



One Community Trust

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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CHANGE RECORD FORM

Version	Date of change	Date of release	Changed by	Reason for change
1	01/09/2020	25/09/2020	JF	New information from KCSIE 2020
2	14/12/2021	09/03/2022	JF	Updates from KCSIE 2021
3	29/09/2022	23/01/2023	JF	Updates from KCSIE 2022
4	07/07/2023	16/10/2023	JF	Updates from KCSIE 2023

5	13/09/2025	12/11/24	JF	<p>Updates from KCSIE 2025</p> <p>DSL/DDSL/safeguarding Governor information updated and added for new schools in the Trust.</p> <p>More information added to make the policy succinct for the High School</p>
6	16/09/2025	13/10/25	JF	<p>Updates from KCSIE 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new information or amended information highlighted yellow.



At One Community Trust we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our schools to share this commitment.

Adults in our schools take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them.

We will always act in the best interest of the child.

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Section One: Safeguarding information for all staff

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, and it is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

KCSIE 2025: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of the children at school as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (part 1, paragraph 3)

Definitions

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

Neglect is a form of abuse and 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.

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive

behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

The One Community Trust complies with the Pan -Cheshire Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements and support the work and scrutiny of the Warrington Safeguarding Partnership.

[Warrington Local Operational and Assessment Protocol](#)

[Policy consultation and review](#)

This policy:

- has been developed in accordance with the principles established by [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), The [Education Act 2002](#) which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- has been written in line with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2019) and has been updated in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)
- should be read in conjunction with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'
- is publicly available on each school website within the One Community Trust.
- is provided to all staff via I AM COMPLIANT.

This policy is also based on the following legislation

- 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
- [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 Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it

could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

- [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) , which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination

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Owing to the serious nature and importance of safeguarding at the **One Community Trust** this policy will be **reviewed annually** in the autumn term and approved by the Trust Board as soon as possible thereafter.

The policy is available to all staff and in addition, all staff are sent Part one of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2025) via I AM COMPLIANT

Introduction

This policy has been developed to ensure that all adults in **One Community Trust** are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people goes beyond implementing basic child protection procedures. It is an integral part of all activities and functions of the One Community Trust.

This policy describes the management systems and arrangements in place to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all our children and staff. It identifies statutory responsibilities and actions that should be taken if concerns are raised about a child's welfare.

This Policy aims to help professionals understand what they need to do, and what they can expect of one another, to safeguard children and always work in the best interests of the child.

Under the Education Act 2002 schools/settings have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils and, in accordance with guidance set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'. The One Community Trust will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to identify any concerns about child welfare and take action to address them.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the arrangements that **The One Community Trust** has in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils. It provides guidance to help staff who may have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child and sets out the school's position in relation to the safeguarding process.

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the Trustees/Governors and should be read in conjunction with the following policies relevant to the safety and welfare of children:

- Online Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety
- Children Absent from Education Policy
- Attendance

Other relevant policies

- SEND Policy
- Behaviour
- Positive Handling
- Equality Policy
- Safer Recruitment
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- British Values
- Relationships and Health Education (RHE)
- Well-being policy

Key principles

Everyone who works with children within the **One Community Trust** has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and for ensuring that they are protected from harm. We all have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility, and it is acknowledged that no single professional or agency can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. It is recognised that school staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide early help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating.

One Community Trust staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the latest statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025**. All our schools should work with Social Care, the Police, Health Services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

The **One Community Trust** is committed to working together with all relevant agencies to ensure that children and families are able to receive the right help at the right time and that appropriate action is taken swiftly to protect children from harm.

We believe that:

- All children and young people have the right to be protected from harm.
- Children and young people need to be safe and to feel safe in school.
- Children and young people need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.
- All children and young people have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs.
- All children and young people must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other.
- All children and young people have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, and social needs as well as their educational needs – a happy healthy sociable child and young lead will achieve better educationally.

- Schools can and do contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours.
- **All** staff have an important role to play in safeguarding children and preventing impairment of a child's mental and physical health or development.

Our responsibility to children and the curriculum

At the **One Community Trust** schools, children are taught about safeguarding and how they can keep themselves and others safe, including online. This is delivered through a range of teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are supported to recognise when they may be at risk and to understand how to seek help when needed. We remain sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including those who are victims of abuse and those with special educational needs or disabilities.

This policy will make clear expectation and responsibility that all staff must contribute to safeguarding our pupils and promoting their welfare by:

- Clarifying standards of behaviour for staff and pupils.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient and robust ethos in the school following our behaviour curriculum, which is built on mutual respect, and shared values.
- Ensuring all children have access to an appropriate curriculum, differentiated to meet their needs and presented in an age-appropriate way. This enables them to develop the necessary skills to build self-esteem, respect others, resolves conflict without resorting to violence, question and challenge and to make informed choices in later life. The curriculum also enables children to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.
- Ensuring all children and young people are encouraged to express and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a variety of activities and have a range of cultural opportunities which promote respect and empathy for others, age appropriately. There is access to information and materials from a diversity of sources with promote social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.
- Training staff to the signs and indicators that a child may be at risk.
- Developing staff awareness, through training, of the types of abuse.
- Developing staff's awareness of the risks and vulnerabilities their pupils may face.
- Addressing concerns at the earliest possible stage by offering early help; and
- Taking action when a child needs protection and safeguarding.
- Working together with all agencies to help to reduce the potential risks that pupils may face if being exposed to abuse, neglect, violence, extremism, exploitation, or victimisation.

All staff can contribute to supporting our pupils by:

- Identifying and protecting the most vulnerable
- Identifying individual needs where possible; and
- Designing plans to meet those needs

- Assessing the risks and issues in the wider community when consider the well-being and safety of our pupils.
- Including appropriate work within the curriculum.
- Implementing child protection policies and procedures; and
- Working in partnership with pupils/students, parents and agencies

The One Community Trust schools assess the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its pupils.

KCSIE 2025 (part 1: paragraph 21)

‘All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.’

Listening to children: Capturing the child’s voice

Effective safeguarding systems are child centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them or placing the interests of adults (potentially the child’s parents) ahead of the needs of children.

Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and for consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour of professionals. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. A child-centred approach is supported by:

- The Children Act (1989) (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004).
- The Equality Act 2010
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1991)

Whilst professionals cannot promise confidentiality, they must do the right thing in all cases. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs; which includes child protection action and the offer of ‘Early Help’.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has a key responsibility for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people registered in the school. This includes ensuring online safety and understanding the school’s filtering and monitoring processes on devices and networks to protect children online.

The DSL must have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role effectively. They are the first point of contact for external agencies conducting Child Protection investigations and coordinate the school’s representation at Child Protection Conferences and other relevant meetings, including submitting written reports when required.

When an individual concern or incident is reported to the DSL, they are responsible for deciding whether it

should be escalated to external agencies as a safeguarding matter.

KCSIE 2025: “The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.” (Part 1: paragraph 9)

Arrangements are in place to ensure that at least one of the DSL- trained persons is available whenever children are taking part in school-led activities. This includes before and after school clubs and other extra-curricular activities.

It is key that all staff know who the DSL is and ensure that all concerns about a child are shared with the DSL immediately.

One Community Trust named DSL's for each school

The names of the Designated Senior Leads at each school within the One Community Trust are:-

Oakwood Avenue Community Primary School

DSL-Joanna Frank (Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding and Welfare)

DSL-Joanne Reilly (Head Teacher)

Deputy DSL-Rachel McIntosh (Assistant Head and SENCO)

Telephone number: 01925 635565

Croft Primary School

DSL-Anne Mains (Head Teacher)

Deputy DSL- Michelle Culliford (Deputy Head)

Telephone number: 01925 764276

Gorse Covert Primary School

DSL-Gill Poole (Head Teacher)

Deputy DSL- Robert Gibson (Deputy Head)

Telephone number: 01925 825070

Woolston Community Primary School

DSL-Clare Buckley (Pastoral lead and Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding)

DSL-Craig Burgess (Head Teacher)

Deputy DSL- Holly Stowell (Deputy Head)

Telephone number: 01925 837764

Birchwood High School

DSL-Jennifer Richards

DSL-Sam Rigby-White

Deputy DSL- Angela Clark

Telephone number: 01925 853500

Brook Acre Community Primary School

DSL- Jo Holmes (Head Teacher)

out

Telephone number: 01925 815827

Culcheth Community Primary School

DSL- Reina Fazackerley (Head Teacher)

Deputy DSL-Nicola Gorman (Deputy Head)

Telephone number: 01925 764312

Locking Stumps Community Primary School

DSL- Jamie Vermiglio (Head Teacher)

Deputy DSL- Lauren Rowlands (Pastoral Lead) and Katie Barlow (SENDco)

Telephone number: 01925 819076

Key role of the DSL

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL in the absence of DSL, is responsible for the overall safeguarding and child protection arrangements within school. The key duties include:

Training & Knowledge

- Attend updated safeguarding training at least every two years to maintain the knowledge and skills required for the role.
- Keep up to date with local safeguarding developments, guidance, and legislation, including the Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership (LCSP) procedures.
- Understand harmful sexual behaviour and the additional risks faced by children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities).
- Be aware of online safety risks, filtering, and monitoring systems in place at the school.
- Access regular professional development, including e-bulletins, peer meetings, and reading relevant safeguarding updates.

