

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



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## 1.0 Policy statement

The Dixons Academies Trust takes seriously its 'duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school' (Children Act 1989 and Education Act 2004). The welfare of the child is paramount and we adhere to all aspects of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Nothing is more important than children's welfare and we will always work in the best interests of the child. All children must have equal rights to protection.

We are committed to having in place procedures that will support informed and sensitive management of child protection issues. The Trust recognises that there are several inter-linking components which form an integrated framework to provide a protective / preventative service. These include:

- known operational policies and procedures for dealing with child protection issues
- having in place clear structures to support the child protection function (i.e. designated lead, named governor and a clear policy)
- having a Safer Recruitment Policy and procedures (see policies)
- ensuring that staff understand the expected code of conduct for working with children (see Professional Conduct Policy) and that students are empowered and aware of issues related to their own welfare (particularly through the Personal Development Studies/PSHCE programme and assemblies)

In addition, the senior leadership team ensures that every precaution is taken to ensure that we minimise the risk of harm to our students in our school environment and on education outside of the classroom (see related policies below).

The Trust recognises the importance of being vigilant at all times both with regards to those we know and also those we do not, and in never believing that 'it could never happen here' (see Bichard Report 2004). In relation to this, we recognise that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that causes harm to children. We take any allegation seriously and follow local arrangements for dealing with this (see policy on dealing with allegations). All staff understand that any concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by:

- Children Acts (1989) and (2004)
- Education Act (2002), and in line with government publications
- Revised Safeguarding Statutory Guidance 2 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' (2000)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act (2006)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Safeguarding students is a core function of the Trust and a whole-school approach is maintained in all our academies. As such, this policy relates to many other policies and in particular the following:

- Anti-Bullying
- Care and Control
- Curriculum
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff
- Educational Visits
- Health and Safety
- Individual Needs
- Positive behaviour
- Prevent education
- Professional Conduct
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
- Safer Recruitment and DBS

**All staff across the Trust must read the latest DfE update of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (part 1) Appendix 5 (September 2018). They have a duty to ensure that not only have they read the document, but have signed annually to confirm that they understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection. If staff are unclear, they must ask the Designated Safeguarding Lead for clarification. All academies train on this statutory guidance annually and put in place measures to ensure staff have read and understood the guidance. All staff understand that any concerns must be referred immediately to the safeguarding team, or if circumstances dictate, directly to Children's Social Care (see page 9)**



## 2.0 Scope and purpose

- 2.1 To enable all staff to be aware, sensitively, of the need for child protection in appropriate circumstances.
- 2.2 To ensure all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- 2.3 To enable all staff to understand the 'duty of care' placed on them and their role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils.
- 2.4 To ensure that all staff understand the procedures in place when dealing with potential child protection issues.
- 2.5 To demonstrate the Trust's commitment and procedures with regards to child protection.
- 2.6 To contribute to the wider safeguarding portfolio of policies (see below).
- 2.7 To ensure all children are provided with a curriculum which addresses issues of being safe as well as ensuring children understand right from wrong whilst having the right climate to express concerns.

## 3.0 Procedures and training

In order to minimise risk to students, the main elements to our safeguarding practice are as follows:

- 3.1 We practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers in every academy to work with children (see policy on recruitment and checking).
- 3.2 We continually review all practices in order to establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop (see Health and Safety policy).
- 3.3 We raise awareness of child protection issues with students and aim to equip them with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- 3.4 We ensure staff are aware of how to conduct themselves with students and give regular training on child protection and safeguarding. All staff in school have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2018) and re-read it on an annual basis to ensure a common understanding that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children.
- 3.5 Regular updates are provided to staff via emails, bulletins and staff meetings. We adhere to the recommendation that formal training is delivered at least annually and regular updates keep safeguarding at the forefront of everyone's thinking and practice.
- 3.6 Early Help ethos ensures that we provide support for our pupils as soon as a problem is identified. This applies to all pupils from early years to those in their teens. Staff discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead and support other agencies undertaking an early help assessment.
- 3.7 We recognise that some children are more vulnerable than others and therefore may be more at risk from abuse (see SEND / Individual Needs Policy).
- 3.8 We carry out appropriate risk assessments in all academies for all school activities (e.g. educational visits).
- 3.9 We raise awareness with all students of the risks of technologies through teaching about e- safety all our schools are 'mobile phone' free as we recognise the risks posed to children from mobile technology including excessive use.
- 3.10 We encourage a positive atmosphere of openness and support where students are encouraged to have the confidence to talk to familiar adults with the understanding that they will be listened to. Enough time is dedicated to the pastoral curriculum to allow for teaching of all aspects of safeguarding.
- 3.11 We operate a 'zero-tolerance' approach to bullying (see Anti-Bullying policy).
- 3.12 We have a strong emphasis on student voice through the student council, faculty reviews, policy reviews and the employment of key staff.
- 3.13 We have procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse and are ever vigilant to all concerns regarding any unhealthy opinions or behaviours a child may display.
- 3.14 We support students who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan and offer non-prejudicial support for those who make allegations.
- 3.15 We ensure all staff have training in child protection procedures at induction. These procedures follow the guidelines set out by OFSTED, Circular 10/95, Safeguarding Children in Education 2004 and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018). Staff will be updated annually to ensure everyone is trained in how to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns. Staff training is tailored to the role of the individual.
- 3.16 We are committed to working with other agencies in order to safeguard children and setting up an interagency assessment as appropriate under the Early Help system (see Working Together 2018).
- 3.17 In all academies, we will consider the child's wishes or feelings when determining what action to take and what services to provide to ensure every child is safe and staff do not promise confidentiality at any point.
- 3.18 This policy applies to the whole Trust community and all academies.



