



## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Date of Policy: September 2023

Date of Review: September 2024

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all students and we expect our staff, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purpose of this policy as

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental health and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

In particular, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Safer Recruitment Policy, Behaviour Policy, Positive Handling Policy, SEND and Inclusion Policy, Online Safety Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

## POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

This policy is available on the school website and all staff and volunteers are required to read it and confirm that they had done so in writing, before commencing work at the school.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn.
- This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Representatives of the whole-school community of students, parents, staff, volunteers and governors will therefore be involved in policy development and review.
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to Children's Social Care immediately. **Anybody can make a referral.** If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

### Child Protection Statement

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

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of [Warwickshire Safeguarding](#).

## Policy Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community or in school.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child. All adults at the school are required to take all welfare concerns seriously and to encourage children and young people to talk to them about anything that worries them. Staff will always act in the best interest of children.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to Children's Social Care immediately. **Anybody can make a referral.** If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage.
- Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.
- All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding which includes the school's behaviour policy, the staff behaviour policy and the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education.
- Safeguarding also includes keeping children safe online. This links to the school's online safety policy which covers remote education and the responsibilities for filtering and monitoring of all IT systems.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

## Policy Aims

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

### Terminology:

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

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

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

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

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

## SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

**Maintained schools** - Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- The Teacher Standards state that teachers, including Headteachers, must have regard for the need to safeguard children's wellbeing, in accordance with statutory provisions; and uphold public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- The statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for the three local safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area, any part of which falls within the local authority; and the chief officer of Police for a Police area, any part of which falls within the local authority area) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children including identifying and responding to their needs.
- The statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2015. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' in this guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies and student referral units.

All staff **must** read Part One and Part Five of this 2023 guidance and sign to say that they have done so. In addition, all staff who work directly with children must read Annex A and Annex B. An electronic copy of the document will be given to all new staff in the 'New joiners information pack'. The accompanying acknowledgement sheet should be signed within one week of staff members joining the school and passed to the DSL's PA.

Research suggests that around 20 percent of children will suffer some form of abuse and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused. The prevalence of neglect continues to be a major concern and online abuse is increasing. The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem. Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, staff in school are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all school staff are alert to the signs of abuse, are approachable and trusted by pupils/students, listen actively to children and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will act on identified concerns and will provide Early Help to prevent concerns from escalating.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Key Personnel:

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is** Laura Bindley

Contact details: email: [lbindley@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:lbindley@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

**The deputy designated safeguarding lead is** Darren Walden

Contact details: email: [dwalden@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:dwalden@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

**The deputy designated safeguarding lead is** Mike Clancy

Contact details: email: [mclancy@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:mclancy@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

### Other staff trained to undertake the functions of the designated safeguarding lead:

Donna Partridge email: [dpartridge@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:dpartridge@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

Nigel Cunningham email: [ncunningham@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:ncunningham@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

Leanne Hicks email: [lhicks@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:lhicks@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

Sarah Masters email: [smasters@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:smasters@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

Wendy Fletcher email: [wfletcher@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:wfletcher@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

**The Headteacher is:** Blake Francis

email: [bfrancis@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:bfrancis@avonvalleyschool.uk) tel: 01788 542355

All schools are required to appoint a member of the senior leadership team to coordinate child protection arrangements and to ensure that there are appropriate cover arrangements.

### The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff. The role and responsibility is explicit in the role holder's job description.
- Is appropriately trained, with updates every two years.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community.
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- Is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, looked after children and young carers.
- Has a working knowledge of local safeguarding partnership (currently Warwickshire Safeguarding) procedures.
- Has an understanding of the Early Help process to ensure effective assessment and understanding of children's additional needs in order to inform appropriate provision of early help and intervention.

