

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Research suggests that more than 10 per cent of children will suffer some form of abuse. Due to their day-to-day contact with children, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and to recognise the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in the school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all staff are alert to the signs of neglect and abuse and understand the local procedures for reporting and acting upon their concerns.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees. It aims to:

- provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- ensure consistent good practice across the college, and
- demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children

BACKGROUND AND TERMINOLOGY

There is a statutory obligation on Trustees to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of their health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective and nurturing care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully. Statutory guidance is provided in [Keeping Children Safe In Education 2021](#).

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to meet statutory obligations laid out in the [Children Act 1989](#) and associated guidance (see [Working Together to Safeguard Children, An Interagency Guide to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children](#)) in respect of those children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering harm.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and any other person(s) who has legal parental responsibility for a child.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- [Keeping Children Safe In Education](#), which is the statutory guidance for Schools and Colleges;
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children, An Interagency Guide to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children](#), which is statutory guidance to be read and followed by all those providing services for children and families, including those in education. This guidance applies in its entirety to all schools.

Appendix 2 provides a further list of policies and guidance relating to the safeguarding of children and relevant to this policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: Lynne Carter

- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is: Sue Gilbert
- The name of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care and Previously in Care is: Lynne Carter
- The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the Prevent agenda is: Lynne Carter
- The Child Sexual Exploitation Lead is: Lynne carter
- The named Safeguarding Trustee is: Jason Coad
- The named Whistleblowing Trustee is: Jason Coad

The DSL and DDSL's:

- Have a working knowledge of LSCB procedures and acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the LSCB
- Keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- Ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- Makes staff aware of LSCB training courses and the latest policies on safeguarding
- Makes this policy available on the school's website or by other means
- Ensures that this policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually, liaises with the Principal

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Good practice includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding this policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- Referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL/DDSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care

ABUSE OF TRUST

- All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be exemplary.
- Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that child is over the age of consent.
- Any such inappropriate activity will also be regarded as gross misconduct and is likely to lead to summary dismissal providing the allegation is proven to the required standard in accordance with the school's Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.
- In such cases, where a risk to the child or young adult has been established, a DBS referral will be required, making further employment in the Education sector very unlikely. For further details, please refer to the school's policy on Managing Allegations Against Staff and to the statutory guidance in [Keeping Children Safe In Education 2021](#).

VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. To ensure that all of our pupils are protected from abuse we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Young carers
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyles
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- At risk of sexual exploitation
- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- At risk of forced marriage
- At risk of being drawn into extremism

The school will identify who their vulnerable children are, ensuring **all staff and Trustees** know the processes to secure advice, help and support where needed. In the first instance a discussion should take place with the DSL and a record kept of this discussion. If further advice is needed or the school wishes to make a referral then they would contact the Early Help Hub.

SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Child neglect and abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the children and their families and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact. Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, a separate link person will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest.
- responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of help lines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our whistle blowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the head teacher and Trustees.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

EHE- Elective Home Education

We will always advise the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity when children are withdrawn from the school to be electively home educated, completing the required Elective Home Education Form (as in link below) and returning it with a copy of a letter from the parents/carers confirming that they are withdrawing the child from the school to home educate. Further guidance is available via:

www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/education-welfare/elective-home-education/

The DSL/DDSL will always alert the Local Authority where there are concerns regarding the safety and welfare of the child in question.

Suspension and Exclusion (Temporary and permanent)

All children who are at risk of temporary suspension or permanent exclusion must be risk assessed and this formerly recorded. If it is not deemed appropriate or safe to continue with the suspension or exclusion then the school will work with the local authority to find a more suitable alternative.

If any child at risk of temporary suspension or permanent exclusion has an allocated social worker they must be consulted ahead of any decision to exclude.

Reduced Time Tables

Should a reduced time table be instigated or be necessary, guidance will be reviewed with the aim the child returns to school full time at the earliest moment or other provision sought to ensure the child/ young person has their full entitlement. Guidance is available at

www.cornwall.gov.uk/schools-and-education/schools-and-colleges/reduced-timetables-part-time-attendance/

The use of a reduced timetable should be an exceptional measure in this school. It is illegal for a school to impose a reduced timetable, but it is accepted that a reduced timetable may be appropriate provided that the setting can demonstrate that the Local Authority's best practice guidance has been followed. Guidance for schools and educational settings details further the actions and procedures that need to be followed.