## 4.0 Trust commitment

We recognise that, for students, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult promotes prevention.

Academies in the Trust will therefore:

- 4.1 Establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- 4.2 Ensure that students know there are adults in the academy who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- 4.3 Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for personal and social development which will equip students with the skills they need to recognise and be safe from abuse (See Personal Development Studies/PSHCE curriculum). Students need to recognise behaviours which are unacceptable from peers and adults.
- 4.4 Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents whilst always putting the needs of the child first.
- 4.5 Ensure that our approach to managing behaviour is positive and that staff understand how to behave when working with children.
- 4.6 Recognise its obligation to work with and co-operate with colleagues from other agencies (Education Act 2004 and Working Together 2018).
- 4.7 Ensure all staff are aware of the school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associate risks.
- 4.8 Ensure that staff are fully aware of the different types of child abuse and signs of abuse (see appendix).
- 4.9 Recognise that staff build up expertise in dealing with concerns and safeguarding issues over time. Therefore, the trust will provide opportunities for staff to contribute to shaping the safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies.

## 5.0 Roles and responsibilities

Each academy in the Trust has a 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL) who has the responsibility to liaise with the appropriate external agencies on child protection issues. Each academy also has a named governor for child protection who is also trained on a regular basis and who has the responsibility to ensure that the academy has an effective policy and structures in place to support the safeguarding of children.

All staff need to be aware of the signs of child abuse and neglect; staff must inform the DSL in total confidence, and a sensitive, tactful and totally confidential investigation will then take place. If the signs are confirmed, one of the Safeguarding Officers will manage any potential Child Protection issue. All staff understand that child protection information is 'need to know' and confidential information about a child should not be freely shared. The child's interests come first and their dignity must be protected.

The Principal, supported by the Governing Body, has overall responsibility for ensuring all aspects of child protection and safeguarding are paramount in the organisation. This duty cannot be delegated. The Principal should ensure regular supervision meetings (at least four times a year) take place so that they are kept up to date with all matters, and also to formally check the welfare of all Safeguarding Officers.

### 5.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

On induction, all staff are advised of the names of their Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Safeguarding Officers (sometimes referred to as Named Persons). Academies ensure that the DSL and Officers have a high-profile among staff and students. The DSL is a senior member of staff.

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection to:

### 5.2 Manage referrals

- Oversee staff referrals through the on-line platform.
- Seek advice and guidance in line with the local safeguarding board's practice.
- Make referrals to children's social care if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so, understanding that all referrals are child-centered and the needs of the child are paramount.
- Ensure the voice of the child is heard and that the unique characteristics of the child within their family and community context is communicated.
- Make a referral to the National Referral Mechanism if there are any concerns that a child may be a potential victim of slavery or human trafficking.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Refer promptly all cases of suspected child abuse to the local social services department. In the case of a social worker attending an academy to see the student following a referral, if the student's parent arrives to collect the student before the social worker it must be remembered that we have no right to prevent the removal of the student. However, if there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, the police should be called.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Ensure written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral and ensure these records are stored securely and separate to the student's curriculum file until the child's 25th birthday.
- Work with the Principal in informing the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk / harm to a child); and / or the police



(cases where a crime may have been committed).

- The Principal and DSL should make all referrals to the LADO unless the concern is about the DSL and then the Principal should make the referral. If the concern is about the Principal, the referral will be managed by the Chair of Governors.
- Liaise with the Principal to inform him / her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Attend all child protection multi-agency conferences and contribute to child protection plans.

### **5.3 Co-ordinate training**

- Co-ordinate annual statutory training as well as regular training and information updates for all staff to keep child protection and the welfare of children paramount.
- Ensure all staff read and understand Appendix 8 of this document at least annually (Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all school and college staff).
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (or Named Persons) should undergo the relevant Child Protection training, and ensure training is updated regularly – at least every two years in order to act as a source of support and expertise for our learning community.
- Ensure that new staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) receive safeguarding children induction by their first day of working at the academies in the Trust.
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the academy's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Ensure that all staff know about and have access to child protection guidelines, are clear about the Child Protection Policy and Professional Conduct Policy.
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as Early Help assessments.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.
- Be clear that early help is the most effective way of promoting the welfare of children and understand how to work with other agencies to provide this for children and families in need and be alert to the potential need for early help for children with certain characteristics such as SEN, young carers, children missing regularly from education and those vulnerable to any form of exploitation or radicalisation.

### **5.4 Raising awareness**

- Ensure all staff are aware of academy processes and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Work with the Trust's Executive Principal in reviewing the Child Protection Policy annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Work with the governors in reviewing procedures and producing training and updates including an annual written report.
- Ensure the Child Protection Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the academy in this.
- Ensure that the school operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance.
- Make links with the local LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding. <http://www.bradford-scb.org.uk/>.
- Ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on his / her behalf.
- Where children leave the academy, ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file.
- Develop effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies to support the protection of children.

### **5.5 The Local Governing Body and Safeguarding Governor**

The Local Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in their



establishment. Each academy will have a nominated governor in respect to child protection.