- Keeps detailed written and electronic records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged, but kept separate from the student's general file.
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to Children's Social Care or the Police as appropriate.
- Notifies patterns of absence to Children's Social Care if a child is under a child protection plan.
- Ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, all child protection records are passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. If the child is the subject of an open case to Children's Social Care, the pupil's social worker is also informed.
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences, strategy meetings and multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meetings.
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans as part of core groups, attending and actively participating in core group meetings.
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the local safeguarding partnership.
- Takes responsibility for understanding and implementing the online filtering and monitoring system in school
- Ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023); the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy; the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct); the Behaviour policy; the school's 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).
- Has a working knowledge of relevant national guidance in respect of all specific safeguarding issues highlighted in paragraphs 31-50 (page 11-16) and Annex B of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023* ensuring that all staff receive necessary training, information and guidance.
- Ensures that the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated at least annually, working with the whole school community of students, parents, staff, volunteers and governors regarding this.
- Liaises with the nominated governor and Headteacher.
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training.
- Makes the safeguarding and child protection policy available publicly, i.e. on the school's website or by other means.
- Ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made.
- Ensures that the school holds more than one emergency contact number for every student.
- Ensures that the Headteacher is aware of the responsibility under *Working Together 2023* to refer all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority within one working day prior to any internal investigation; and to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as appropriate.
- Acts as case officer in the management of allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers, as directed by the Headteacher.

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)** are appropriately trained to the same level as the DSL and, in the absence of the DSL, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

**The Governing Body** ensures that the school:

- Appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training.
- Ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job/role descriptions of every member of staff and volunteer.
- Ensures that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available during school or college hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL or a Deputy DSL will generally be expected to be available in person but in exceptional circumstances availability will be via telephone and/or Google Meet or other such media.
- Ensures that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available at least via telephone or other media as above during any out of hours/out of term school activities.
- Has a Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, that are consistent with local safeguarding partnership and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means.
- Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the Headteacher and allegations against other children.
- Follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations.
- Develops an induction strategy that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements on induction and appropriate child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of Warwickshire Safeguarding; and that the DSL receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals.
- Ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with copies of (or access to) the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (Code Of Conduct) before they start work at the school.
- Appoints a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after by the Local Authority and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales; and ensures that the designated teacher has appropriate training.
- Ensures that the school contributes to inter-agency working and plans.
- Participates in the Early Help process and offers to initiate help for students with additional needs in order to provide a coordinated offer of Early Help.
- Considers how students may be taught about safeguarding, including how to keep themselves safe at all times including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The governing body nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Headteacher.

The governing body also identifies a named governor to take leadership responsibility for the school/college's safeguarding arrangements. That governor will maintain regular contact with the DSL and will ensure that the governing body receives regular reports about safeguarding activity at the school/college.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority, Warwickshire Safeguarding and national guidance.

An annual report, using a pro forma provided by the Local Authority, will be submitted to WSCB about how the governing body's duties have been carried out.

## **The Headteacher:**

- Ensures that the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff.
- Allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy/s to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of students and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings.
- Supports the designated teacher for looked after children to promote the educational achievement of any students who are looked after by the Local Authority and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keeping children looked after and previously looked after children safe.
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and those concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures.
- Ensures that students are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe at all times including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Refers all allegations that meet the harm threshold that a child has been harmed by, or that children may be at risk of harm from, a member of staff or volunteer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority within one working day prior to any internal investigation.
- Records all low-level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold and responds to these concerns as part of the whole school approach to safeguarding as per Part Four – Section One in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*.
- Ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as advised by the LADO.
- Appoints a case officer who will be a member of the senior leadership team to investigate allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers and/or act as a point of contact for the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- Treating all students with respect.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involving students in decisions that affect them.
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among students.
- Being a good listener.
- Being alert to changes in student's behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation.
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, child-on-child abuse, sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, extremism, online safety and information-sharing.
- Asking the student's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.

- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and **is not** an inevitable part of growing up. Therefore, we will not tolerate or dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “it wasn’t aimed at anyone”. The school will challenge behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing or touching (including with other items such as pencils, rulers etc.) any part of someone else’s body, or interfering with another person’s clothing. Any physical contact could lead to a fixed term suspension due to the impact on the victim. Fixed term suspensions could lead to permanent exclusion from the school due to serious or persistent breaches. Sexual violence and sexual harassment is a safeguarding issue and will be dealt with under this Policy, which may involve referrals to other agencies and the police.
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some student’s lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with school procedures and Warwickshire Safeguarding guidance.
- Referring all concerns about a student’s safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children’s Social Care.
- Following the school’s rules with regard to communication and relationships with students, including via social media.
- Understanding that all students are at risk of abuse but some students are especially vulnerable.

