal mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour which may look inappropriate but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

What to do if you have a low-level concern

All low-level concerns should ultimately be received by the Headmaster

- Share concerns with the Headmaster within 24 hours of becoming aware of it;
- If behaviour is from the Head, then share concern with the Chair of Governors;
- In the absence of the Headmaster inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- If behaviour is from the DSL and the Head is absent, then share concern with another Head Teacher from the School.

Procedure for managing a low-level concern

Step 1 - Initial Concern Raised

In the first instance, staff can report verbally to the Head or provide a written summary of their concern.

- A verbal account will be subject to contemporaneous recording by the Head, ensuring that a written record is taken as information is shared;
- Sound professional judgment will be used in determining what information is necessary to record for Safeguarding purposes;
- Record should include brief context, concise details, and relevant incidents;
- Record to be signed, dated and timed and stored in Teams, accessible only by the School Head, DSL and Director of HR

Note that staff should feel comfortable to self-refer where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others and, on reflection, they believe that they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the professional standards expected by the School.

If the person raising a concern wishes to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Step 2 - Response by Head

- The Head should speak to the person who is raising the concern
- Review the information and decide whether the behaviour is:
 - (i) Entirely consistent with the School Staff Code of Conduct

- (ii) Constitutes a low-level concern
- (iii) Is serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- (iv) When considered with any other previous low-level concerns about this individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the Head Teacher and LADO/any other statutory agencies;
- The Head should speak to the individual about whom the concern is raised (unless LADO/Police have advised otherwise)
- Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified

Head must make records of:

- All internal conversations;
- All external conversations;
- The details of the concern;
- The context in which the concern arose;
- Their determination;
- The rationale for their decision; and
- Any action taken.

Step 3 –Decision Making and Next steps

Information shared meets School's expectations and is compliant with Code of Conduct

- Head to inform the individual concerned what was shared about their behaviour and give them an opportunity to respond;
- Speak to person who shared the low-level concern, providing feedback about how and why the behaviour is consistent with the Code of Conduct and the law;
- Consider if a review of the Code of Conduct is necessary - is the Code not clear? Has the training been unsatisfactory? Is the Low-Level Concerns policy not clear enough?
- Consider training/support of Low-Level Concern policy if the same individual reports similar low-level concerns and it is found to be consistent with Code again.

Information shared does not meet the School's expectations and is in breach of the Code of Conduct - a low level concern

- A sensitive and proportionate response is essential;
- Maintain confidence that concerns will be handled promptly and effectively, whilst protecting staff from potential false or malicious allegations;
- Any investigation is on a 'need to know' basis;
- Some concerns may not give rise to further action, others may be dealt with by management guidance and/or training;
- In many cases, a positive/supportive conversation with the individual will enable them to meet expectations moving forward

Information gained is above a low-level concern or further evidence gained raised the level of concern

If further evidence is gained that raises the level of concern, the Head will always access guidance from LADO.

Previous low-level concern

Information available will be reviewed and a decision may be made to reclassify the concern as an allegation, and the concern will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. It may be the case that repeated low level concerns are dealt with under the School's Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

Recording and Retention of Information

All records of Low-Level Concerns, (including behaviour deemed by the Head to be entirely consistent with the Code of Conduct) should be retained in a central low level concerns file;

These records are confidential, with a limited number of individuals having access, for example Head Teacher, Director of Finance and Operations and HR Officer. If appropriate, a member of the SMT. The Head may store the Low-Level Concern records with the other safeguarding and child protection records.

In the event of a decision that behaviour is a low-level concern, the information should not be held on personnel files.

If disciplinary, grievance or whistleblowing procedures are triggered, then a copy should be held on both safeguarding and personnel files.

If the concern is deemed serious enough to consider referral to the LADO, then records should be retained on the personnel file.

If the Low-Level Concern is reclassified as an allegation, then files should be moved from Safeguarding to personnel files.

The School will retain information regarding safeguarding concerns centrally within a secure system, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Review

The Head should review the central LLC file periodically to ensure such concerns are being dealt with appropriately, and any potential problematic behaviour patterns are identified.

Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met.

The school must consider if any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

Timeframe

Low level concern files should be kept unless and until further Government guidance provides otherwise.

When a staff member leaves and/or takes up new employment, that would then create a natural point at which the content of the file may be reviewed.

References

The School will only provide substantiated safeguarding allegations in employment references. Low Level Concerns will not be included in a reference unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. Any matter which has met the threshold for referral to LADO and found to be substantiated, will be referred to in a reference.

Low level concerns about adults policy: September 2026

Signed



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_____ Head Teachers Date: _____

_____ Chair of Governors Date: _____

Next Review Due: September 2027



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