2. Referral & Reporting

- Act as the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
- Refer suspected cases of abuse to the Local Authority using the Multi-Agency Request for Services (MARS) form, as appropriate.
- Refer cases of radicalisation to the Channel programme and support staff in making such referrals.
- Report cases where a person is dismissed or leaves due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the police, as required.
- Assess the appropriateness of an Early Help assessment or whether statutory social care intervention is needed.
- Ensure children have an 'appropriate adult' during police investigations or searches.

Support for Staff and Children

- Provide advice, support, and training to all staff and volunteers on safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the school's reporting and recording procedures.
- Support staff in deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, children with SEND, and young carers.
- Be confident in identifying and accessing local specialist support for children affected by sexual violence or harassment, including victims and alleged perpetrators.
- Promote the welfare of children, sharing safeguarding information with teachers and school leadership to support educational outcomes.

Governance & Policy

- Keep the headteacher informed of any safeguarding concerns (if not the DSL).
- Manage and maintain secure safeguarding records.
- Champion safeguarding across the school and keep all staff updated with current procedures and best practice.

- Ensure the school's safeguarding and child protection policy is embedded, available, and reviewed regularly. Communicate updates to all staff.
- Ensure all new staff and volunteers receive safeguarding information from induction.
- Provide a termly report to the governing body, including policy updates, training undertaken, anonymised incidents/cases, and the number of children on a child protection plan.
- Challenge safeguarding practices and decisions in line with the WCSB Escalation Policy.

Availability & Communication

- Be available during term time for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- In exceptional circumstances, when not on-site, be available via telephone or other appropriate communication methods.
- Promote effective communication internally and with external agencies regarding child protection matters.

PLEASE NOTE:

All staff working within the One Community Trust will follow their school's individual procedures in relation to keeping detailed accurate contemporaneous records on a child/family.

When children leave the school the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

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

Overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the DSL

The role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body are the accountable body for ensuring the safety of the school. They will facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development.

The governing body will ensure that:

- A member of the Local Governing Body is identified as the designated governor for Safeguarding and receives appropriate training each year. The identified Governing Body member will provide the Governing Body with appropriate information about safeguarding and will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead member of staff.
- There is a named member of the school Senior Leadership Team who takes on the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and that there is a deputy DSL(s) who is appropriately trained to

deal with any issues in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There will always be cover for this role.

- The school's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and updated, and the school complies with local safeguarding procedures.
- They are aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and the Trusts local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- The school operates safe recruitment and selection practices and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and relevant volunteers.
- The Designated Safeguarding lead attends appropriate refresher training every two years as a minimum, encouragement for annual update is best practice. In addition to formal training, DSL will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
 - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
 - Reviewing the [DfE's filtering and monitoring standards](#), and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards
- Temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children and their responsibilities.
- The school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay;
- The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) and if an allegation are made against the Headteacher the Chair of Governors will liaise directly with the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO).
- The Headteacher, Chair of Governors and DSL should attend specific training in managing allegations against members of staff who work with children. This training is available through the Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- The governing body reviews its policies/procedures in relation to safeguarding children on an annual basis. This includes all policy's that make up the safeguarding suite of documents.
- All governors read KCSIE Annex A and Part 2

The role of Safeguarding Governor

The governor responsible for safeguarding children will play an essential role in ensuring children in the school are kept safe from harm. The safeguarding governor plays an important role in ensuring oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding policy, procedure and practice on behalf of the full governing body.

One Community Trust named Safeguarding Governors for each school

<p>The names of the Nominated Safeguarding Governor at each school within the One Community Trust are:</p>
<p><u>Oakwood Avenue Community Primary School</u> Nicola Graham School Telephone number: 01925 635565</p>
<p><u>Croft Primary School</u> Jo Haslam School Telephone number: 01925 764276</p>
<p><u>Gorse Covert Primary School</u> Natalie Rose School Telephone number: 01925 825070</p>
<p><u>Woolston Community Primary School</u> Matt Jeffrey and Helen Greenwood School Telephone number: 01925 837764</p>
<p><u>Birchwood High School</u> Alison Fisher School Telephone number: 01925 853500</p>
<p><u>Brook Acre Community Primary School</u> Dawn Farrent School Telephone number: 01925 815827</p>
<p><u>Culcheth Community Primary School</u> Kate O'Donnell School Telephone number: 01925 764312</p>
<p><u>Locking Stumps Community Primary School</u> Rob Oakes School Telephone number: 01926 819076</p>

The Nominated Governor is responsible for liaising with the Head and DSL over all matters related to safeguarding issues. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual children. It is not the role of the nominated governor to supervise the DSL; the nominated governor should offer support and appropriate challenge. However, the nominated governor for safeguarding will want to be reassured that systems for safeguarding children are in place and embedded into practice.

Expectations of staff at the One Community Trust

All adults who work with children will:

- Read, adhere and understand, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 part one or Annex A which is a condensed version of Part one if they do not work directly with children. This guidance is reviewed annually.
- Read and follow the procedures written within this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Be aware of the systems which support safeguarding, including this Safeguarding and Child protection policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy, the behaviour policy, online safety which includes the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say they have read KCSIE 2025 and this policy.
- Be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers, governors, visitors etc. Adults who work with children are responsible for providing all information to complete DBS Checks and Prohibition Order checks and share information in respect of disqualification by association (where applicable).
- Be supportive to the development and implementation of , Early Help Assessments, TAF Plans, Child in Need plans, Child in Care plans and Child Protection plans;
 - Be aware of the Early Help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- Be alert to the signs and indicators of possible abuse (**See KCSIE 2025 Part 1 for definitions and indicators**)
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children
- That a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

- Deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child in line with Part Two of the policy - you must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, and provide a written account as soon as possible

What we do if there are concerns about a child?

If any school staff has a significant concern about a child they **MUST** notify the DSL without delay, or in the absence of the DSL, the deputy DSL or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. It is of significant importance that this is completed immediately, with 'no delay' so that appropriate action can be taken as quickly as possible. It is not acceptable to leave this until later in the day or at a more convenient time. Staff members will be held accountable for not taking swift action.

All staff working within the One Community Trust must follow their school's individual procedures in relation to recording information. The information must capture all the relevant information about the concerns. This is evidence based practice and will support the DSL in making an assessment of what action needs to be taken.

Inevitably verbal conversations may sometimes supersede the completion of the written information and in some cases urgent action may be taken at a fast pace e.g. medical treatment, urgent contact with children's social care or the police. It is important to always prioritise the safeguarding of a child, however, there should be recognition that contemporaneous record keeping is an important feature of safeguarding practice and should be prioritised by all staff to ensure that child protection and early help case files are up to date and accurate.

It is the responsibility of all staff to complete the relevant paperwork for the DSL should that member of staff have concerns about a child or following a disclosure. This procedure should be followed without exception.

PLEASE NOTE: Anyone can make a referral.

You must tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/mars>

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

<https://www.warringtonsafeguardingpartnerships.org.uk/p/i-work-or-volunteer-with-children-and-young-people/how-to-report-abuse>

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse from a child

Children often will choose who they talk to, when they have something that is worrying them or happening to them. Children may have thought long and hard about telling an adult and will have chosen the adult specifically as they have trust in that lead to do the right thing.

However, it should be remembered 'that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful...This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL'.

Disclosing something upsetting and traumatic may be very difficult and distressing for both the child and the adult. Listening to and supporting a child who has been abused can also be traumatic for the adults involved. Support for you will be available from your Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head Teacher. These guidance notes may help you if you are ever in this situation. Remember, the child chose you and it is a privileged position to be in, it's a position where you can make a difference to a child's situation.

A golden rule is that you don't ever promise confidentiality and always be open and honest with the child.