**Please also refer to the school’s Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers.**

## **ABUSE OF TRUST**

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

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways of grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a student under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that student is over the age of consent.

The school’s Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct) sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

## **CHILDREN WHO MAY BE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE**

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability such as societal attitudes and assumptions including prejudice and discrimination; child protection procedures that are inadequately responsive to children’s diverse circumstances; isolation; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child’s personality, behaviour, disability and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who:

- are disabled or have certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- have a mental health need;



- are a young carer;
- are showing signs of being drawn in to antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- are frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- are at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic violence;
- are misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- have returned home to their family from care;
- are at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- are a privately fostered child;
- are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

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

## EARLY HELP AND USE OF EARLY HELP ASSESSMENT

The school recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Early Help might be simple and something the school is able to address with parents so that the child's needs are met quickly and easily.

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, Police), the school will use the Early Help process to complete an early help assessment and identify what help the child and family require to prevent their needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

The school is committed to working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies to:

- identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from Early Help.
- undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help when that is appropriate, using the Early Help Pathway.
- provide targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing an action plan that will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.
- If Early Help is appropriate, the pastoral team, under the direction of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL), will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an Early Help Assessment as appropriate. Other staff may be required to work directly with pupils and their families and to support other agencies and practitioners in an Early Help Assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional.

The school will be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for any child who is deemed as vulnerable, as per the section above.

The Early Help process can only be effective if it is undertaken with the agreement of the child's parents/carers. Young people in secondary schools may consent to an Early Help Assessment in their own right, subject to Information Sharing Guidance. The school should seek advice from a Targeted Support Officer in those circumstances.

The Early Help Assessment should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them.

If parents and/or the child do not consent to the Early Help process being initiated, the school will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral into Children's Social Care may be necessary.

## **ATTENDANCE**

We recognise that full attendance at school is important to the well-being of all our students and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely and our Home/School Link worker will liaise directly with parents and students to remove barriers to attendance and improve student's attendance. We work closely with Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) when the patterns of absence are of concern. Our attendance policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the governing body.

## **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. The DSL & Deputy DSL's will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

We follow the DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination.

Where a student has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps\* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school should make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council's Access to Education team at 01926 736323 or via e-mail to [cme@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@warwickshire.gov.uk).

\*Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts. Parents will be asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes.
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits where safe to do so
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the student/family
- All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the student's file

The school is required by law to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

The school is required to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education.
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- have been permanently excluded.

The school must notify the Children Missing Education Officer in the Local Authority as soon as the grounds for deletion are met and no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential for the school to comply with this duty so that the Local Authority can, as part of its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Children Missing Education Service can be contacted through the Vulnerable Team on 01926 736323 or by email to [cme@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@warwickshire.gov.uk).

Upon receipt of a referral from the school, the CME Officer will then continue to attempt to track the child, for at least a further 10 school days, using access to additional contacts/services, e.g. Housing. If this also fails to establish the student's whereabouts, the school will be informed by email and may then, but not before, remove the student from roll and place the child's name on the School to School database, entering XXXXXXXX in the box for destination. This will place the student on the list of Children Missing from Education.

Deletions from roll agreed with the CME Officer will normally be backdated to the first day of absence.

If the CME Officer is able to contact the student and her/his parents, arrangements will be made with the school and family for a return to education, including a reintegration programme where necessary. If the student has registered at another school, the school will delete the child's name from our roll and transfer the child's educational records to the new school in the normal way. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

Students leaving the school for known destinations outside the maintained sector in England and Wales will be updated to the School to School database using MMMMMMM in the destination box. This includes private/independent schools, schools in other countries (including Scotland and Northern Ireland) and students moving into Home Education. The latter will be formally notified to the Elective Home Education Team at Warwickshire County Council by the school as soon as written confirmation is received from the parent(s). If no confirmation is received the above Missing Children procedures will apply.

## **CHILDREN WHO RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE**

The school recognises that children who run away or go missing - and are thus absent from their normal residence - are potentially vulnerable to abuse, and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It could also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 highlights that 'Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care' (DfE 2014) requires that every child or young person who runs away or goes missing must be offered a Return Home Interview (RHI) within a period of 72 hours of their return.