In particular, the Governing Body must ensure that:

- the Child Protection Policy and procedures are in place, followed and reviewed annually
- safer recruitment procedures are in place and followed
- there is a Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the academy's leadership team
- the academy provides relevant safeguarding children training for school staff and volunteers
- each academy follows the process and procedure for dealing with allegations
- they work with the academy to ensure that deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay
- they evaluate how children are being taught about safeguarding
- they check that the SCR and DBSs are in place for all governors and staff at least annually
- they dedicate meeting time to consider child protection matters including referrals (see annual agenda)
- the Chair is responsible in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Principal
- this policy is ratified by the Trust Board and made public on the academy's website

## **6.0 Prevention through education**

The Dixons Academies Trust recognises that proactive education coupled with a child-centred ethos is paramount in protecting children. Children may be vulnerable to neglect or abuse or exploitation within the family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. Threats can take a variety of forms including: physical, emotional, neglect, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. All Dixons academies ensure they have an open climate where children feel safe and know they will be listened to if they come forward. Additionally, we take every opportunity in our formal and pastoral curriculum to educate children about managing risk as well as building up self-esteem. Children know that adults are vigilant and that they will provide advocacy to assist them.

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

Governing bodies must ensure that the Principal has appointed a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after and to ensure that this person has appropriate training.

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and / or neglect or increasingly because they are a refugee. Appropriate academy staff will have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility; the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him / her; details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that responsible staff are aware of the information they require in relation to the pupil's status, for example, access rights for birth parents or those with parental responsibility. We recognise that in some cases pupils will not be from the geographical local authority and will ensure that liaison takes place with the relevant professionals from the appropriate authority.

## **8.0 SEND and children with additional vulnerabilities**

All staff understand that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities may be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They may be more isolated from their peers and may find it difficult to express concern. No concern should be over-looked or passed off as a symptom of SEN or disability. Staff must be hyper-vigilant to the needs and concerns of these children who are among the most vulnerable. Additional barriers can exist in identifying neglect and harm for some groups of pupils or students. Staff will be sensitive to their specific needs, particularly in relation to communication barriers.

## **9.0 Missing children**

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education settings are in place, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify any risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. All schools have staff dedicated to following up on children's absence and a system of early contact.

## **10.0 Contextual safeguarding**

Designated leads will be particularly mindful of contextual safeguarding (Firmin 2017). Young people's experiences and relationships beyond the family may mean that they are more or less likely to experience significant harm. This is particularly the case for adolescents who may have access to influences beyond the family, for example, on-line, peer-group, criminal subcultures. This influence occurs at a time when they are particularly vulnerable and suggestable to influence. Peer relationships are increasingly influential and may undermine familial relationships. It is for this reason that schools must be safe spaces where staff are hyper-vigilant to negative peer influences including those that challenge school and social norms. Staff must be wary of potentially exploitative peer to peer relationships, particularly where there is an imbalance of power. Staff must never underestimate the weight of peer influence and must report this as a safeguarding concern where they witness it occurring.

## **11.0 Whistleblowing (see trust policy)**

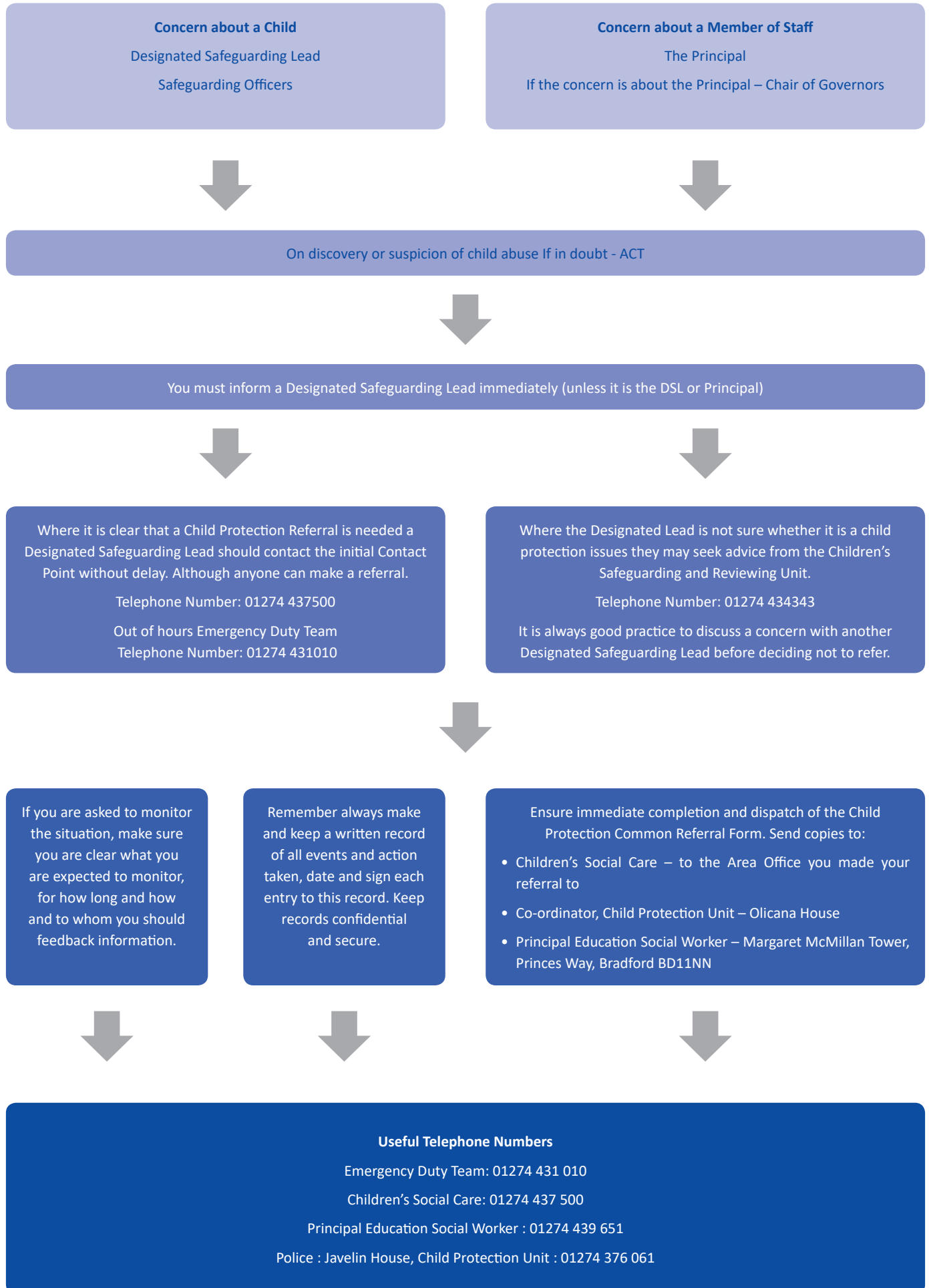
All staff and volunteers should be able to raise concerns should they consider there to be poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the safeguarding regime and know that concerns are taken seriously by the leadership team. Whistleblowing procedures are in place across the academy trust and are available on request or on academy websites.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who feel unable to raise concerns directly on 0800 028 0285 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)