Guidance for you to consider

- ✓ Stay calm and listen to what the child is saying, do not show them you are shocked or upset
- ✓ Do consider the environment that you are in with the child, is it appropriate? Do other staff members know where you are?
- ✓ Ask open ended questions and record what is being said in the child's own words.
- ✓ Encourage the child to talk but reassure the child that they have done the right thing in speaking to you
- ✓ Reassure the child that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- ✓ Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
- ✓ Listen and remember and make notes **if appropriate**, it is not usually advisable to make a written record whilst a child is disclosing abuse, as it may deter the child from speaking.
- ✓ Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you by clarifying the facts.
- ✓ Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling an adult. Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- ✓ Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- ✓ At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell (The DSL) and why that person needs to know.
- ✓ As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Stick to the facts and do not put your own judgement on it.

Do Not

- ✗ Do not ask "leading questions" or press for information.
- ✗ Do not investigate.
- ✗ Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment or share your opinion on what has happened.
- ✗ Do not swear.
- ✗ Make inappropriate comments about the alleged offender
- ✗ Never promise to keep it a secret. Assure the child that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why (The DSL).
- ✗ Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad.

- ✘ Make physical contact with the child. Whilst the child may seek out physical contact, remember that this may place you in a vulnerable position and also an abused child may not want physical comfort e.g. a hug.

If you have concerns about a child, or notice something may be wrong, ask the question “Are you OK?” Children have told us that they want adults to:

Be Vigilant: they want to have adults notice when things are troubling them.

Understanding and action: they want adults to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon

Stability: to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them

Respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not

Information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans

Explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response

Support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family

Advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.

Notifying parents or carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child’s parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children’s social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children’s social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim’s parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what’s being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator’s parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what’s being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision

Record keeping

All staff, volunteers and visitors have a responsibility to report and concerns about the welfare and safety of a child and all such concerns must be taken seriously.

Good, up to date record keeping of concerns and action taken is essential for two main reasons:

- It helps schools identify causes for concern at an early stage. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are considered as a holistic picture, that a safeguarding or child protection concern becomes clear;
- It helps schools monitor and manage its safeguarding practices. Furthermore, in any inspection/review it will be important to provide evidence of robust and effective safeguarding policy and practice

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and reason for those decisions, should be recorded in writing at the time or as soon as possible after the event. It is not usually advisable to make a written record whilst a child is disclosing abuse, as it may deter the child from speaking. However, it is important that events are recorded in the child's own words and as soon as possible, to ensure absolute accuracy.

Records should be factual, using the child's own words in cases where a disclosure is made. Professional opinion can be given but needs to be supported by stating the facts and observations upon which the opinions are based. It is important to remember that what is recorded can be shared with all appropriate agencies and potentially the child's parents. (Except where doing so, would place a child at risk of significant harm in the case of parents.

Expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds.

All records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- If using a chronology or making a written account the record should be dated, timed and signed with the name of the signatory clearly printed and filed in chronological order. CPOMS automatically adds these details.

PLEASE NOTE

All concerns should be shared with the DSL and individual school procedures for information followed.

If the DSL is not available, staff should speak to a member of the SLT and/or take advice from local children's social care (KCSIE (2025), paragraph 53). The DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

All records of child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations are to be treated as sensitive information and should be kept together securely and separately from the child's general school records. These include:

- any concerns recorded by staff
- Any child protection information received from previous schools or other agencies
- Copy of any internal or external referrals and correspondence
- Copies of any referrals from the DSL to Children's Social Care

- In the case of a child subject to a Child Protection Plan, notes of any Child Protection case conference or Core Group meetings etc.
- Where a case is ongoing, keep a record of any actions and discussions etc. which will form a 'running chronology' for future reference.

If any information is removed from a file for any reason, a dated note must be placed in the file indicating who has taken it, why and when.

When a child changes school, a copy of the child protection file should be sent to the new school, under separate cover, directed to the receiving schools DSL. Best practice would recommend a handover meeting to ensure that all relevant information is shared. A receipt should be gained to acknowledge receipt.

Confidentiality and information sharing

With effect from 25 May 2018, the statutory General Data Protection Regulations came into force. The **One Community Trust** has developed a set of relevant and appropriate documents which are all available on the school's website.

All data is maintained and managed in line with school GDPR policies and the agreed retention schedule (see separate GDPR policies).

Staff ensure that confidentiality protocols are followed, and information is shared appropriately. The Head of School or Designated Member of Staff discloses any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only. Information sharing procedures are based on the guidance document 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers May 2025.

[KCSIE 2025 DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead \(or a deputy\). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.](#)

All staff and volunteers must understand that they have a professional responsibility to share information in a timely manner with other agencies to promote effective safeguarding.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests

You should note that if a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider that:
 - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
 - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to the local authority children's social care

- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.
- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
 - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
 - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
 - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
 - The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
 - **If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)**

Safer recruitment

The **One Community Trust** adhere to the DfE guidance set out in to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education- Statutory guidance for schools and colleges' September 2025 and any subsequent updates.

KCSIE 2025 "It is vital that as part of their whole school or college approach to safeguarding governing bodies and proprietors create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children in their school or college. As part of this culture, it is important that they adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in schools and colleges." (KCSIE 2025 paragraph 211)

Senior managers and the governing body ensure that stringent recruitment and vetting procedures are in place for staff and other adults, and that nobody commences work unless all necessary checks are complete to a satisfactory level. The same rigour is applied when appointing volunteers.

Safer recruitment practice includes

- scrutinising applicants,
- verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications,
- obtaining professional and character references,
- checking previous employment history
- and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job.
- It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and completing checks in relation to Prohibition Orders.
- At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See the Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Managing allegations and concerns against professionals who work with children or organisations using school premises

At the One Community Trust we recognise the possibility that adults working in the schools may harm children. Any concerns about the conduct of adults (including supply staff, volunteers and governors) in the school should be taken to the Headteacher without delay (or where that is not possible, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead).

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the lead receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will then consult the LADO and HR business partner, without notifying the Headteacher first. The Chair of Governors can be contacted via the school office.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

The headteacher has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

Allegations

It is an allegation if the person* has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (also includes behaviour outside the school).

(*Person could be anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.)

Allegations should be reported to the LADO 'without delay'.

Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school or college, or a combination of these.

Further details can be found in KCSIE 2025 Part 4

Low Level Concerns

Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person* has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly 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,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

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

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

(* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again

See KCSIE 2025 Part 4: Section Two Concerns or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (paragraphs 433-452)

KCSIE 2025: "The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any

concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO” (paragraph 430)

Whistleblowing

Where there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in the school, staff should refer to the One Community Trust **Whistle-blowing Policy**.

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- an legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

Safeguarding training

Learning about safeguarding is given a high priority at all the schools within the trust. Expertise is extended effectively, and internal capacity is built up. Managers ensure that staff regularly undertake a comprehensive range of learning to promote safe practice in classrooms, around the school and off site.

Training is provided for all staff and volunteers. When new staff join our school, they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be emailed a copy of our school’s Safeguarding Policy and given Part one of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ and told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs are. All staff are expected to read and understand these key documents. Teaching staff will also be shown/told how to access and record incidents following their own school’s individual procedures.

Every new member of staff or volunteer will be given access to safeguarding training during their induction period within their first month of joining the school. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record and the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The training will also include information about whistleblowing in respect of concerns about another adult’s behaviour and suitability to work with children.

Whilst it is not statutory for all staff to update their safeguarding training on an annual basis, it is good practice. Safeguarding update training should be part of whole school INSET training days/staff meetings and can provide useful updates on key themes. The training will be delivered by the DSL/Deputy DSL.

The DSL and Deputy DSL must update their training on a regular basis. The statutory requirement is every two years; however, good practice is that the DSL attends multi-agency training on an annual basis and

participates in local (single agency) networks to share good practice, reflect and learn together and to keep up to date.

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process.

The named governor for safeguarding should also update their training on a regular basis; good practice is on an annual basis to ensure that they keep up to date in their knowledge.

Evidence of safeguarding training must be made available as part of any safeguarding inspection or audit.

Section Two

This section will explain Early Help and explore what abuse is in detail and define some of the signs and symptoms. It is important that staff read through this section and familiarise themselves with the potential warning signs that a child is at risk.

PLEASE NOTE

All concerns should be shared with the DSL and individual school procedures for recording information followed.

Early help for children and their families

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later when situations can be more complex. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. The One Community Trusts safeguarding procedures should include effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families.