CONCERNS ABOUT A COLLEAGUE

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation or whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues should be reported to the head teacher. Complaints about the head teacher should be reported to the chair of Trustees.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

The procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in the School's Whistleblowing and Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff guidance.

Staff need to be mindful that it is not only their behaviour in school which may lead to concerns being raised. Where a member of staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school which may/may not have involved children but could impact on their suitability to work with children this should be discussed with the LADO. Usually referred to as 'Transferrable risk'.

Never let allegations by a child or young person go unrecorded or unreported, including any made against you. If you receive a disclosure, about an adult colleague, it is important to reassure the child that what they say will be taken very seriously and everything possible done to help.

In all instances the Principal must be informed. If the Principal is not available, then the DSL should be advised.

If the allegation concerns the Principal then the Chair of Trustees must be informed.

In all situations regarding an allegation of abuse against a member of staff (including supply staff/volunteers/Trustees) the school must not act alone and must seek advice and make a referral where necessary.

In such circumstances our Principal, or Chair of Trustees (if the allegation is against the Principal) will contact the LADO for advice

As part of our safeguarding duties, the LADO Service has a statutory responsibility to manage and oversee allegations made against professionals and volunteers who work with children. All allegations and concerns should be referred to the LADO within 24 hours where advice and guidance can be provided in respect of balancing the responsibility to safeguard with the need to support staff in difficult situations.

The following issues need to be considered:

- What are the safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are not in contact with the alleged abuser?
- contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO;
- consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation;
- ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedure is followed, including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary;
- act on any decision made in any strategy meeting; and
- advise the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any other appropriate regulatory or professional body where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations founded or would have been if they have resigned.

LOW-LEVEL ALLEGATIONS

Low level concerns are concerns which do not meet this threshold, but no matter how small they seem, still require sharing with the right person and dealing with appropriately. Examples include:

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

The school takes all allegations against staff seriously, including low-level allegations and will deal with them in the same manner as to an allegation deemed to be serious. Concerns can be a suspicion, complaint, or disclosure made by another.

All low-level concerns should be reported in line with the reporting allegations procedure above so that they can be investigated in the same way. For the avoidance of doubt, low-level allegations should be reported to the Principal (or to the Chair of Trustees if the concern relates to the Principal)

as soon as possible. The Principal will then investigate the concern and will decide if it is deemed serious enough to be reported to the LADO.

The allegation on the staff members personnel file as outline below.

- All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and will be held by the school confidentially;
- The school will regularly review any low-level allegations to identify potential patterns of behaviour so that this can be dealt with in the appropriate way; and
- Allegations of low-level abuse will be held by the school for until the individual leaves their employment.

STAFF TRAINING

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and Trustees will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection policy, reporting and recording arrangements and contact details for the DSL. They will be issued with information in relation to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, key designated staff, Staff Code of Conduct, Part 1 of KCSIE (September 2021), key contacts, what to do if a child discloses abuse, and recording concerns.

All staff and Trustees will receive training that is regularly updated, at least yearly. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, e-bulletins, website access and staff meetings throughout the year. We will ensure we have a DSL and a DDSL who has received appropriate training and support for their role and that we are adhering to Appendix 1 of the KCSIE September 2021.

Our Board of Trustees will have access to basic safeguarding training within the school. We will recommend and encourage them to undertake training specifically on the safeguarding responsibilities of the Board of Trustees in line with Part 2 of KCSIE, in particular the role of the Safeguarding Trustee.

At least one member of our recruitment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training. Best practice is that this is updated every 3 years to ensure that the school are keeping up with changes made to recruitment processes and changes in safeguarding requirements when recruiting staff. All those involved in Safer Recruitment must read KCSIE Part 3.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The School complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and the LSCB by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

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

All school staff involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight years old are made aware of the disqualification and disqualification by association legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the School.

