



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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Bettws Lifehouse

Child protection and safeguarding policy

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Reviewed by: Maxine Bond & Kay Jones

Director with Safeguarding Responsibility: Kay Jones

Executive Whole School Designated Safeguarding Lead: Maxine Bond

Designated Safeguarding Lead Panel:

Maxine Bond, Nici Jones, Kay Jones, Fiona Davies

Policy statement and principles

Bettws Lifehouse is totally committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all children who attend and have access to its staff and education. Our ethos of nurturing and child centred focus This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. (see *Positive behaviour policy, Online Safety Policy, Complaints Policy and Recruitment Policy*).

These policies are available on the school website and are included in the staff handbook.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- safer children make more successful learners
- policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review sooner.

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Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Teacher Standards 2012
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- Working Together: Transitional Guidance 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015.
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Policy principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- All staff will reassure children that their concerns are being taken seriously and that they will be kept safe
- Positive reflective practice encourages sharing information under the ethos of promoting safeguarding

Policy aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners



Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of 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.

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

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

EDSL refers to the designated safeguarding lead at Bettws Lifehouse

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Roles and responsibilities

Key personnel

The Executive Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection is Maxine Bond

Contact details: email – Maxine.Bond@bettwslifehouse.org.uk tel: 01686639456

The deputy designated lead(s) are:

Nici Jones Headteacher Kingsland Grange – Nici.Jones@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Salina Price Asst. Head DMHL Kingsland Grange – salina.price@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Stuart Harris Asst. Head Kingsland Grange – stuart.harris@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Katie Goddard Key Stage Manager Kingsland Grange – katie.goddard@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Jenny Hellin Key Stage Manager Kingsland Grange – jenny.hellin@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Jade Griffiths Key Stage Manager Kingsland Grange jade.griffiths@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Jess Reed Key Stage Manager Kingsland Grange jess.reed@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Vanessa Kara Key Stage Manager Kingsland Grange vanessa.kara@bettwslifehouse.org.uk

Safeguarding Panel: Maxine Bond, Nici Jones, Fiona Davies, Kay Jones **(all DSL trained)**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 01686 651166

The Director for Safeguarding is Mrs Kay Jones

The Director of Education is Mrs Meg Jones

Chair of Governors: Mrs David Price – d8881333@btinternet.com



The Designated Safeguarding Lead (EDSL):

The Executive designated safeguarding lead (EDSL) takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school. The DSL has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, which include:

- ensuring the child protection policies are known, understood, and used appropriately by staff, reviewed annually and publicly available
- advising and supporting staff on child protection and safeguarding matters
- encouraging a culture of listening to children
- managing safeguarding referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies
- taking part in strategy discussions and multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) meetings
- liaising with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) at the local authority where allegations are made against staff
- making staff aware of LSCB training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements
- transferring the child protection file to a child's new school
- undergoing training and receiving regular updates to maintain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role, including Prevent awareness training

The deputy designated safeguarding lead(s):

are trained to the same level as the DSL and support the DSL with safeguarding matters as appropriate. In the absence of the DSL, the deputy DSL carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The designated teacher for LAC pupils

The designated teacher for looked after children maintains the educational and social wellbeing of vulnerable children following the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, involving promoting educational achievements through monitoring progress and ensuring that all looked after children receive the support and resources, they need to reach their full potential.



SENDCo

The SENDCo is responsible for overseeing the identification, support, and monitoring of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in schools or early years settings. Identifying pupils with SEND and ensuring statutory duties, including managing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's), ensuring inclusive teaching practices and interventions are in place and work closely with parents/carers and staff to remove barriers to learning.

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the EDSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care

Abuse of position of trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence.

Children who may be at greater risk of harm

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

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- living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- living transient lifestyles
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- LGB children and children questioning their gender. Children in these groups are more likely to experience discrimination including hate related behaviour.
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or being drawn into extremism.
- Missing from education
- safeguarding considerations for Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and other minoritised ethnic communities, including adultification.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration would include the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages if appropriate and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

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

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

Staff are trained to manage these additional barriers to ensure the children in our care are appropriately safeguarded.

Children missing education

Attendance, absence, and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse



or exploitation, or mental health problems. The DSL will have a proactive response to continued absence, monitoring unauthorised absence and taking appropriate action including timely contact with parents/carers regarding unexplained absences, taking into account family context and escalation of prolonged, persistent or severe absence as a safeguarding concern triggering notifying the local authority universal agencies, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Behaviour

Positive behaviour is key to engagement in learning, when staff identify pupil changes in behaviour such as unmet need, trauma, serious violence, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, absence, self-harm, suicidal ideation and substance abuse they will discuss with DSL or deputies who will work with the Behaviour Lead on safety and support planning. Contact will be made with parents/carers and the local authority and other universal agencies to inform them of concerning changes in behaviour.