## Appendix 1: Child Protection Flow Diagram



## **1. Dealing with disclosures of abuse**

- Always listen carefully and quietly – do not press for any evidence at all.
- Remain calm and reassuring – do not dismiss the disclosure – do not show distress or concern.
- Do not refute the allegation.
- Show that you care through open and reassuring facial and body language.
- Do not interrogate or ask leading questions (it could later undermine a case).

## **2. At this point, take the following steps:**

- Explain to the student that the disclosure must be reported – emphasise your trust in them.
- Do not promise to keep the allegation secret or that ‘everything will be alright’.
- Reassure the student by telling them that they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not offer physical reassurance.
- Do not admonish in any way e.g. ‘I wish you had told me sooner’.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately and verbally to begin with where possible.
- Under no circumstances discuss the matter with any other person - if the allegations prove to be untrue, any such discussion would be deemed defamatory. Information to staff is on a ‘need to know’ basis at the discretion of the DSL.
- If the child agrees, take them with you to the DSL or Safeguarding Officer, although not at the expense of a disclosure continuing.
- With the DSL, prepare a detailed report itemising:
  - the information revealed by the student with absolutely no opinion
  - actions taken by yourself, including when the suspicions were reported, to whom the suspicions were reported and follow-up action taken within the academy
- Date and sign any written record of events and action taken and keep this confidential and secure. You must keep, in absolute confidence, a copy of the report, as will the DSL.
- The DSL keeps Child Protection records centrally and securely; they are not kept in the child’s file.
- All staff are under a duty to report all suspicions of abuse to the DSL.
- The DSL is responsible for passing on these concerns to Social Services.
- Accurate records are essential in the event of further investigations.

## **If you see or hear something that concerns you:**

- don’t ignore it
- make a mental note and seek advice
- don’t feel silly – if it worries you, someone else needs to know
- see the DSL immediately (or a Safeguarding Officer if the DSL is unavailable) if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm. No child should go home without external agency involvement if the DSL is concerned about risk. As well as a face to face with the DSL, a cause for concern must be completed by the member of staff reporting (CPOMs or paper).
- see the appropriate Head of Year, or in the case of a COP child – Individual Needs if it is something related to safeguarding, but not a child whose safety is immediately at risk
- see the DSL, or Safeguarding Officer immediately if it is related to the child being at risk and do this before the child goes home that day.
- all staff may raise concerns directly with Children’s Social Care services.
- concerns about adults in any academy should be made to the Principal.

## **Child Protection Procedures – Points of action**

### **1. Discovery or suspicion of child abuse**

Inform the DSL in person and also electronically record in CPOMs. The DSL will, in the appropriate manner and according to procedures, assess the situation.

### **2. The DSL will, if appropriate, take the following steps:**

- where it is clear that a Child Protection Referral (significant harm) is needed, contact Social Services without delay
- where the DSL is not sure whether it is a child protection issue, or where they need to check the child protection register, they may seek advice from the Child Protection Unit
- follow locally agreed protocols which can be found on the Bradford Safeguarding Children’s Board website

### **3. The DSL will attend a Child Protection Conference**

We recognise the importance of multi-agency working and will ensure that staff including the DSL are able to attend all relevant meetings, case conferences, core groups and strategy meetings.



## Appendix 2: Additional Information on categories of abuse

### 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

### Risk indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- may require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred. In an abusive relationship, the child may:

- appear frightened of the parent/s
- act in a way that is inappropriate to her / his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- have unrealistic expectations of the child
- frequently complain about / to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism / low warmth environment)
- be absent or misusing substances
- persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household. Staff should also be aware of the wider threats to children within peer groups, online and the influence of extremist groups.