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

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

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

- **Volunteers** (including Trustees) will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the School, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left with children unsupervised. Section 128 checks will be carried out on all (non-associate) Trustees in maintained schools. Academies should carry out the check on trust members and trustees, Trustees who sit on committees or local governing bodies with delegated responsibilities and staff engaged in management positions.
- **Contractors** working on site will have their identity checked and requests DBS checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

SITE SECURITY

Visitors (including contractors) are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the School's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The Principal will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES

School staff are aware at no times should their own personal cameras/smart phones be used in recording children or young people in this school.

The school will ensure that they get parental permission to take photographs of children for media, website and other school purposes.

Any person taking images of the children should be challenged by staff unless they are absolutely confident, they have the relevant permissions.

EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

The School provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils (see staff Code of Conduct).

Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

Students are taught about keeping safe online through tutorials, assemblies, ICT lessons and through the school's PSHE and RSE curriculum.

Advice to parents is available on our website and through our weekly parent bulletins.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Recognising abuse

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

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

[Keeping Children Safe In Education](#) 2021 refers to four categories:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators in each case.

Child Mental Health

Staff should be aware that in some cases mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Whilst staff are unable to make a mental health diagnosis, they are in a good position to identify those who may be experiencing a mental health problem.

Where children experienced abuse or neglect or other traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACE's), this can have a lasting impact throughout their childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that they think may be a safeguarding concern they should talk to the DSL/DDSL immediately.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be tackled in accordance with our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies.

The school takes bullying incidents very seriously. Children should be helped to understand what constitutes bullying and understand what actions will be taken if such incidents were to occur. All forms of bullying are emotionally harmful to children. As a school we have a zero tolerance to bullying. Our anti-bullying and behaviour policies outlines the different aspects of bullying and the school's response to this. All incidents of bullying must be reported and clearly recorded. Please see the relevant policies for more details.

Taking action

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

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

Appendix Three sets out what action should be taken if a member of staff has concerns about a child.

Where a safeguarding concern arises, the child's wishes and feelings will be considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. The child will be able to express their views and any process or action will be taken in the best interests of the child, law permitting.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to talk to the pupil and ask if they are okay or if they can help in any way. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL or DDSL.

Staff should use the **My Concern Form** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

If there is an immediate concern about a child or their family, **any member** of staff can phone the MARU for advice and guidance if the DSL/DDSL is not available.

Contact details: MARU 0300 1231 116

If the concerns arise out of office hours contact 01208 251300

When contacting MARU, staff must ensure that they have as much factual information about the child as possible and should include the following:

- Full name
- D.O.B
- Address
- Family composition details (including names of parent(s) and siblings)
- Any key professionals working with the school

Factual information about the concerns they have- including access to any chronologies the school has on the child.

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

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

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

Notifying parents

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

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL/DDSL, Principal or the nominated child protection Trustee. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Any child who reports child on child sexual abuse should not be told that the matter will remain confidential as it is likely to be necessary that the information be shared with other agencies.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

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

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

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Principal or DSL/DDSL.

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

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

RECORD KEEPING

The school recognises the importance of the need to record any concerns held about children or young people, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding and child protection practice. We are clear about the need to record any concerns held about children or young people, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

In our work with children and their families, we recognise the importance of:

- Keeping clear detailed up to date written records of concerns about children and young people. This includes a chronology.
- Ensuring all records are kept secure and in a locked location.
- Ensuring records are passed on to the receiving school if a child or young person transfers. In line with current local authority guidance.
- Ensuring all records are clear, factual and jargon free.

Bodmin College uses MyConcern to record, track and monitor safeguarding concerns.

REFERRAL TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The DSL/DDSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child. When a member of Staff, parent, practitioner, or another person has concerns for a child, and if the school are aware that the case is already open to social care then they should contact the allocated worker. If they do not know the name of the worker, they can contact MARU who will provide contact details of the worker and/or their manager.

The DSL has responsibility for promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker. The DSL will ensure staff know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment, and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.

REPORTING DIRECTLY TO CHILD PROTECTION AGENCIES

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL/DDSL, the Principal and the nominated child protection Trustee are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

CHILDREN WITH SEXUALLY HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL/DDSL as soon as possible.