RHI's are intended to ascertain the factors that triggered the young person's absence. Those factors may include difficulties at home, in school and in the community. The short timescale of 72 hours is imposed in order to ensure that the RHI remains relevant to the young person and enables any required action to be initiated at the earliest opportunity.

RHI's are undertaken by professionals who are independent in order to facilitate a discussion with the young person that is as open as possible. As soon as the Local Authority receives notification that a young person has gone missing from home or care, a letter will be sent to parents/carers seeking their consent to a RHI with their son/daughter. Direct contact will then be made with parents/carers and the young person to make arrangements for the interview.

In order to fulfil the timescale of within 72 hours, it is essential that all opportunities to interview young people including times during the school/college day are utilised.

When necessary and in conjunction with the Local Authority, the school/college will facilitate Return Home Interviews, both in terms of releasing the young person from their normal timetable to participate in an interview and in providing an appropriate and safe space on the school/college site for the interview to take place.

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

If the Local Authority has not received consent from parents/carers and the young person is not assessed as being capable of giving or withholding informed consent, the school/college will contact the parent/carer and seek to secure their consent.

Parents/carers may also choose to accompany their son/daughter in interviews and the school will facilitate that as appropriate.

## **HELPING CHILDREN TO KEEP THEMSELVES SAFE**

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 requires governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.'

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons and through all aspects of school life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about e-safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and students are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

## **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND STAFF INVOLVED IN A CP ISSUE**

Child abuse is devastating for the child, their families and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved in providing support.

We will support students, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) 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 student, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from students or 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 (both written and electronic) securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a student or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a student that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a student or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a student or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is included in the safeguarding information for parents and students. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the school's child protection procedures.

## IF STAFF HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A COLLEAGUE

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague - including visiting professionals and volunteers - towards a student are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood a situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The school's **whistleblowing** policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues - including what may seem minor contraventions of the school's Code of Conduct – to the Headteacher; to facilitate proactive and early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture that protect children and reduce the risk of serious abuse in school.

The recommended format for all staff in schools to record any such poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues or other adults who work with children is the pro forma *'Logging A Concern about the behaviour of an adult who works with children'*, also known as the *'Yellow form'*. Alternatively, the schools online safeguarding reporting system can be used by all staff to raise a safeguarding concern about a member of staff. These online reports will be automatically submitted to the Headteacher. All such forms should be passed directly to the Headteacher. Alternatively, staff are encouraged to approach the Headteacher directly to discuss their concerns.

Concerns or complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to either of the chair of governors, whose contact details are displayed in the staff room, on the school safeguarding display board and on the school website, for any member of staff to use in such an instance. The 'Yellow form' should also be used for that purpose as above.

Staff may also report concerns about suspected abuse or neglect directly to Children's Social Care or the Police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

Staff can also contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for the coordination of responses to allegations against people who work with children, by submitting a 'Warwickshire- Position of Trust Referral' form or via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01926 414414.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 between 8.00am and 8.00pm Monday to Friday or e mail [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline and contact numbers for Children's Social Care, the Police and the Designated Safeguarding Lead are all displayed in the staff room.

## ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to students and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. However, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that allegations are investigated fairly, quickly and consistently and that all parties are protected. In the event of suspension, the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

**As stated above, all allegations against staff should be reported to the Headteacher using a yellow form. Allegations against the Headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors.**

**Staff may also report their concerns directly to Police or Children's Social Care if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.**

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)*.

The Headteacher will refer all allegations that meet the harm threshold that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day prior to any internal investigation.

The Headteacher will record all low-level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold and respond to these concerns as part of the whole school approach to safeguarding as per Part Four – Section One in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*.

Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.



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

If the school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using our school premises for running an activity for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform the local authority designated officer (LADO), as we would with any safeguarding allegation.

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

As required by *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, all allegations in respect of an individual who works at the school that fulfil any of the following criteria will be reported to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority (LADO) within one working day:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The Designated Officer's contact number is **01926 745376**. Referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer should be submitted on a Position of Trust (PoT) MARF form and sent to [lado@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:lado@warwickshire.gov.uk). Please see the Warwickshire Safeguarding website below for the most up-to-date information.