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

### Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- developmental delay
- abnormal attachment between a child and parent / carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- aggressive behaviour towards others



- scape-goated within the family
- frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic or 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he / she presents with indicators of possible significant harm. Training will be provided to all staff on the ‘signs of abuse’.

### **Recognising neglect**

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

- 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 irresponsible with no apparent medical cause
- failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- child thriving away from home environment
- child being frequently absent from school
- child being left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- child being abandoned or left alone for excessive period

### **Physical Abuse**

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- an explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- several different explanations provided for an injury
- unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- the parents / carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

### **Bruising**

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- variation in colour, possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- the outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- bruising around the face
- grasp marks on small children
- bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

### **Bite marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.



## **Burns and scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g:

- circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- burns of uniform depth over a large area
- scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his / her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- old scars indicating previous burns / scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation
- scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

## **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- the history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- there are associated old fractures
- medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- there is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

## **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may include 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.

## **Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and / or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child / family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- inappropriate sexualised conduct
- sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- an anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- pain or itching of genital area
- blood on underclothes
- pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

## **Sexual Abuse by Young People**

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviours such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.



Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

### **Assessment**

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident, the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- equality – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- consent – agreement including all the following:
  - understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
  - knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
  - awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
  - assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
  - voluntary decision
  - mental competence
- coercion – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Staff should not underestimate the potential for one child or young person to abuse another. There are many different forms peer on peer abuse can take, which may involve all the above four categories. Abuse may involve person to person contact, however abuse involving the use of technology such as online bullying, social media abuse and “sexting” is on the increase and should be assertively dealt with. There should be an understanding of the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse and that girls may be more likely (although not exclusively) to be victims.

Staff are reminded that peer on peer abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”: abuse is abuse. Victims must be heard and perpetrators both disciplined according to the school policy and educated. Staff must report any incident of peer on peer abuse and staff must be clear that abuse is criminal.

Staff becoming aware of peer on peer abuse will take appropriate action as outlined in the relevant guidance on bullying and cyberbullying.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)

### **Sexting**

Sexting is the sending of provocative or sexual photos, messages or videos. They are generally sent using a mobile phone but can also include posting this type of material online. The incident may occur when: a person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18; a person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult; a person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18. The sharing of sexual imagery of people under 18 by adults is classed as child sexual abuse and should always be reported to the police.

The school will exercise its right to search, screen and where necessary confiscate mobile phones where an incident occurs. All staff are clear that sexting is an offence and is treated as such.

Any incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible, who will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. There may be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate).

Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is 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 a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children’s social care and / or the police immediately.

Further information is available here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/551575/6.2439\\_KG\\_NCA\\_Sexting\\_in\\_Schools\\_WEB\\_\\_1\\_.PDF](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.2439_KG_NCA_Sexting_in_Schools_WEB__1_.PDF)



## Appendix 3: Specific concerns to be aware of for all staff

### Children missing in education

We recognise that a child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and must be taken seriously. Home-Link Officers will follow up all unauthorised absences on a daily basis and will liaise closely with the DSL. Any child who is deleted from the admission register at parents request because: they are being educated at home; they ceased to attend because of moving location; they were certified as unfit to attend school before ceasing education; they are in custody for more than 4 months; or they have been permanently excluded, should be reported to the Local Authority in compliance with the amendments to the Pupil Registration Regulations (1 September 2016). Additionally, any student who fails to attend school regularly, or is absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days should be reported to the authority.

### Forced marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Evidence from West Yorkshire Police shows that the issue of forced marriage affects certain sectors of communities, typically girls in the age range of 14 – 16 years old originating from Pakistan, India & Bangladesh (approx. 60% of the cases) together with a percentage of cases of children originating from the Middle-East and African countries.

A signal of FM is the removal of the students from school and lengthy absence which is often unexplained. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings.

Any member of staff with any concerns should report this immediately to the DSL who should raise the concern with the Bradford Police Safeguarding Unit by email at [b.dsu@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:b.dsu@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk) or by phone on 01274 376223. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Whilst the onus of the investigation for criminal offences will remain with the police, the DSL should co-operate and liaise with the relevant agencies in line with current child protection responsibilities. The current West Yorkshire Safeguarding Board procedures also require schools to make a referral to Children's Social Care on 01274 437500.

### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM. Section 5C of the FGM Act 2003 (as inserted by section 75 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) gives the government powers to issue statutory guidance on FGM to relevant persons including schools.

What is FGM?

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

#### Four 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
- is 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. It is illegal in most countries including the UK.

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 Leon, 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 include:

- 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

#### **Mandatory reporting of FGM - duty on schools:**

Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 years. Those failing to report such issues will face disciplinary sanctions. Further detail can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information).

#### **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

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

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to 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, not 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 and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, 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, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involvement in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault

**Vulnerability to radicalisation or extreme viewpoints (see also Social Moral Spiritual Cultural Policy)**

The Trust recognises its duty under Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to protect our students from indoctrination into any form of extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of self or others. Extremism is defined as ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including: the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable, including the young by seeking to sow division between communities based on race or faith, discriminate against women and girls and persuade others that minorities are inferior. Additionally, any calls for the death of members of the armed forces would be defined as extremism. This duty is of paramount importance because of the open access to electronic information through the internet. IT safety and information handling are taught within the formal curriculum. The DSL understands and educates staff on the due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and a referral to a Channel Panel will be made if vulnerability is suspected.