Children with medical conditions

Schools have a vital role to play in supporting the physical health of their pupils including allergies, safer eating, first aid, medicines, individual healthcare plans and education adaptations. All staff are aware of children who have specific medical conditions, if staff are concerned that a child's physical health is also a safeguarding concern they can discuss it with the DSL or a deputy. Further support is available at Kingsland Grange from the named Physiotherapist & Clinical Health Lead, Jasmin Williams.

Mental health

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are also aware that where children have suffered adverse childhood experiences those experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL or a deputy. The named Mental Health Lead for Kingsland Grange is Salina Price.



Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual pupils

Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual are considered separately from children who are questioning their gender. LGBTQ+ young people may be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying.

Gender questioning pupils

Exploration of self is normal in adolescents; the school will support parents of, and pupils questioning their gender or taking steps to transition. Pupils may have complex needs, and it is important that school staff are prepared to identify any safeguarding concerns with the DSL or a deputy who will liaise with parents in relation to decision-making over pronouns or gender identity. Support for these pupils is available through the Mental Health lead, Salina Price, and team.

Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation, and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the child's welfare is paramount. The school's whistleblowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence, so a sensitive inquiry can take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the headteacher. Complaints about the headteacher/principal should be reported to the chair of trustees, or alternative proprietor.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, we must follow our set procedures. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, volunteers and contractors can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2026) and in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Adults policy and procedures.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the



possible signs of abuse, neglect, online safety, and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff, including the DSL and headteacher, will receive regularly updated training. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, e-bulletins, website access and staff meetings throughout the year.

Safer recruitment

Our school complies with the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2026) and the *Local Safeguarding Children Board* (LSCB) by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications, and work history. The school's Staff Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full and are available on the staff section of the school computer system or upon request.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All relevant staff are made aware of the disqualification from childcare legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the school.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

Volunteers

Any volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have



not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge confirming they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The headteacher will exercise professional judgment in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site. It is our general policy that all visitors are never unsupervised.

Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our school, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

Staff/pupil online relationships

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation. Staff should not have current pupils as 'friends' or contacts on any social media platform and should not add them until at least 12 months after their leaving school date. Any request from a pupil, current or past, should be openly discussed with the staff team. Any advice given will be recorded.

Child protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.



Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child-to-parent or caregiver abuse.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out in Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures, which can be accessed via our Anti-Bullying Policy, available online via our website.

Taking action

Any child, in any family, in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child; if necessary, call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

Staff may suspect that a pupil is at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **safeguarding report on the MIS, CPOMS** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened



what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that, to help them, they must pass the information on to the DSL.** The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgment. During their conversations with the pupils, staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what the pupil’s mother thinks about it
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- complete the **safeguarding report on the MIS** and **notify** the DSL as soon as possible
- seek support if they feel distressed.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL or a deputy will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion, or disclosure.

Our focus is the pupil's safety and wellbeing. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality. Staff should discuss concerns only with the DSL, headteacher, or chair of trustees (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will



then decide who else needs to have the information, and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2026) emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with our Retention and Destruction Policy.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and where:

- it is necessary and proportionate to do so; and
- the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether the decision is taken to share. Written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with universal agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the data protection officer.

The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and pupils on request.

Referral to children's social care

The DSL or a deputy will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being



made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, community-based Early Help, Family Help, police, universal agencies or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency, and the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy, the headteacher and the chair of trustees are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgment that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Child on Child abuse (including harassment and violence)

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, all staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and should be clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding child-on-child abuse. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- **sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse** such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault
- **sexting**, including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content
- **teenage relationship abuse** - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- **upskirting** - taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge
- **initiation/hazing** - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or school groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities,



special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

- **harassment and violence** - identified as serious violence, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and violence, AI-generated imagery, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, misogynistic and misandrist behaviour, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and risks.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example, girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

At our school, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse.

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Assemblies are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- RE, Citizenship, PSHE, SMSC and other cross-curricular opportunities are used to reinforce the message through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in school.
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.

- **Information gathering** – children, staff and witnesses will be spoken with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** – if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents** – as with other concerns of abuse, the school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a pupil with parents. Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil, and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.



- **Record** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored

securely on the school's child protection and safeguarding systems and/or in the child's separate child protection file. The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of the action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Children can report allegations or concerns of child-on-child abuse to any staff member and that staff member will pass on the allegation to the DSL in accordance with this policy. To ensure children can report their concerns easily, the school has the following system in place for children to confidently report abuse:

Where allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made, the school will act in accordance with the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2026).

Supporting those involved

The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships or some restorative justice work.

Support may also be required for the pupil who was harmed. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) & child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim 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. This power imbalance can be due to a range of factors, including age, gender sexual



identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources.