[Warwickshire Safeguarding allegations against people who work with children and young people](#)

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to contact and refer to the Designated Officer when necessary. The only exception is when the allegation is against the Headteacher, in which instance the nominated governor will undertake that responsibility.

## STAFF TRAINING

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

All new staff and governors who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- the school's safeguarding and child protection policy
- signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- reporting and recording arrangements
- the staff code of conduct
- details of the DSL
- the identity and role of the DSL and all Deputy DSLs
- the school's behaviour policy
- the school's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.

NB all of the above will be explained **before** a new member of staff, governor or volunteer has direct contact with children in school. The school's child protection policy and code of conduct will be sent with the letter confirming an appointment with a written requirement that the individual read the two policies in advance of starting work at the school. The individual will be given an opportunity to clarify any issues on their first day at work and then asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood both policies and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, including the Headteacher and governors will receive training that is regularly updated. That will consist of a half day training event every three years as a minimum but will also include thematic training during inset days and regular discussions at staff meetings.

The DSL will attend training for newly appointed DSLs and refresher training every two years delivered by Warwickshire County Council's Education Safeguarding Service. That training will include up to date information about the local safeguarding partnership. The DSL will also be supported to access WSCB inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

In addition, the Headteacher and at least one governor will attend safer recruitment training. Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's Visiting Staff Leaflet.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including disabled and SEND children, previously looked after children, young carers and risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff and allow 'safe' volunteers to work with children by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* together with WSCB and the school's Safer Recruitment policies.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed by a panel of at least two school leaders/governors, if shortlisted.

The school will also:

- ensure that every job description and person specification for roles in school includes a description of the role holder's responsibility for safeguarding
- ask at least one question at interview for every role in school about the candidate's attitude to safeguarding and motivation for working with children
- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- carry out relevant online checks as part of due diligence in the recruitment process

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

All new members of staff and volunteers will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, and any other relevant safeguarding issues that are pertinent to the school.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies and third party organisations that they have



satisfactorily undertaken all appropriate checks in respect of individuals they provide to work in the school that the school would have undertaken if they were employing the individual directly.

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.

### **Regulated Activity**

Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* part three.

### **Governors**

All governors will be the subject of Enhanced DBS checks as defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with students. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

### **Supervised Volunteers**

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

### **Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where appropriate. The school will always check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

## **SITE SECURITY**

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given an identity 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 to ensure children in school are kept safe. The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

The school requires that all third party contractors complete our assurance document prior to coming onto the school site. This information is stored on the single central record.

Coloured lanyards are used to differentiate which visitors have satisfactory checks including evidence of their satisfactory DBS and assurance documentation.

Green lanyards – for all visitors that have satisfactory checks

Red lanyards – for all visitors where we do not have satisfactory checks and therefore must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times

Black lanyards – for all governors

Risk assessments are used to monitor any staff, visitors or third-party contractors where there are any concerns about the safeguarding checks that have been completed. Risk assessments will be dynamic and based upon the circumstances of the activity and risks posed.

## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Our behaviour policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Governing Body. This policy is transparent to staff, parents and students.

## RECORD KEEPING

The school will maintain safeguarding records in accordance with the guidance document provided by [WCC Education Safeguarding Service Child Protection Record Keeping Guidance](#).

In accordance with that guidance, the school will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children's Social Care immediately.
- keep records in a folder in a meticulous chronological order.
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations.
- ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school, college or other education establishment when a student moves. The DSL will do this as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and will ensure that confirmation of receipt of the records is obtained.
- the DSL will also consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with a child's receiving school in advance of the child leaving so that the receiving school is able to support the child as effectively as possible and plan for her/his arrival.
- ensure that incoming safeguarding records are brought to the attention of the DSL, Deputy DSLs and other key staff such as the SENCO when a child transfers in from another school.

Safeguarding records will be maintained independently from the student's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Such records will only be accessible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and school leaders who need to be aware.

The school has moved to using an online, electronic safeguarding record keeping system. All concerns will be kept in a chronological order and stored safely through the *Safeguard My School* software.

If staff are not able to report a concern on the Safeguard My School software, they are still able to use the WSCB pro forma *Logging A Concern About A Child's Safety And Welfare* (Form C) also known as the 'Green form'.