Each academy in the Trust vets all visitors carefully and will take firm action if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to infiltrate or influence members of our community, either physically or electronically. Staff are trained to be vigilant at spotting signs of extremist views and behaviours and to always report anything which may suggest a student is expressing opinions which may cause concern. In these cases, we would assess risk and work with other agencies, including the police through the Safer Schools Partnership and, if necessary, the Channel Programme.

At Dixons, our core mission of diversity permeates all we do. We place a strong emphasis on the common values that all communities share such as self-respect, tolerance and the sanctity of life. We work hard to broaden our students’ experiences, to prepare them for life and work in contemporary Britain. We teach them to respect and value the diversity around them as well as understanding how to make safe, well-considered decisions. See our SMSC policy for more detail on this. All our staff are Prevent trained by the police or a WRAP trainer on a 3-yearly basis. Our internal safeguarding and child protection training includes training on Prevent for all new staff.

**Honour based violence**

So-called ‘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 (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, school / college staff will speak with the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should refer to the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures (as set out in section 4 of this policy), using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care.



## Appendix 4:

**Name of academy** Dixons Cottingley Academy

<b>Address</b>	Cottingley New Road, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 1TZ
<b>Telephone</b>	01274 567281
<b>Fax</b>	N/A
<b>Email office</b>	info@dixonsco.com

**Role** **Name** **email**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>email</b>
Executive Principal	Shirley Watson	swatson@dixonsat.com
Principal	Clare Skelding	cskelding@dixonsco.com
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jo Monaghan	jmonaghan@dixonsco.com
Safeguarding Officer	Jane Grooby	jpgrooby@dixonsco.com
Safeguarding Officer	Beverley Higgins	bhiggins@dixonsco.com
Chair of Governors	Lynn Barrett	lynnbarrett@talktalk.net
Safeguarding Governor		



Department  
for Education

# Keeping children safe in education

**Statutory guidance for schools and colleges**

**September 2018**

**Part 1: Information for all school and college staff**

**Annex A: Further information**

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# Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

## What school and college staff should know and do

### A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

1. Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).
2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.
3. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
4. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:
  - protecting children from maltreatment
  - preventing impairment of children's health or development
  - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
  - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
5. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

### The role of school and college staff

6. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
7. **All** staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and **all** staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early

help.<sup>3</sup> Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

8. **Any staff member** who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in paragraphs 22-33. Staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.

9. Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care.

10. 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.

11. The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.<sup>4</sup>

## What school and college staff need to know

12. **All** staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include:

- the child protection policy;
- the behaviour policy;<sup>5</sup>
- the staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one of this document should be provided to staff at induction.

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed information on early help can be found in Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

<sup>4</sup> The [Teachers' Standards](#) apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period (newly qualified teachers [NQTs]); and teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools, who are subject to the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012.

<sup>5</sup> All schools are required to have a behaviour policy (full details are [here](#)). If a college chooses to have a behaviour policy it should be provided to staff as described above.

13. **All** staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
14. **All** staff should be aware of their local early help<sup>6</sup> process and understand their role in it.
15. **All** staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.<sup>7</sup>
16. **All** staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

## **What school and college staff should look out for**

17. **Any** child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
- is disabled and has specific additional needs
  - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
  - is a young carer
  - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
  - is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
  - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
  - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
  - is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
  - is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves

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<sup>6</sup> Detailed information on early help can be found in Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

<sup>7</sup> More information on statutory assessments is included at paragraph 28. Detailed information on statutory assessments can be found in Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

18. **All** staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Indicators of abuse and neglect, and examples of safeguarding issues are described in paragraphs 41-51.

19. Departmental advice [What to Do if You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused - Advice for Practitioners](#) provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. Examples of potential indicators of abuse and neglect are highlighted throughout the advice and will be particularly helpful for school and college staff. The [NSPCC](#) website also provides useful additional information on abuse and neglect and what to look out for.

20. Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

21. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should **always** speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

## **What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child**

22. If staff have **any concerns** about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. See page 13 for a flow chart setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.

23. If staff have a concern, they should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

24. Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school's or college's own pastoral support processes;
- an early help assessment;<sup>8</sup> or

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<sup>8</sup> Further information on early help assessments, provision of early help services and accessing services is in Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).



- a referral for statutory services,<sup>9</sup> for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm.

25. The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

26. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers](#) supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.

## Early help

27. If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) 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. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) sets out that the safeguarding partners should publish a threshold document that should include the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under section 17 and 47. Local authorities, with their partners, should develop and publish local protocols for assessment. A local protocol should set out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed once a child is referred into local authority children's social care.

## Statutory assessments

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

## Children in need

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

## Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquires under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour based violence, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.

29. The online tool [Report Child Abuse to Your Local Council](#) directs to the relevant local children's social care contact number.

## What will the local authority do?

30. Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge receipt to the referrer and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
- the child is in need, and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take
- to see the child as soon as possible if the decision is taken that the referral requires further assessment.

31. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.
32. If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as required).
33. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

## Female Genital Mutilation mandatory reporting duty for teachers

34. 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**.<sup>10</sup> 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. **See Annex A** for further details.