This requires all staff, to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help;
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help (E.g. Early Help Assessment, TAF); and
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Schools should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs,
- Has special educational needs;
- Is a young carer;
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence; and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.

All professionals working in educational establishments have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, to share that information and work together to provide children and young people with the help they need.

Early help assessment

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL/Deputy DSL/Pastoral Lead will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead

practitioner.

We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL/Deputy DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/early-help>

What is abuse?

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Abuse has significant impact on a child's physical and emotional health and development.

All staff:

- Should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
- Should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.
- Should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation
- Should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

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

Categories of abuse:

All staff are aware of the categories of abuse which are:



Signs of abuse in children

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation

Neglect

KCSIE 25 ‘Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion 13 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.’ (KCSIE 2025 part 1 paragraph 28)

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting.

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

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care.
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause.
- 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 for excessive periods
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent.

Emotional abuse

KCSIE 25 'Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.' (KCSIE 2025 part 1 paragraph 26)

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;
- Quiet, withdrawn and nervous
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development;
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders;
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies;
- Neurotic behaviour: 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.

N.B.: Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment.

Physical abuse

KCSIE 25 'Physical Abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.' (KCSIE 2025 part 1 paragraph 25)

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.

PLEASE NOTE

All concerns should be shared with the DSL and individual school procedures for recording information followed.

Sexual abuse

KCSIE 25 'Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young lead to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual

abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education all staff should be aware of it and the procedures in place to deal with it which are written within this policy. '(KCSIE 2025 Part 1 paragraph 27)

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.

Parenting capacity: When there are concerns

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);
- Inconsistent 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
- Mental health issues which prevent the parent from meeting the child's basic needs
- Violence between adults in the household.

- Failure to protect the child from known 'risky' leads
- Failure to prioritise the child's needs above that of their own.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

Whilst all children should be protected, it is important that we recognise that some children are potentially at greater risk of harm:

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

KCSIE 2025: Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may still need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behavior and mental health" (paragraph 173)

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

Where a child has a social worker, the DSL will always take this into account to ensure that any decisions are made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. This consideration will inform decisions about, for example:

- Responding to unauthorised absences or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support
- Tailoring behaviour management approaches to meet the child's needs
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality patterns for early signs of concern
- Assessing risks and providing support during school trips or off-site activities
- Communicating with parents or carers in a way that safeguards the child
- Early identification of emerging concerns to prevent escalation of risk

Children who are absent from education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) the school has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - leave school to be home educated
 - move away from the school's location
 - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
 - are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

The DFE defines Children who are absent from Education as;

'All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being (suitably) educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually 20 consecutive days)'

Children requiring mental health support

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

KCSIE 2025: "Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one." (paragraph 44)

KCSIE 2025: "Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils." (paragraph 182)

KCSIE 2025: "Mental Health problems can, in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Governing bodies should ensure they have clear systems in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems." (paragraph 183)

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

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that also raises a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.

Across One Community Trust, each school has staff trained as Mental Health First Aiders, who are trained to respond to mental health concerns. Each school will also have a named Senior Mental Health Lead.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health issues

For a number of reasons, children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse than others. For example, children with disabilities may be more dependent on others for intimate care and may be less able to tell people about any abuse they experience. For these reasons, it is essential that rigorous safe recruitment procedures are in place, especially with regard to recruitment checks on volunteers and paid workers, whistle blowing policies, and having clear guidelines setting out acceptable behaviour by those working with children with disabilities.

We recognise the particular vulnerabilities of children with SEND particularly with relation to the following:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further explanation;
- the potential for SEND children to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without showing signs;
- the specific barriers to communication for children with SEND.
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

At One Community Trust, we provide additional pastoral support and attention for children who may require extra help, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We ensure that appropriate support for communication and learning is in place. This includes providing one-to-one or small-group support tailored to individual needs, using visual aids and assistive communication tools, and developing personalised plans in collaboration with parents, teachers, and external specialists. We also conduct regular check-ins to monitor well-being and progress, work closely with external agencies such as speech and language therapists or educational psychologists, and provide staff training to ensure all adults are confident in supporting these pupils. Through these measures, we aim to safeguard the emotional well-being of all children while promoting their learning and development.

KCSIE 2025: “Governing bodies and proprietors, should, therefore ensure that their child protection policy reflects the above and to address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.” (paragraph 201/203)

Children in care and previously looked after children

KCSIE 2025: “A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.” (paragraph 191)

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep children in care and previously looked-after children safe. We will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children’s looked after legal status, contact

arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements

- The DSL has details of children’s social workers and relevant virtual school heads

There is a designated teacher in each school is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children in care and previously looked-after children in line with [statutory guidance](#).

The Designated Teacher

KCSIE 2025: “Governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies **must** appoint a designated teacher and should work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after. With the commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.” (paragraph 192)

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

We recognise that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. The One Community Trust behaviour and antibullying policies detail how we prevent bullying based on gender or sexuality.

We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

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

Forms of abuse and safeguarding issues

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the various relationships young people form in their community, schools, and online environments can involve violence and abuse. Parents and carers often have limited influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Different forms of abuse and exploitation seen within the community include:

- Child Sexual Exploitation

- Child Criminal Exploitation
- County Lines - Exploitation by criminal gangs and organized crime groups such as county lines.
- Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery
- Radicalisation of children and young people by extremist groups.

How do I refer a child at risk?

Where Exploitation, or the risk of it, is suspected, practitioners should always complete the **Cheshire Contextual Screening Tool**. If, after discussion there remain concerns, a referral using the Multi Agency Request for Services (MARS) form **MUST** be made to Children’s Social Care.

When practitioners have concerns that a child is linked to a perpetrator(s) or other young people at risk of exploitation or has concerns about a location these will be discussed at the monthly **Exploitation and community mapping meeting**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child under 18 into sexual activity for the child’s needs or the perpetrator’s gain. CSE can occur with or without physical contact and may happen online.

KCSIE 2025: “CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. (paragraph 38)

KCSIE 2025: “CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child’s immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.” (paragraph 39)

KCSIE 2025: “CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.” (paragraph 40)

Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but highlights common signs that can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Possible signs include:

- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour

- Sexually risky behaviour, including “swapping” sex
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections
- In girls: repeat pregnancy, abortions, or miscarriage
- Receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- Having multiple mobile phones and being anxious about losing contact via mobile
- Possessing unaffordable new items (clothes, mobile phones) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- Changes in dress or appearance
- Visiting hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- Being seen at known places of concern
- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities without knowing where they are
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Contact with known perpetrators
- Involvement in abusive relationships; being intimidated or fearful of certain people or situations
- Associating with groups of older people, anti-social groups, or other vulnerable peers
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Recruiting other young people into exploitative situations
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school, or opting out of education altogether
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, or eating disorders
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Involvement in crime
- Police involvement or criminal records
- Involvement in gangs, gang fights, or gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, or sexual assault

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation may not recognise themselves as such. A significant number of these victims go missing from home, care, or education at some point. Conversations for runaways can help establish why a young person ran away, determine the support required, and prevent repeat incidents. The information gathered from return

conversations can also inform the identification, referral, and assessment of CSE cases.

Consent and legal considerations

When assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, careful consideration must be given to the issue of consent:

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (this constitutes statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching.
- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence.
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.
- Even where sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old does not constitute an offence, it may still result in harm or the likelihood of harm.
- Non-consensual sex is rape, regardless of the victim's age.
- If a victim is incapacitated through alcohol or drugs, or has been subject to violence or threats (or their family has), they cannot be considered to have given true consent, and offences may have occurred.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

KCSIE 2025: "Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation." (paragraph 34)

KCSIE 2025: "Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced to 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."(paragraph 35)

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

County lines

All information taken from KCSIE 2025: Annex B (page 151 and 152)

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

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

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

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

- go missing 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 drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit>

Radicalisation

The One Community Trust seeks to protect children and young people from all forms of violent extremism, including but not limited to those linked to Islamist ideology, Far Right/Neo-Nazi/White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Schools have a statutory duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (The Prevent Duty) in the following areas, with the aim of safeguarding pupils from radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism:

- Assessing the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology.
- Demonstrating that robust safeguarding policies are in place to identify children at risk and intervening as appropriate (**see Appendix 3: Prevent Duty Referral Protocol**).
- Ensuring that clear protocols are in place so that any visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised within the school.
- Promoting fundamental British values within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities and reflecting these values in the general conduct of the school.
- Promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Ensuring that safeguarding arrangements consider the procedures and practices of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures established by the Warrington Safeguarding Board. This policy describes procedures in accordance with government guidance and refers to locally agreed inter-agency procedures implemented by the WSB.
- Training key staff to provide them with the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Staff should know where and how to refer children and young people for further help.
- Protecting children from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school, including by establishing appropriate levels of filtering.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces the first statutory definition of domestic abuse in England and Wales. This definition broadens the understanding of domestic abuse beyond physical violence to include:

- Emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

The Act specifies that both individuals involved must be aged 16 or over and must be "personally connected," as defined in Section 2 of the Act. This encompasses:

- Intimate partners or ex-partners
- Family members
- Individuals who share parental responsibility for a child

Importantly, the Act recognises children who see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right, provided they are related to or under the parental responsibility of either the perpetrator or the victim. This inclusion emphasises the profound impact domestic abuse can have on children and the necessity for appropriate safeguarding measures.