PEER ON PEER SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap. They can occur both online and offline, both physically and verbally. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the DfE guidance, [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#).

Peer on peer abuse of any nature will not be tolerated. Any child found to have breached the school's policy on the use of technology will be sanctioned in line with the behaviour policy.

Children will be taught about safeguarding to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse. A whole-school approach will be taken to educate children in an age and stage of development appropriate manner, and may tackle issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- what respectful behaviour looks like;
- consent;
- equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong

Our school has a zero tolerance to sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is never acceptable and will never be tolerated. 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.

All victims must be taken seriously, supported, and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting the abuse.

Reports of sexual assault and harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, and every effort is made to minimise the disruption to their education.

Part 5 of KCSIE (September 2021) clearly outlines the response that should be taken. Please refer to our peer-on-peer policy.

If anyone has any concerns that a child or children may be at risk, they must report them to the DSL immediately. They should then liaise with MARU and follow guidance laid out in KCSIE (September 2021).

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children, including any symptoms of disability masking indicators of possible abuse and communication barriers.

Staff should ensure that their response to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the same sex is equally as robust as it is for sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the opposite sex.

The DfE guidance, [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#), provides information for staff on indicators to look out for and advice on what they should do if they have concerns about a child.

All children who report abuse will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe. The child will be informed as to how the report will be dealt with.

Rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and 'upskirting' are crimes. Where the sexual abuse is of this nature, the matter must be referred to the police.

Where a criminal investigation leads to a conviction or caution, the school, if it has not already done so, will consider any suitable sanctions in line with the behaviour policy.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking 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. (DfE Child Sexual Exploitation February 2017).

CSE can occur over time but could also be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, e.g., through others sharing images or videos of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child who was coerced into engaging in sexual activities including 16/17-year-olds who can consent to sex. Some children may not realise that they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. Victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the forced nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they

perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

All suspected or actual cases of CSE are a safeguarding concern in which Child Protection procedures must be followed; this will include a referral to MARU and where the risk is immediate to the police. If any staff are concerned about a pupil, they will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s and the CSE lead within the school.

Activities such as county lines, shoplifting, pickpocketing, vehicle theft/damage can all be forms of CCE.

Children can get trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence and entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be forced to carry weapons such as knives or as a form of protection for themselves. Children involved in CCE often commit the crime themselves so are not easily seen as victims and are therefore very vulnerable. They may still have been criminally exploited even if they appear to have agreed or consented to the activity. It can be very specific e.g. County Lines, shoplifting, vehicle theft, pick pocketing.

All professionals should be aware that girls can also be involved in CCE. Although the indicators may not be the same. It is important to note that those involved with CCE may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

COUNTY LINES County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms or 'deal line'. This activity can happen locally as well as cross the UK. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store, and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into County Lines in a number of locations including schools and other education settings.

Children are increasingly being targeted via social media. Children can be easily trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence towards victim and their families if they attempt to leave the county lines network

Any concerns about county lines should be referred to the DSL immediately and they should then contact MARU for guidance and advice.

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding incidents can be associated with factors outside of school. All staff 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. It can include child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, serious violence, county lines, domestic abuse, and gang culture. It can also involve links to anti-social behaviour, identifying local 'hot-spots' in the community.

Always have a discussion with your DSL/DDSL if you have concerns or if you have been told information that concerns you about a family.

It is important to verify as much as possible the accuracy of the information, but this should not get in the way of you having a discussion with your DSL.

If making a referral to social care the school should provide as much information as possible.

SERIOUS VIOLENCE

All staff should be aware of indicators that may signal that children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups. A significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries can also be indicators of involvement with serious violent crime.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its [Criminal exploitation of children](#) guidance.

HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

'Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse.

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

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

Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers to do so. 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. The Home Office provides guidance on the same - [Mandatory Report of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information](#). A summary of the guidance is attached at Appendix Four.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is forced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and

emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

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

RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

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

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

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

The School will respond to any concern about Extremism/Radicalisation/Prevent as a Safeguarding concern and will report in the usual way using local safeguarding procedures. We will seek to work in partnership, undertaking risk assessments where appropriate and proportionate to risk, building our children's resilience to radicalisation.

PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The School ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care

arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL/DDSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

Young carers

As a school we recognise the needs of young carers in that they can be more vulnerable or placed at risk.

We aim to be able to identify young carers and ensure they are supported to help reach their potential with an understanding that staff and volunteers may need to refer into early help services for an assessment of their needs via the Early Help Hub.

Modern Slavery And Human Trafficking

The above are offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. These offences include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.

Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country. It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given to be moved.

Children cannot give consent to being exploited therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence.

If you hold information that could lead to the identification, discovery and recovery of victims in the UK, you can contact the Modern Slavery Helpline 08000 121 700. **All members of staff must also inform the DSL/DDSL of any concerns.**

Advice or referral can be made via MARU (0300 1231 116) or for Vulnerable Adults (0300 1234 131).

Work Experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Children staying with host families

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in Annex E of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

APPENDIX ONE

Four categories of abuse

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. (Working Together July 2018, updated December 2020).

Domestic abuse may take many forms. Witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent may cause considerable distress to children and both the physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by adult victims who experience domestic abuse can have a negative impact on their ability to look after their children. Children can still suffer the effects of domestic abuse, even if they do not witness the incidents directly. However, in up to 90% of incidents involving domestic **abuse** where children reside in the home, the children are in the same or the next room. Children's exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress among children. Children can see school as a safe retreat from problems at home or alternatively not attend school through a perceived need to be at home to protect abused parents or siblings.

Domestic abuse can therefore have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment and emotional well-being and development. The potential scale of the impact on children is not always easy to assess but may manifest itself as behavioral, emotional or social difficulties, including poor self-esteem, withdrawal, absenteeism, adult-child conflict. Children sometimes disclose what is happening or may be reluctant to do so hoping that someone will realise something is wrong.

Indicators of abuse

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

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

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

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships

- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety or self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact or appear fearful
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge/behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Although situations of FGM may be unusual it is important that you do not assume it could not happen here. 8–15-year-old girls are the most vulnerable.

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

Indicators may include:

- Days absent from school
- Not participating in physical education
- In pain/has restricted movement/frequent and long visits to the toilet/broken limbs
- Confides that she is having a special procedure, cut or celebration
- Unauthorised and or extended leave, vague explanations or plans for removal of a female in a high-risk category especially over the summer period
- Plans to take a holiday which may be unauthorised, unexplained, or extended in a country known to practice FGM
- Parents from a country who are known to practice FGM.

APPENDIX TWO

Related Safeguarding policies

In addition to [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) which both apply in their entirety, the following policies and documents should also be considered:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Behaviour Policy and Procedures
- Personal and intimate care
- Complaints procedure
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health And Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Computer Use Policy
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Guidance

The above list is not exhaustive. Copies of all policies can be obtained from the Principal's PA.

This is an overarching policy and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

[Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners](#)

[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)

[The Prevent Duty Departmental, advice for Schools and child care providers](#)

[Multi agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation](#)

[Children Missing Education- Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

[Multi agency practice guidelines for dealing with Forced Marriage](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and a guide for Practitioners](#)

[Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education settings](#)

[Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

[Mental Health and Behaviour in school Guidance](#)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance](#)

[The General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) and Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education- statutory guidance](#)

[Ofsted Education Inspection Framework with specific reference to Inspecting Safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings](#)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

[Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Multi Agency Safeguarding Children Partnership Guidance which includes links to relevant policies and procedures as well as training and useful links for children, parents/carers and professionals.](#)