## Record keeping

35. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

## Why is all of this important?

36. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and serious case reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action.<sup>11</sup> Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect;
- poor record keeping;
- failing to listen to the views of the child;
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve;
- not sharing information;
- sharing information too slowly; and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

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<sup>10</sup> Under Section 5B(11) (a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

<sup>11</sup> An analysis of serious case reviews can be found at [Serious case reviews, 2011 to 2014](#).

## **What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about another staff member who may pose a risk of harm to children**

37. If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- this should be referred to the headteacher or principal;
- where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor of an independent school; and
- in the event of concerns/allegations about the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, allegations should be reported directly to the designated officer(s) at the local authority. (Further details can be found in Part four of this guidance).

## **What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college**

38. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's or college's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

39. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, should be put in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's or college's senior leadership team.

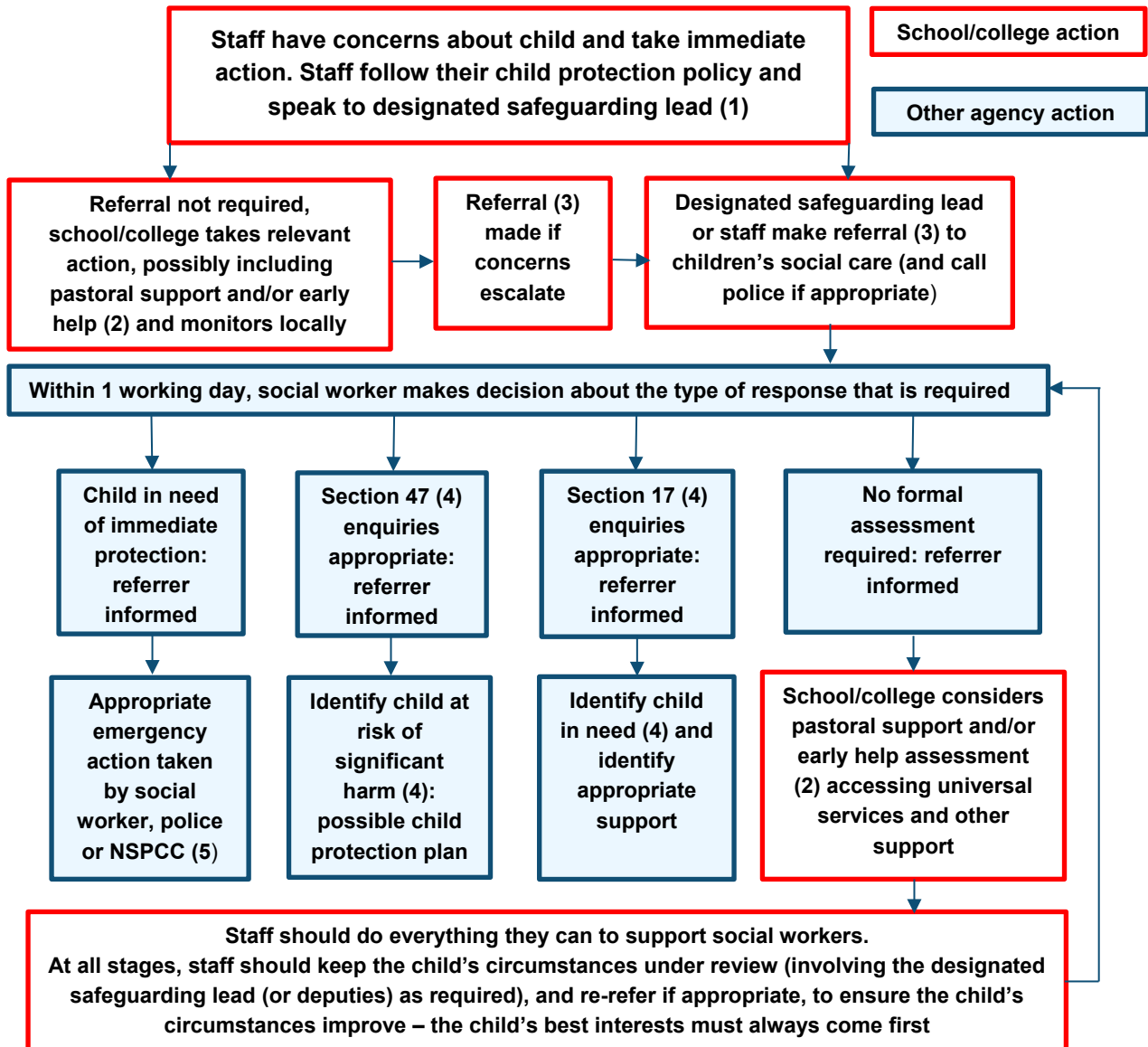
40. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Advice on Whistleblowing](#).
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain, Road, London EC2A 3NH.

## Actions where there are concerns about a child



(1) In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of this guidance.

(2) Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.

(3) Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

(4) Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

(5) This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

## Indicators of abuse and neglect

41. **All** school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

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

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

44. **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.

45. **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education (see paragraph 48).

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

## Specific safeguarding issues

47. **All** staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

49. **All** staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

50. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. Additional information regarding contextual safeguarding is available here: [Contextual Safeguarding](#).

51. **Annex A** contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read the annex.

## Annex A: Further information

Annex A contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read this annex.