Types of Domestic Abuse

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse, and child-to-parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of age, sexual identity, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or background, and domestic abuse can occur both inside and outside the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including guidance on the impact on children.

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

Controlling behaviour is defined as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is defined as an act or a pattern of acts involving assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation, or other abuse, used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim.

This definition includes honour-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and forced marriage, and makes clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. The definition does not cover violence by a child under 16 against another family member.

- Where the perpetrator is over 18 and the victim is under 18, the abuse is regarded as child abuse.
- Where both the perpetrator and victim are under 18, a child protection investigation may still be required. The national definition allows abuse between 16- and 17-year-olds to be considered domestic abuse.

More information [How to Protect Children From Domestic Abuse | NSPCC](#)

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0800 2000 247

Operation Encompass

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

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8am to 1pm, Monday to Friday on **0204 513 9990** (charged at local rate).]

Forced marriage (FM)

There is a clear difference between a 'forced marriage' and an 'arranged marriage'. Arranged marriages have worked well in society for many years. An arranged marriage is when families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

A forced marriage is when one or both parties do not consent to the marriage, and people are forced into marriage against their will. Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to a faith or belief occurs across the country. In such cases a parent or carer has come to view a child as 'different'. They have attributed this difference to the child being possessed and as such will attempt to exorcise the child.

There is a variety of definitions associated with abuse linked to faith or belief. The National Action Plan includes the following when referring to Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB).

Belief in concepts of:

- witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune, such as telephoning a wrong number which is believed by some to allow malevolent spirits to enter the home.

Reasons for the child being identified as 'different' may be a disobedient or independent nature, bed wetting, nightmares or illness. Attempts to exorcise the child may include:

- beating
- burning
- starvation
- cutting or stabbing

- isolation within the household

Children with a disability may also be viewed as different, and various degrees of disability have previously been interpreted as 'possession', from a stammer to epilepsy, autism or a life limiting illness.

- Read more at nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/ where you can also download a leaflet on CALFB.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

We recognise that our staff are well placed to identify concerns and take action to prevent children from becoming victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of so-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) and provide guidance on these issues through our safeguarding training. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should inform the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

Where there is a disclosure that FGM it is important that staff know what their statutory response should be.

KCSIE 2025, 'whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police'. (paragraph 42)

We will provide guidance and support to our teachers on this requirement and further information on when and how to make a report

Below is a very short summary and must be read in conjunction with the mandatory reporting guidance. (See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>)

The mandatory reporting procedures say:

'It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.'

'Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate'.

In most cases 'reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, and best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day'.

The procedures also set out what information is needed, in order to make a report.

See here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information-accessible-version#reporting>

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

<https://www.warringtonsafeguardingpartnerships.org.uk/p/i-work-or-volunteer-with-children-and-young-people/how-to-report-abuse>

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

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

The 'One Chance' rule

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings / schools / colleges take action without delay. There is a mandatory duty on teachers to report disclosures on FGM about a female under 18 personally to the police.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 strengthened further the legislation on FGM and now includes:

- the right to anonymity for victims
- the offence of failing to protect a girl aged under 16 from the risk of FGM
- the provision of Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPO); and
- the duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

N.B. for school staff this will occur from a disclosure and not a physical examination

Honour-based abuse (HBA)

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

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 came into force in February 2025 means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. Any concerns that students may be getting married should be referred to the DSL.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBV, they must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

How do I refer a child at risk?

Where Exploitation, or the risk of it, is suspected, practitioners should always complete the **Cheshire Contextual Screening Tool** If, after discussion there remain concerns, a referral using the Multi Agency Request for Services (MARS) form **MUST** be made to Children’s Social Care.

When practitioners have concerns that a child is linked to a perpetrator(s) or other young people at risk of exploitation or has concerns about a location these will be discussed at the monthly **Exploitation and community mapping meeting**

Sexually harmful behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour involves one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults. Sexually harmful behaviour occurs when a young lead (below the age of eighteen years) engages in any form of sexual activity with another individual over whom they have power by virtue of age, emotional maturity, gender, physical strength or intellect and where the victim in this relationship suffers sexual exploitation and betrayal of trust.

Sexual activity includes sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal), sexual touching, exposure of sexual organs, showing pornographic material, exhibitionism, voyeurism, obscene communication, frottage, fetishism and talking in a sexualised way. We should also include any form of sexual activity with an animal and where a young lead sexually abuses an adult.

Incidents of sexually harmful behaviour come to light, either through discovery or disclosure, which may be third-party or second-hand information. The details provided should be carefully recorded by the lead receiving the initial account and passed to the DSL. The DSL will assess the level of concerns about the behaviour if a referral to Social Care is appropriate.

Please Note

All concerns should be shared with the DSL and individual school procedures for recording information followed.

Substance misuse

Pupils affected by their own or other's drug misuse should have early access to support through the school or academy’s ‘early help’ offer and through referral to local drug and alcohol services.

As part of the statutory duty on schools to promote pupils’ wellbeing, schools have a clear role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of their pastoral responsibilities. Schools can have a key role in identifying pupils at risk of drug or alcohol misuse. The process of identifying needs should aim to distinguish between

pupils who require general information and education, those who could benefit from targeted prevention, and those who require a detailed needs assessment and more intensive support.

- Schools should provide accurate information on drugs and alcohol through education and targeted information, including via the FRANK service;
- Tackle problem behaviour in schools, with wider powers of search and confiscation;
- Work with local voluntary organisations, health partners, the police and others to prevent drug or alcohol misuse.
- To include this support for children as part of the 'early help' offer from the school.

Child-on-child abuse (See Appendix 4 for more information)

KCSIE 2025: “All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children” (including online). (paragraph 156)

Child on child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.”

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy DSL)

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 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the

private fostering arrangements.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

[Private Fostering 7 minute briefing](#)

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Keeping yourself safe when working with children

It is essential that all staff working within the One Community Trust are aware of how to conduct themselves to minimise the risk of being involved in any child protection processes. All staff should follow the guidance below when working with children.

DO:

- ✓ Read and follow the school's child protection procedures
- ✓ Report to the DSL or Headteacher any concerns about child welfare or safety
- ✓ Report to the any DSL or Headteacher concerns about the conduct of other staff, volunteers or contractors
- ✓ Follow your schools procedures for recording all relevant incidents
- ✓ Work in an open and transparent way
- ✓ Discuss and report any incidents of concern, or any situation that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child.
- ✓ Report to the DSL, Headteacher or a member of the SLT any incidents suggesting a pupil may be infatuated with you or taking an unusual interest in you.
- ✓ Dress appropriately for your role
- ✓ Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children
- ✓ Ensure you understand the rules concerning physical restraint
- ✓ Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, seek the pupil's permission wherever possible.
- ✓ Allow children to change clothes with respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.
- ✓ Avoid working in one-to-one situations with children, but if necessary take the appropriate precautions and ensure a member of staff knows where you are
- ✓ Avoid volunteering to look after children overnight
- ✓ Be careful when recording images of children; do this only for approved educational activities and following the correct procedures
- ✓ Contact your professional association or trade union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature.
- ✓ Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues in the school.
- ✓ Listen to pupils if they express concern or rumours about staff, and check facts carefully before drawing conclusions.