The school includes the risks of criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of such exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse which may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside 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.

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.

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.

Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs, and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation which, as well as including the indicators set out under CCE below, can also include having older boyfriends and suffering sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant. All concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.



Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

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

Children can become trapped by this exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection.

Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys and both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

All staff are made aware of indicators that children are at risk of, or experiencing, criminal exploitation. The main indicators can include children who:

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

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors set out under CCE, above.



Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools and colleges. Indicators of county lines include those indicators set out under CCE, above, with the main indicator being missing episodes from home and/or school. Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited include children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from 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 with which they have no connection or in a hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Online safety

As schools increasingly work online, it is essential to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate material. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation.

DSLs and senior leaders are expected to work with curriculum, RHE/RSHE and computing leads. Online safety updates add generative AI, AI-generated imagery, filtering and monitoring, cyber security, screen use in early years, remote education and annual review expectations. We have ensured that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to manage the content available to pupils, and to monitor the personal conduct of our pupils online. We have also ensured that appropriate security protection procedures are in place to safeguard our systems, staff, and learners. We review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies alongside the emergence of AI technology and misinformation, disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories.

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

- **content** - being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation and extremism



- **contact** - being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users such as peer-to-peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children
- **conduct** - personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images and online bullying
- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

All staff are aware of these risk areas and should report any concerns to the DSL.

Sharing nudes and semi nudes

Sharing photos, videos and live streams online is part of daily life for many children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. For the purposes of this guidance, the term 'making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes' refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under the age of 18. The term 'images' includes all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums, or done offline between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop.

The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image-sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'. Other terms used in education include 'sexting', 'youth-produced sexual imagery' and 'youth-involved sexual imagery'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people in relationships, as well as by those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer
- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online
- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame



All incidents involving youth-produced sexual imagery will be responded to as follows:

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

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the police. Once a report is made to the police, the report must be recorded, and the police will investigate. This may include seizing devices and interviewing the young people involved.

The UK Council for Internet Safety updated its advice for managing incidents of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in December 2020 – [UKCIS advice 2020](#). The school will have regard to this advice when managing these issues.

Sexting (and/or Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)

There is no accepted definition of 'sexting', but most professionals agree that it refers to the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs of a person under 18 years of age, via mobiles or over the internet. The [UKCCIS advice document](#) refers to this as '**youth produced sexual imagery**'.

All incidents involving youth-produced sexual imagery will be responded to as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately, and the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. If appropriate, there will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.



At any point in the process, if there is a concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately in accordance with this policy. [Shore Space online resource](#) is also a resource offering a space for teenagers worried about the sexual behavior of others, or their own thoughts and actions, to chat confidentially and get crucial advice.

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the police. Once a report is made to the police, the report must be recorded, and the police will investigate. This may include seizing devices and interviewing the young people involved.

Honour-Based Violence

'Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses 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. All forms of HBV are abuse.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad, and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales, the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England and Wales. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role



in arranging the marriage, but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Radicalisation and Extremism

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (social, moral, spiritual and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

Further comprehensive information can be found in our PREVENT policy.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes people who are or have been married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another, or each has had a parental relationship with the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, economic and emotional abuse.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Any child can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on children, and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

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Where police have been called to a domestic violence incident where children are in the household and experienced that incident, the police will inform the DSL. This ensures that the school has up-to-date safeguarding information about the child.

All staff are aware of the impact domestic violence can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL, who will contact Operation Encompass, notifying the police of concerns of domestic abuse.

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL, and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies

This policy should be read alongside our other safeguarding policies, which are set out in Appendix Two.

Special Circumstances

Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked-after children safe. All staff have information about a child's looked-after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The DSL, Headteacher and key worker have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

Work Experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise



pupils on work experience, which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2026). These checks are managed and inspected in accordance with our work experience policy.

Boarding Schools and Children's Homes

Research has shown that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings. All boarding schools and residential special schools comply with the National Minimum Standards for their particular setting and are appropriately inspected.

Those schools should be particularly alert to the signs of abuse in such settings and work closely with the host local authority and, where relevant, any local authorities that have placed their children there.

Appendix One

Four categories of abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs. 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.



Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons, it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

All staff are responsible for reporting their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:



- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless regarding their own or others' safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their schoolwork
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSP to decide how to proceed.

Appendix Two

Related Safeguarding policies

- Staff behaviour/code of conduct
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Positive Behaviour
- Personal and intimate care
- Complaints procedure
- Tackling bullying
- Safe Touch Policy
- Safe working practice
- Whistleblowing
- SEN
- Recruitment and selection
- Managing allegations

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- Grievance and disciplinary
- Staff/pupil online communication
- Use of the Internet and Mobiles during school hours
- Confidentiality and information sharing