As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

**Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.**

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## Children and the court system

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

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

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

## Children missing from education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

## Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. [NICCO](#) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

## Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation

does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

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

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

## **Child criminal exploitation: county lines**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of

transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism<sup>98</sup> should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

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

## Domestic abuse

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>98</sup> [national crime agency human-trafficking](#)

[NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects](#)

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

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

## Homelessness

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

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

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

## So-called 'honour-based' violence

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a

wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

## Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV or who has suffered from HBV, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers**<sup>99</sup> that requires a different approach (see following section).

## FGM

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

### FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

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

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<sup>99</sup> Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.<sup>100</sup> Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's or college's designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

## Forced marriage

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

The Forced Marriage Unit has published [statutory guidance](#) and [Multi-agency guidelines](#), with pages 35-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges. School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email [fmf@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmf@fco.gov.uk).

## Preventing radicalisation

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

[Extremism](#)<sup>101</sup> is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the

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<sup>100</sup> Section 5B(6) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 states teachers need not report a case to the police if they have reason to believe that another teacher has already reported the case.

<sup>101</sup> As defined in the Government's Counter Extremism Strategy.

armed forces. [Radicalisation](#)<sup>102</sup> refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

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

### **The Prevent duty**

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard<sup>103</sup> to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".<sup>104</sup> This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

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

### **Additional support**

The department has published advice for schools on the [Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

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<sup>102</sup> As defined in the Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.

<sup>103</sup> According to the Prevent duty guidance 'having due regard' means that the authorities should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions.

<sup>104</sup> "Terrorism" for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act).

There is additional guidance: [Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales](#) that applies to colleges.

[Educate Against Hate](#), a website launched by the Her Majesty's Government has been developed to support and equip school and college leaders, teachers, and parents with information, tools and resources (including on the promotion of fundamental British values) to help recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. The platform provides information on and access to training resources for teachers, staff and school and college leaders, some of which are free such as Prevent e-learning, via the Prevent Training catalogue.

## **Channel**

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

The school's or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral. As a Channel partner, the school or college may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required.

## **Peer on peer abuse**

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

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

### **Context**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the



experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

## What is Sexual violence and sexual harassment?

### Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003<sup>105</sup> as described below:

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

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

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

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<sup>105</sup> [Legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)

**What is consent?**<sup>106</sup> Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.<sup>107</sup>

## Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

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

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.<sup>108</sup> It may include:
  - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

## The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by

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<sup>106</sup> It is important school and college staff (and especially designated safeguarding leads and their deputies) understand consent. This will be especially important if a child is reporting they have been raped. More information: [here](#)

<sup>107</sup> [PSHE Teaching about consent](#) from the PSHE association provides advice and lesson plans to teach consent at Key stage 3 and 4.

<sup>108</sup> [Project deSHAME](#) from Childnet provides useful research, advice and resources regarding online sexual harassment.

reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow the referral process as set out from paragraph 22 in Part one of this guidance. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

## Additional advice and support

Abuse or Safeguarding issue	Link to Guidance/Advice	Source
Abuse	<a href="#">What to do if you're worried a child is being abused</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Faith based abuse: National Action Plan</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody</a>	Home Office website
Bullying	<a href="#">Preventing bullying including cyberbullying</a>	DfE advice
Children and the courts	<a href="#">Advice for 5-11-year olds witnesses in criminal courts</a>	MoJ advice
	<a href="#">Advice for 12-17 year old witnesses in criminal courts</a>	MoJ advice
Children missing from education, home or care	<a href="#">Children missing education</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Child missing from home or care</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Children and adults missing strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
Children with family members in prison	<a href="#">National Information Centre on Children of Offenders</a>	Barnardo's in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advice
Child Exploitation	<a href="#">County Lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners</a>	DfE
	<a href="#">Trafficking: safeguarding children</a>	DfE and HO guidance
Drugs	<a href="#">Drugs: advice for schools</a>	DfE and ACPO advice
	<a href="#">Drug strategy 2017</a>	Home Office strategy
	<a href="#">Information and advice on drugs</a>	Talk to Frank website

<b>Abuse or Safeguarding issue</b>	<b>Link to Guidance/Advice</b>	<b>Source</b>
	<a href="#">ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug (&amp; alcohol) prevention</a>	Website developed by Mentor UK
“Honour Based Violence”  (so called)	<a href="#">Female genital mutilation: information and resources</a>	Home Office
	<a href="#">Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance</a>	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Forced marriage: information and practice guidelines</a>	Foreign Commonwealth Office and Home Office
Health and Well-being	<a href="#">Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children</a>	DfE, Department for Health and Home Office
	<a href="#">Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience</a>	Public Health England resources
	<a href="#">Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school</a>	DfE statutory guidance
	<a href="#">Mental health and behaviour</a>	DfE advice
Homelessness	<a href="#">Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions</a>	HCLG
Online	<a href="#">Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children</a>	UK Council for Child Internet Safety
Private fostering	<a href="#">Private fostering: local authorities</a>	DfE - statutory guidance
Radicalisation	<a href="#">Prevent duty guidance</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Prevent duty advice for schools</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Educate Against Hate Website</a>	DfE and Home Office
Violence	<a href="#">Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges</a>	Home Office advice
	<a href="#">Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy</a>	Home Office strategy
	<a href="#">Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims</a>	Home Office guidance
	<a href="#">Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges</a>	DfE advice
	<a href="#">Serious violence strategy</a>	Home Office Strategy