Such records (either electronic or on paper) will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations describing the child's behaviour, appearance, statements/remarks made to staff or other children and observations of interactions between the child, other children, members of staff and/or parents/carers that give rise to concern. Where possible and without interpretation, the exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer will be recorded. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record.

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 student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headteacher or DSL, who will advise them to submit a Freedom of Information request for consideration. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies without the consent of parents, where that information may help to protect a child.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

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

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a DSL, another SLT member or outside agency as required (e.g. Education Safeguarding Lead in the Warwickshire Front Door).

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about students with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met in school. However, staff should only refer child protection concerns to the DSL or Headteacher or – in the case of concerns about the Headteacher – to the chair of governors. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

**However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in schools failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023* emphasises that any member of staff can contact and/or make a referral to Children's Social Care if they are concerned about a child.**

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles.

Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure

Record of concern forms (Form C – Green forms) and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals. For information that is stored on the Edukey – Safeguard My School software, please refer to their [GDPR, compliance and information sharing agreement](#).

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a CD or flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage.

The school's Data Protection policy is available to parents and students on the school website.

## EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFFSITE ARRANGEMENTS

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, the school's child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on the school site, the school will check that those organisations have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. When school students attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work

related activities, the school will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have safeguards in place.

To protect students, we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- use only the student's first name with an image
- ensure students are appropriately dressed
- encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

Please see the school's Images – Safe and Appropriate Use policy, for further information.

## ONLINE SAFETY

Children and young people commonly use mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children. That harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Students may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

The breadth of issues within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into the 4 c's areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying; and
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites in school. Many pupils own or have access to handheld devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.

The school's **online safety policy** explains how we try to keep students safe in school and protect and educate students in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our sexual exploitation policy or child protection procedures.

Staff also receive online safety training and advice regarding the use of social networking and electronic communication with students. The school's online safety co-ordinator provides advice at regular intervals throughout the year, including staff meetings and staff briefings.

## **Staff/pupil relationships**

Staff also receive advice regarding personal online safety and their use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils through google classroom and the school email system only.

Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject of a referral to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **FILTERING AND MONITORING**

Digital filtering and monitoring technology plays a vital role in helping schools to adopt a whole school approach to safeguarding. It helps to facilitate the safest space possible for students to learn and thrive. At The Avon Valley School, our Governors have a legal obligation to ensure that digital monitoring technology is up to date and that the infrastructure is in place for the Safeguarding Team to be alerted to risks both on and offline. The school uses the Warwickshire Digital Safeguarding Team's package of support to meet these filtering and monitoring requirements.

The DSL should take lead responsibility for online safety, including understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. This includes overseeing and action on:

- Filtering and monitoring reports
- Safeguarding concerns
- Checks to filtering and monitoring systems

All staff should be clear on their expectations and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring as part of their safeguarding role.

## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Recognising abuse**

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

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of children. 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 adult men or women or by other children or young people. Staff are trained to understand and recognise indicators of all four categories of abuse as defined below.

**There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.**

### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

### **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.

## **Sexual abuse**

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

## **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, 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.

Definitions taken from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2023).

## **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 those 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 or neglected may:**

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late

- 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
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new ‘friends’ or adults recently acquainted with the child’s family

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 DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.**

### **Impact of abuse**

The impact of child abuse neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

### **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 when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999;
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly 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 an online report on [Edukey – Safeguard My School](#)
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief

### **If you are concerned about a student’s welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk but have no ‘real’ evidence. The student’s behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the student the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. Staff are encouraged and supported to ask pupils if they are OK, if there is anything the child would like to talk to them about and if they can help in any way. Staff are trained to do this by asking appropriate open questions which do not lead the child in any particular direction but invite the child to talk about anything if they wish to.

Staff should use the same record of concern [Edukey – Safeguard My School](#) to record these early concerns. If the student does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following



an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help process as in section 7 of this policy.

### **If a student discloses to a member of staff or volunteer**

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 student talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the student know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the student this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the student may think that they do not want to listen but if left until the very end of the conversation, the student may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with student's staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact – the student may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – **'I'm glad you told me'; 'I believe you'; 'It's not your fault'; 'We are going to do something about it'**
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the student
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the student's mother think about all this; **however**, it is reasonable to ask questions to clarify understanding and to support a meaningful referral if that is required, e.g. when did this happen, where did this happen?
- at an appropriate time tell the student that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the student what will happen next
- let them know that someone (either you or another named person, e.g. the DSL) will come to see them before the end of the day
- report verbally to the DSL
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the [Edukey – Safeguard My School](#) software and/or discuss with the DSL
- seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief

### **Notifying parents**

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

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will be sought first from Children's Social Care.