DON'T:

- ✗ Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation or intentions
- ✗ Misuse your position of power and influence over children in any way.
- ✗ Use any confidential information about a child to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass them.
- ✗ Engage in activities outside of school that could compromise your professional position.
- ✗ Establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils outside of school
- ✗ Accept regular gifts from children
- ✗ Give personal gifts to children
- ✗ Communicate with pupils in inappropriate ways, including personal emails, text messages, or social media.
- ✗ Share your home address, phone number, email address or other personal details with pupils.
- ✗ Make physical contact with a child secretive
- ✗ Arrange to meet with pupils in closed rooms without senior staff being aware in advance.
- ✗ Use physical punishment of any kind
- ✗ Give special attention on one child unless it is part of an agreed school plan or policy
- ✗ Transport pupils in your own vehicle without prior management approval
- ✗ Take, publish, or share images of pupils or other children without parental permission.
- ✗ Access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material
- ✗ Abuse your position of trust with pupils
- ✗ Allow unsafe boundaries in informal settings, such as trips or out of school activities.

APPENDIX 2: Online Safety and digital technology

The One Community Trust recognises that in a modern learning environment, the use of emerging technologies, the internet, multimedia devices, and digital imaging facilities is an everyday requirement. However, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people remain the school's top priority.

We understand the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful or inappropriate online material and recognise that technology plays a significant role in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, all schools aim to:

- Implement robust processes, including filtering and monitoring systems, to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in the safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart devices (referred to in this policy as 'mobile phones')
- Establish clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Set up clear mechanisms to identify, respond to, and escalate any incidents or concerns relating to online safety, as appropriate.
- **The 4 key categories of risk**

KCSIE 2025: "The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>). (paragraph 135)

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
 - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
 - Keeping personal information private
 - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
 - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year.

- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
 - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
 - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology. Children/parents are also expected to sign the agreement if they are bringing mobile phones on to the school site.
- Explain the consequences that will be in place if a child breaches the policies regarding acceptable use.
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.

Filtering and Monitoring

Filtering refers to the technology used to prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content, while monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure such access is not made. Monitoring can include:

- Physical monitoring
- Live software monitoring
- Reviewing user logs
- Monitoring individual devices

All schools in One community Trust use **SENSO** monitoring software across all school devices. This provides live alerts and reports on safeguarding concerns, helping staff to act quickly where risks are identified. Any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures, including SENSO.

Each year, the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), together with the IT team and a governor, will review our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. They will also ensure that all staff understand the reporting systems in place and that any reports are managed effectively.

All staff will receive training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring and how to raise concerns. In addition, all staff will take part in annual cybersecurity training.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, children and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.
- One Community Trust recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard children. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose children to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

- One Community Trust will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully children in line with this policy and our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.
- Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

Social networking sites

Social Networking sites are part of everyday culture within the cyber environment and all staff will promote safe use of the internet to all children/young people. The school curriculum will include the input of appropriately trained personnel around Internet Safety and safe use of media items. Staff will ensure that any personal use of Social Networking sites does not in any way impinge upon the school or their professional standards. Any concerns regarding a staff member's conduct should be brought to the immediate attention of the Head of School or the DSL.

Any attempt by a child/young person to contact staff via such internet sites will immediately be reported to the Head of School or DSL in order that appropriate advice can be given to the child/young person and their parents.

APPENDIX 3: Radicalisation and violent extremism

We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society.

We will ensure that:

- Through training, staff, volunteers and governors have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism is, why we need to be vigilant in school and how to respond when concerns arise
- There are systems in place for keeping pupils safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our school by using effective filtering and usage policies
- The DSL has received Prevent training and will act as the point of contact within our school for any concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism
- The DSL will make referrals in accordance with Warrington Channel Procedures and will represent our school at Channel meetings as required
- Guidance and advice provided by the DFE, national and/or local services will be adhered to/considered where appropriate
- Through our curriculum, we will promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Recognising extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Prevent duty referral protocol

STEP 1 When a concern is identified, as with all safeguarding concerns, the member of staff may seek clarification from the individual but must be careful not to lead or investigate. Details of the concern are shared at the earliest opportunity with one of school's designated named persons for safeguarding. Staff member records on CPOMs.

STEP 2 The designated named person for safeguarding will discuss the concern, (including the relevant context) with the member of staff (the referrer) and document the report.

STEP 3 The DSL to check if any additional concerns are known / documented in the school's safeguarding records, then alert the Head Teacher or another designated named person. Jointly they should consider if the concern falls within general safeguarding concerns (see step 4) or if a Prevent referral should be made (see step 5).

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate. Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

STEP 4 Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the police or [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team

STEP 5 The Channel panel convenes to consider support options.

STEP 6 If deemed suitable by the Channel panel a holistic package of support will be determined and delivered. **Please note school may be involved as part of the multi-agency support offered.**

STEP 7 As with all aspects of safeguarding, even if Channel support is deemed suitable and offered, school retains a duty of care. As such staff should remain vigilant, reporting any new or further concerns to school's designated named persons for safeguarding.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

APPENDIX 4: Child-on-child abuse procedures

1. What is child-on-child abuse?

Child-on-child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group that can occur as a single incident or repeatedly over time. It involves actions that intentionally harm another person, either physically or emotionally. While girls are more often victims and boys more often perpetrators, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

It can take many forms, including:

- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Relationship abuse
- Domestic violence
- Child sexual exploitation
- Youth and serious youth violence
- Financial abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Gender-based violence

Child-on-child abuse is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, based on a person's:

- Race
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Special educational needs or disabilities

It can also affect children who:

- Are adopted or in care
- Have caring responsibilities
- Have health problem
- Are frequently on the move (e.g. children from military families or the travelling community)
- Are experiencing a personal or family crisis
- Have actual or perceived differences (e.g. physical or cultural differences).

These types of abuse rarely occur in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Abuse can happen within schools and other settings. It is important to **recognise** what constitutes abuse, how it may be present, how it can be managed. Appropriate support and intervention should be put in place to meet the needs of the individual, alongside preventative strategies to reduce further risk of harm.

Most incidents of pupils hurting other pupils will be addressed under the school's behaviour policy. However, this safeguarding policy applies to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns, including situations where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

Alleged incidents may involve pupils from the same or different schools and may occur on or off school premises. Safeguarding principles and the school's duty to protect pupils apply in all cases, including incidents online.

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys". Abuse can sometimes be gender-specific, for example, girls being sexually assaulted or boys subjected to initiation-type violence. The school will investigate all claims of abusive behaviour between children with the same seriousness as any other type of abuse.

Preventing violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority. We also recognise that emotional abuse can be as damaging, or more damaging, than physical violence. Abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, which can be:

- Physical
- Psychological (eg knowing what upsets someone)
- Intellectual
- Social (e.g., having the support of a group or isolating someone physically or online)

Even low-level disruption and offensive language can have a significant impact if left unchallenged, and may discourage victims from reporting more serious incidents.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Part 5 of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025** and the guidance *Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges* set out how schools should respond to reports of sexual violence and harassment.

Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

In cases where nudes or semi-nudes (formerly "sexting") have been shared, the school follows guidance issued by the UK Government and relevant authorities, including the NCA, CEOP, and IWF (June 2025 guidance on abuse material generated by AI). Schools ensure that:

- Incidents are treated as safeguarding concerns, not merely misbehaviour
- Responses are proportionate, prioritising the safety of all pupils
- Parents or carers are informed where appropriate, unless this increases risk
- Evidence is preserved and referred to appropriate authorities, including the police if necessary

What should a school do if child-on-child abuse is reported?

- 1. Take all reports seriously:** Every allegation should be treated with urgency and care, regardless of where or how the incident occurred (on-site, off-site, online, or in person).
- 2. Ensure the immediate safety of the victim(s):** Protect the child from further harm while the report is being investigated. This may include separating the children involved, providing adult supervision, or arranging safe spaces.
- 3. Listen and record:** Speak to the child calmly and without judgement. Record exactly what the child says, using their own words where possible, and include details such as time, date, and any witnesses.
- 4. Inform designated safeguarding lead (DSL):** The DSL should be notified immediately and take responsibility for coordinating the next steps, including liaising with parents, carers, and external agencies if required.
- 5. Follow safeguarding procedures:** Apply the school's safeguarding and child protection policies, including reporting to the appropriate external authorities if the allegation involves potential criminal behaviour or raises serious safeguarding concerns.
- 6. Support for all involved:** Provide emotional support and appropriate interventions for the victim, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. This may include counselling, pastoral support, or referral to specialist services.
- 7. Review and prevent:** After the incident is resolved, review policies, procedures, and preventative strategies to reduce the risk of similar incidents in the future.

2. Contextual safeguarding

Children's experiences of abuse and violence are rarely isolated events, and they can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives and spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to child-on-child abuse therefore needs to consider the range of possible types of child-on-child abuse set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences. This can be done by adopting a 'contextual safeguarding' approach and by ensuring that our response to incidents of child-on-child abuse takes into account any potential complexity.