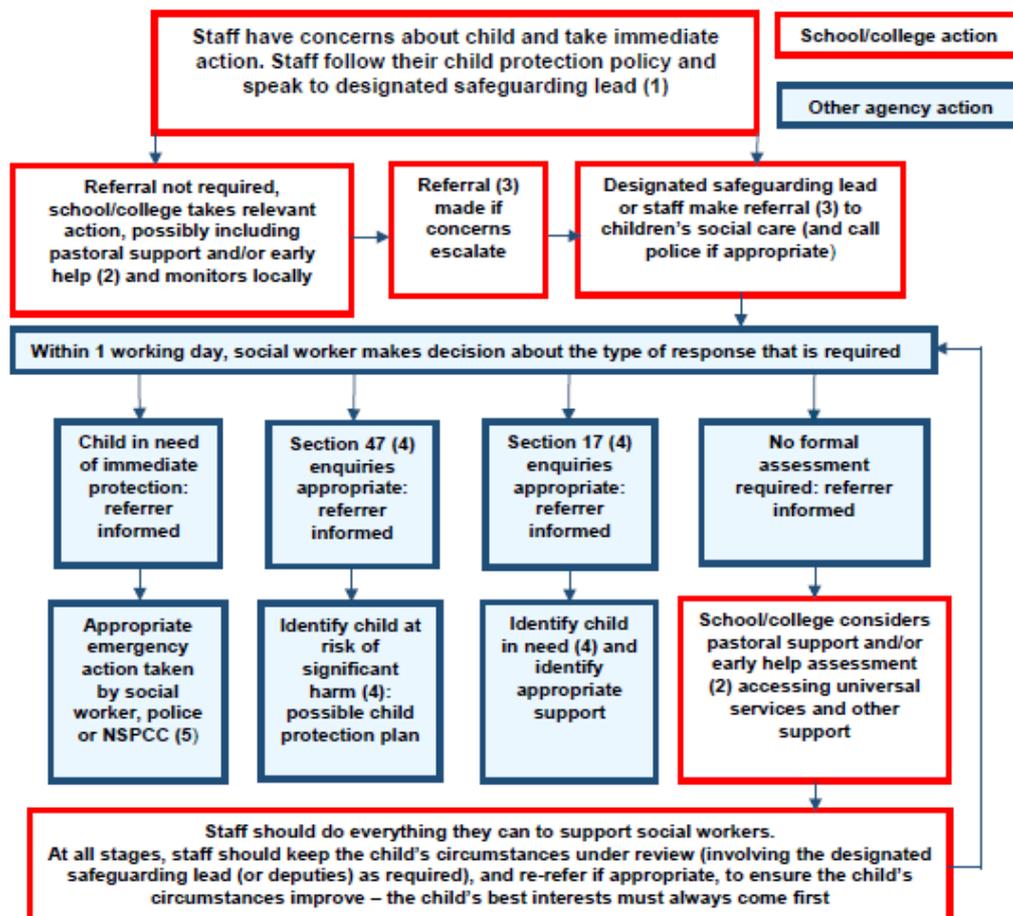
Furthermore, we will follow the procedures set out by:

The [South West Child Protection Procedures](#) and [Our Safeguarding Children Partnership \(OSCP\) for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly](#).

In accordance with the above procedures, the School carries out an annual audit of its Safeguarding provision (S175/157 Safeguarding Audit, requirement of the Education Act 2002 & 2006) and sends a copy to the Local Authority from which a report is submitted to OSCP.

APPENDIX THREE

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).



New duty for health and social care professionals and teachers to report female genital mutilation (FGM) to the police

What is the new duty?

On 31 October 2015 a new duty was introduced that requires health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in girls aged under 18 to the police.

For example, if a doctor sees that a girl aged under 18 has had FGM they will need to make a report to the police. Or, if a girl tells her teacher that she has had FGM, the teacher will need to report this to the police.

What will happen after the case has been reported to the police?

FGM is a serious crime and the police will need to investigate each reported case appropriately. The police will work with social care professionals to make sure that the girl is safe and her needs are put first.

Why is it being introduced?

When a girl has undergone FGM, a serious crime has taken place so it is very important that the police are involved as soon as possible. This will make sure that a proper investigation can take place.

The purpose of the new duty is to help make sure that professionals have the confidence to confront FGM and to help increase the number of referrals to the police so that cases can be investigated appropriately.

What the new duty won't do

It doesn't mean that police will take action without consulting appropriately with social care professionals and other relevant professionals.

It won't require professionals to report cases to the police where they suspect FGM may have been carried out or think a girl may be at risk. The duty also doesn't apply to women aged 18 or over. Professionals will follow existing safeguarding procedures in these cases.

Summary: Mandatory reporting of FGM*

Duty applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales.

Requires these professionals to make a report to the police if, in the course of their professional duties, they:

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

*Introduced in Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015