### **Making a referral to Children's Social Care**

The DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.



**However, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023* emphasises that 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.**

The student (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 or create undue delay.

## **Bullying**

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child on child abuse and can take many forms. It is most likely to include, but not limited to:

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

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause children considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through the school/college's anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. All members of staff receive a copy of the school's behaviour policy, which contains the anti-bullying procedures, as part of their induction and are trained to be aware of the harm caused by bullying and to respond to all incidents of bullying and child on child abuse proactively.

This school believes that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm, both from adults and other students in the school.

Abuse is abuse and will not be tolerated, minimised or dismissed as 'banter'; 'just having a laugh'; 'part of growing up'; 'boys being boys'; or 'girls being girls'. When dealing with abuse of pupils by other pupils, staff will be mindful of the potential for prejudice-based bullying; racist, disability, homophobic and transphobic abuse; gender-based violence and teenage relationship abuse. Whilst mindful of the particular vulnerability of women and girls to violence, it is also recognised that boys as well as girls can be abused by members of the opposite as well as the same gender group.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Members of staff to whom such allegations are made and/or who become concerned about a pupil's sexualised behaviour, including any known online sexualised behaviour, should record their concerns in the usual way on [Edukey – Safeguard My School](#) and report them to the DSL as soon as possible, as with any other safeguarding concern.

It is likely that for an allegation or concern to be addressed under child protection procedures, some of the following features will be found. The allegation or concern:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

### **Sexting (Youth Produced Sexual Images)**

As with all other actual or possible safeguarding issues and concerns, staff should not make their own judgements about whether a 'sexting' issue is more or less serious enough to warrant a report to the DSL. What may seem like less serious concerns to individual members of staff may be more significant when considered in the light of other information known to the DSL, which the member of staff may not be aware of.

If staff become concerned about a 'sexting' issue in relation to a device in the possession of a student (e.g. mobile phone, tablet, digital camera), the member of staff should secure the device (i.e. it should be confiscated). This is consistent with DfE advice Searching, Screening and Confiscation - Advice for Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies (DfE January 2018), page 11 'After the search'.

The confiscated device will be passed immediately to the DSL. Staff will not look at or print any indecent images.

The DSL will make a judgement about whether the reported 'sexting' incident is experimental as mentioned above or aggravated.

Aggravated incidents involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of sexual images created by young people. These include possible adult involvement or criminal or abusive behaviour by young people such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts, or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a young person who is pictured.

Aggravated incidents of sexting will usually be referred to Warwickshire's Integrated Front Door for advice about whether or not a response by the Police and/or Children's Social Care is required. This will facilitate consideration of whether:

- there are any offences that warrant a Police investigation
- child protection procedures need to be invoked
- parents/carers require support in order to safeguard their children
- a multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meeting is required
- any of the perpetrators and/or victims require additional support. This may require the initiation of an Early Help Pathway and the offer of early help services

Examples of aggravated incidents include:

- any evidence of pressurising, intimidating, bullying, extortion and/or threatening of students by one or more other students to create and share indecent images of themselves
- pressure applied to a number of students (e.g. all female students in a class or year group) to create and share indecent images of themselves
- pressurising a younger student or students to create and share indecent images of themselves
- pressurising a student with additional vulnerability to create and share indecent images of themselves
- dissemination of indecent images of young people to a significant number of others (either as an act of so-called 'revenge porn' or exploitation)
- any evidence of adult involvement in acquiring, creating or disseminating indecent images of young people (possibly by an adult pretending to be a young person known to the victim).

The DSL will make a judgement about whether or not a situation in which indecent images have been shared with a small number of others in a known friendship group with no previous concerns constitutes an aggravated

incident; or whether the school is able to contain the situation in partnership with all parents of the students involved, arrange for the parents to ensure that all indecent images are deleted and that the young people involved learn from the incident in order to keep themselves safe in future.