This Policy and procedures encapsulate a contextual safeguarding approach, which:

- is an approach to safeguarding children that recognises their experiences of significant harm in extra-familial contexts and seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities;
- recognises that as children enter adolescence they spend increasing amounts of time outside of the home in public environments (including on the internet) within which they may experience abuse; and
- considers interventions to change the systems or social conditions of the environments in which abuse has occurred

3. Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that can occur between peers and the following list is not exhaustive:

3.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may include hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse) to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action to take or sanctions to introduce.

3.2 Bullying – physical, name calling, homophobic etc.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Young people who bully and those who are bullied can have long-term problems. To be considered as bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An imbalance of power: young people who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once. Details of our anti-bullying strategies and procedures can be found in our Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures.

Details of our anti-bullying strategies and procedures can be found in each schools Whole School Behaviour Policy.

3.3 Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for cyberbullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. Cyberbullying involves the use of mobile devices, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as outlined above.

Cyberbullying can fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (Section 1) which states that a person who sends electronic communications which are “indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim” would be deemed to have committed an offence. The Communications Act 2003 (Section 127) further supports this and states that a person is guilty of an offence if he/she sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or if for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another he/she sends a message by means of a public electronic communications network knowing that the message is false.

If the behaviour involves the taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no option but to involve the Police to investigate

these allegations.

3.4 Bullying which occurs outside the school premises

Each school will follow the procedures outlined in their Whole School Behaviour Policy and use disciplinary powers to address the conduct of pupils when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, during the evening at weekends or during the school holidays. Where abuse outside of school is reported to the school, we will investigate and take appropriate action. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police if we believe an offence has taken place.

3.5 Sexting (nudes or semi nudes)

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude/semi-nude pics' or 'rude pics' or 'nude/semi-nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture, can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

Once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and the image could end up anywhere. By having in their possession or distributing to others indecent images of a person under 18, many young people are not aware that they could be committing a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Any direct disclosure by a pupil (male or female) will be taken very seriously. A child who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, including pseudo-images, which are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you 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

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL

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 pupil(s)
- 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 on the best 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 pupils 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 pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

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 young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to SEN)
- 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 pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person 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.

- They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).
- If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil 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 pupil at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through Police Liaison Officer or by contacting 101

Curriculum coverage

Dependant on age and if the matter arises pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of the schools PSHE and computing 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

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective education, including:

- Putting safeguarding first
- Approaching from the perspective of the child
- Promoting dialogue and understanding
- Empowering and enabling children and young people
- Never frightening or scare-mongering
- Challenging victim-blaming attitudes

At One Community Trust, the safety and well-being of all children is of paramount importance. When there is a safeguarding concern, we will take into account the child's wishes and feelings when determining the appropriate actions and services. We are committed to creating an environment where children feel safe, supported, and comfortable in reporting any concerns or allegations.

To achieve this, the schools will:

- Establish clear systems for children to report abuse or concerns confidently.
- Ensure that these reporting systems are well-promoted, easily understood, and accessible to all children.

- Emphasise to children that their concerns will be taken seriously, and they are encouraged to express their views and provide feedback without fear.

Children are provided with multiple opportunities to report any concerns, including speaking to:

- Their Class teacher/Form Tutor, whom they see daily.
- non-teaching staff who work within their year group
- Pastoral Support/DSL.

All children will be informed of the methods available for sharing concerns. This information will be communicated through assemblies, induction sessions at the beginning of the school year at High School, and revisited throughout the academic year. Additionally, posters displayed around the schools will promote the steps for reporting and provide alternative contact information for students who may not feel comfortable speaking to someone directly within the school.

3.6 Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a school or sports team etc. Hazing can also be used as initiation into a street or other 'gang'. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older or established members of the organisation or 'gang', because they have all experienced this as part of a 'rite of passage'. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment.

3.7 Prejudiced bullying/behaviour

The term prejudiced-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices related to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

3.8 Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. Abuse can occur online and offline and is 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. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive. We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour.

- **sexual violence**, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- **sexual harassment**, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;

In relation to any reports or disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children we will:

- make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- challenge behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and other private areas of the body

Ultimately any decisions on how to proceed with an allegation of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be made on a case by case basis with the DSL (or deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children’s social care and the Police as required.

Some situations, however, are statutorily clear:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape;
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law; and
- creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (see para 3.5 – Sexting). This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.

3.10 Upskirting

Upskirting is a highly intrusive practice, which typically involves someone taking a picture under another person’s clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Anyone, and any gender, can be a victim and this behaviour is completely unacceptable.

KCSIE 2025: “upskirting (which is a criminal offence) typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.” (paragraph 35)

4. Managing the disclosure

Our initial response to a disclosure from a child is that the disclosure will be taken seriously. All our staff know how to use CPOMS to log the incident, this is a vital and must be done immediately. This is part of gathering critical information from a child relating to their disclosure.

- The member of staff to whom the disclosure is made will reassure the child that they will be supported throughout and kept safe.
- Staff will never assume that someone else is dealing with the alleged incident. If in doubt, they will speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

- Details of the disclosure will be passed to the DSL immediately or as soon as practically possible on CPOMS.
- The DSL will manage the concern from the member of staff, child or parent.
- The DSL will follow the school's Child Protection procedures which will ensure they gather as much information and context relating to the disclosure as possible. Where necessary, advice will be sought from Warrington MASH Team who will advise on how to proceed with the concern.
- Other agencies such as Police and Social Care will be notified and become involved if appropriate.

4.1 Gathering the facts

It is important to gather a broad view of the facts at an early stage.

- Wherever possible, manage the disclosure and subsequent interviews of those involved with two members of staff present (preferably one being the DSL or deputy DSL).
- All those involved in the alleged incident should be spoken to individually and separately.
- Gain a statement of facts from those involved using consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the children to tell you in their own words what happened.
- Only interrupt the child to gain clarity with open questions – where, when, why, who. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene? etc.)
- Staff will not promise confidentiality at the initial stage and will inform those involved who the report will be passed on to.
- A written record, via CPOMs, will be made immediately by the person to whom the disclosure is made and passed to the DSL for action.

4.2 Considering confidentiality and anonymity

Staff will never promise confidentiality as it is likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.

We will only engage staff and other agencies that are required to support the children involved or will be involved in any investigation.

If the victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, staff may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. In this event, the DSL will consider the following:

- parents should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk);
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed a referral should be made to children's social care via Warrington MASH team.
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. The starting point is that reports should be passed to the Police.

Ultimately, it is for the DSL (or deputy) to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the decision is taken to go ahead and report the incident, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered.

Additional information on confidentiality and information sharing is available from DfE advice 'Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' and 'NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners'.

We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment and will carefully consider which staff should know about the report and any support that will be in place for the children involved.

Full consideration will also be given to the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities and the support which may be required by the victim and his/her family should this situation arise.

5. Response to a disclosure

It is essential that all concerns/allegations of child-on-child abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly. The way in which they are responded to can have a significant impact on the school environment.

Any response will include:

- a thorough investigation of the concerns/allegations and the wider context in which they may have occurred (as appropriate);
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk – whilst the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and at risk of harm themselves. We will ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it.

We will take into account:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, and consider and address any wider contexts such as the child/children's peer group (both within and outside the school); family; the school environment; the experiences of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children's online presence;
- the changes that may need to be made to the above contexts to address the child/children's needs and to mitigate risk;
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so, the DSL should discuss the proposed action with all those involved and their parents and obtain consent to any referral before it is made, unless informing the parent will put the child at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform the parents will generally be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the Police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents should be informed.
- the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so.

If a pupil is in immediate danger, or at risk of significant harm, a referral to the MASH (if the pupil is aged under 18) and/or the Police will be made immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

If a member of staff believes for whatever reason that child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss their concern with the DSL without delay so that a course of action can be agreed.

5.1 Internal management

Where behaviour between peers is abusive or violent, the incident will be dealt with using methods set out in 5.2-5.4 below. However, where support from local agencies is not available or the incident is considered to be inappropriate or problematic, the school may need to handle allegations/concerns internally. It may be appropriate to handle the incident using the whole school behaviour policy and procedures which includes procedures to be followed in the case of bullying. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for the decisions will be recorded either in writing or electronically. The services of external specialists may be required to support the process.

5.2 Early help assessment

Where appropriate and necessary, the school may undertake or contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of a child/children and their family.

5.3 Referral to MASH

Where a decision is made to make a referral to the Warrington MASH Team a strategy meeting is convened, then the school will hold every professional involved in the case accountable for their safeguarding response, including themselves, to both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it.

5.4 Reporting to the police

Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the Police. There are, however some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the Police e.g. where the existence of youth produced sexual imagery does not involve any aggravating factors. All concerns/allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis and considering the wider context.

6. Individual risk and needs assessment

Where there is an incident of child-on-child abuse, the school will undertake a robust risk and needs assessment in respect of each child affected by the abuse including the alleged perpetrator. The risk assessment will:

- assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed and/or faced by the child;
- engage the child's parents and draw upon local services and agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term (unless informing the parent will put the child at risk of harm);
- consider whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of any child involved; and
- be reviewed at regular intervals in the light of the child's on-going needs to ensure that progress is being made which benefits the child.

If at any stage the child's needs escalate, the DSL should contact the MASH Team to determine the appropriate course of action.

7. Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help our decision-making process regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim. We will:

- consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse;
- consider the needs and wishes of the victim. The victim will be listened to and acknowledged. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is possible. Where a pupil feels able to deal with the incident on their own or with support of family and friends, the pupils will continue to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future;
- ensure that the victim will never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report;
- consider interventions that target a whole class or year group e.g. work on cyberbullying/relationship abuse etc.;
- support the child in improving peer group relationships where bullying is a factor in the abuse and consider restorative justice work with all those concerned;
- ensure that sensitive issues are explored through the use of the curriculum (PSHE and Relationships and Health Education).

8. Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will support our decision-making process regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator. In relation to this we will consider:

- how we will continue to provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implementing any disciplinary sanctions. If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site. Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the pupil has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case, an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multiagency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all the agencies involved including the pupil and their parents.
- the age and developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of them being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations made against them.
- the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviour in young children may be a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices or materials.

Advice will be sought, as appropriate, from the Warrington MASH Team, the Police and any other agencies or specialist services in order to commission the right support for the child/children concerned.

9. Sanctions

Before deciding on appropriate action, the school will always consider its duty to safeguard all children from

harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the child-on-child abuse and the causes of it.

Sanctions may include additional supervision of the pupil or protective strategies if the pupil feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school response might include a sanction (in accordance with the Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures) such as class exclusion, SLT supervision or fixed-term exclusion to allow the pupil to reflect on their behaviour.

The school will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves or exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognising that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this Policy may still be required.

A permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children in the school or, where the Head teacher/Head of school, in their absolute discretion, considered the actions of the pupil(s) has damaged the school's ethos.

Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of child-on-child abuse, and the school will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forward.

10. Whole school approach to prevention

Our school's response to child-on-child abuse will not begin at the point at which a child has been abused. We will proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address. Our school has created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to other pupils.

Our school will:

- Involve parents to ensure they are clear that the school does not tolerate any form of child-on-child abuse. We will make parents aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being abused by their peer. We want parents to feel confident that our school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. We will expect parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home;
- Involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent child-on-child abuse, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' agreements for computers and consideration of what can still be improved;
- consider how (if at all) the school's physical environment contributed to the abuse, and how this can be addressed going forward, for example by improving the school's safety, security and supervision;

- ensure that any lessons learnt are acted upon swiftly – were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the school;
- Implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of child-on-child abuse will reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that abuse is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned;
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate abuse, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. We will also include children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. We teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable;
- Provide effective staff training on how to deal with child-on-child abuse. All school staff (paid and unpaid) understand the principles and purpose of the school's Policy and procedures, how to resolve and respond to problems, and where and when to seek support from others in the school;
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying of any description so that they are assured that they will be listened to and that incidents will be acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report abuse which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying;
- create an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss their experiences of child-on-child abuse, without fear of further abuse or discrimination;
- recognise that some children with special educational needs or disabilities may lack the social or communication skills to report child-on-child abuse incidents and we ensure our training builds in regular awareness of this;
- frequently address the impact of abuse within the school and what constitutes appropriate, safe and acceptable behaviour with our children and staff.

[APPENDIX 5: Useful links, advice and support](#)

The following links have been provided to aid professionals with some useful information in relation to safeguarding.

Warrington Safeguarding Partnership is designed to assist professionals and volunteers who work with children with care and support needs, to safeguard and promote their welfare.

It gives you easy access to important safeguarding guidance, information on forums, training and links to other safeguarding resources. Link below

[Warrington safeguarding partnerships](#)

The Child and Social Work Act 2017 requires the Local Authority, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the police to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Warrington Safeguarding Partnership does not commission or deliver direct frontline services. Their job is to make sure that the services all work well together and that they are effective in keeping children and young people safe.

Their aims are that:

- Every child and young person in Warrington is safe and healthy, and has the opportunity to reach their potential;
- They create a 'challenge and check' process for practice; and
- Ensure that they embed a culture of learning that always seeks to make improvements.

Core partners are Warrington Borough Council, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB and Cheshire Constabulary (Police).

Key safeguarding links

- [NSPCC](#)
- [Childline](#) - Call 0800 1111
- [CEOP](#) - CEOP works with child protection partners across the UK and overseas to identify the main threats to children and coordinates activity against these threats to bring offenders to account. We protect children from harm online and offline, directly through NCA led operations and in partnership with local and international agencies.

Disabled children

- [HM Government guidance](#)
- [NSPCC Advice](#)

Online safety

- NSPCC – Online safety
- Professionals online safety helpline – 0844 381 4772 helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- ThinkUKnow
- **DFE Guidance**- Sharing nudes and semi- nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Helpline 0800 028 3550
- Home Office guidance

Forced marriage

- HM Government multi-agency practice guidance for professionals

Prevent

- Prevent duty guidance - .GOV.UK [pdf]
- Pan Cheshire Strategy [pdf]
- Department for Education – Prevent Helpline 0207 340 7264

Contextual safeguarding

- Contextual Safeguarding Network

Child exploitation protocol

- Pan Cheshire Child Exploitation Screening Tool

More information can be found in: [Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK](#)

County lines

- HM Government documents and promotional materials

Young person's drug and alcohol service

- The Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Screening Tool [pdf] is designed to support young people and professionals to identify the level of a young person's drug and / or alcohol misuse.

- Pathways to Recovery is a free and confidential drug and alcohol service for adults, families and carer's in Warrington. Their recovery teams work across Warrington to support people struggling with addictions. Visit [Pathways to Recovery - Warrington](#)

Domestic abuse

- **Diamond**- Counselling and Therapeutic Support Service for Children and Young people affected by Domestic Abuse, [make a referral](#)
- **Refuge** - Advice, emotional and practical support for women, men and young people. Call 01925 243359
- **The Hideout**– to help children and young people to understand domestic abuse, and how to take positive action
- **The Children's Society**– guidance for young people on both [domestic abuse](#) and [teen relationship abuse](#)
- [Sexual abuse support services for Children and Young People](#)
- [Report abuse of children and young people | warrington.gov.uk](#)
- [Action for children](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- Cheshire Cares – victims of domestic abuse/crime 01606 366336
- Young person IDVA – Warrington IDVA services WarringtonIDVAservice@refuge.org.uk
- Stalking helpline - 0808 802 0300
- Karma Nirvana - Honour based violence helpline 0800 5999 247
- Samaritans – 0845 790 9090
- [SafeLives](#)

Warrington Domestic Abuse Partnership (WDAP)

The Warrington Domestic Abuse Partnership is made up of council employees, members of the police, local support groups and charities. The group works together to try and reduce domestic abuse in Warrington, and make sure people know about how domestic abuse affects people, families and communities.

- You can contact the WDAP on **01925 443124**.
- For further information - [Warrington Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2025](#)

National domestic abuse helpline

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

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

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safelives: young people and domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

APPENDIX 6: References

The following documents were used in the creation of this Policy and procedures and should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2025 (DfE)
 - Relevant parts of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty have been outlined and explicitly linked to safeguarding, particularly in regard to diversity inclusion, prejudicial and discriminatory bullying and sexual violence & harassment.
- Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges – May 2018 (DfE)
 - DfE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment guidance has been incorporated into KCSIE 2025, and therefore will be withdrawn in September 2025. It is helpful that the information is all in one place, and therefore easier for staff to access, although it does mean that there has been a substantial increase to the length of the KCSIE guidance. This also means that what was non-statutory guidance becomes statutory.
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers – July 2018 (HM Government)
- NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners – 2015 (NSPCC)
- Working together to Safeguard Children – July 2018 (HM Government)