In the latter instance, the DSL will usually consult with the Police and/or Children's Social Care through the Front Door to check that no other relevant information is held by those agencies and to ensure an agreed response is documented before proceeding.

## **Viewing Imagery**

Adults should **not** view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is a good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible, the DSL's responses to incidents will be based on what they have been told about the content of the imagery.

Any decision to view imagery will be based on the DSL's professional judgement. Imagery will never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to a pupil.

If a decision is made to view imagery, the DSL will be satisfied that viewing:

- is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved)
- is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent in making a report
- is unavoidable because a young person has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a school device or network

If it is necessary to view the imagery, then the DSL will:

- never copy, print or share the imagery; this is illegal
- discuss the decision with the Headteacher, Children's Social Care or the Education Safeguarding Manager
- ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL or Deputy DSL with delegated authority from the Headteacher
- ensure viewing takes place with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the Headteacher, another DSL or a member of the senior leadership team. The other staff member does not need to view the images
- wherever possible ensure viewing takes place on school or college premises, ideally in the Headteacher or DSL's office
- ensure wherever possible that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery
- record the viewing of the imagery in the pupil's safeguarding record, including who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions; and ensure this is signed and dated and meets the wider standards set out by Ofsted for recording safeguarding incidents

**Deletion of images** - if the school has decided that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given to deleting imagery from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery. The school may decide to confiscate an electronic device if it is believed to have inappropriate content. The school will then contact parents to collect the device or the police if it is believed the content would form part of a police investigation.

## **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 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or 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.

Victims of CSE 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, 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 other criminal activity including trafficking and illegal drugs. 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. This form of criminal activity and exploitation is referred to as County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).

Indicators of child sexual exploitation and other associated criminal exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social network
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers)
- Frequenting areas known for sex work
- Concerning use of internet or other social media
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, not all children with these indicators will be exploited and child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being looked after (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)

The school teaches children about consent and the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and RSE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see her/himself as a victim. The child may initially resent what she/he perceives 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 criminal – including county lines - exploitation of children and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to Children's Social Care via the Front Door as with any other child protection concern and with particular reference to local safeguarding partnership Child Sexual Exploitation procedures. Parents will be consulted and notified as above.

Following a referral to Children's Social Care, a Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meeting may be convened under local safeguarding partnership (currently Warwickshire Safeguarding) inter-agency safeguarding procedures. The school will attend and share information at MASE meetings as required. Parents and young people will be invited to attend MASE meetings by Children's Social Care as appropriate.

## **So-called ‘honour based’ violence**

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. Such crimes include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered HBV.

All forms of so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and staff will record and report any concerns about a child who might be at risk of HBV to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to the Police and/or Children’s Social Care as with any other child protection concern.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

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. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth. This is a form of child abuse.

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.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years’ imprisonment or a fine, or both.

If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

From October 2015, teachers will be subject to a statutory duty as defined by Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) to report to the Police where she or he discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18. This is known as mandatory reporting.

Teachers in that situation will record their concerns and inform the DSL, who will ensure that a direct report is made to the Police. However, teachers will have a responsibility to report directly to the Police if they believe that FGM has taken place.

## **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

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.

Since February 2023, it’s been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. This also applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages.

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.

## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse and 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
- emotional abuse

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. School staff should understand that children can be victims of domestic abuse as well as a witness to this.

All concerns about children being affected by domestic abuse will be reported to the DSL as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will respond to the report by consulting Children's Social Care in order to establish whether a referral is required or the situation should be managed by discussion with parents/carers and possibly the offer of early help.

## Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL (and any deputies) refer any concerns 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, 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.

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 that 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 DSL (or a deputy) will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

## Radicalisation and Extremism

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the **Prevent Duty** which was revised in December 2023.

Some children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including 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 armed forces. Even very young children have been exposed, in rare circumstances, to extremism at home and elsewhere including online. The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values.

The school has defined responsibilities to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised, i.e. adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. The school is committed to preventing pupils from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The school promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing pupils with opportunities through the curriculum to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and learn how to discuss and debate points of view; and by ensuring that all pupils are valued and listened to within school.

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism and are made aware of the importance of identifying indicators of children being radicalised and reporting all concerns immediately to the DSL. The school will make appropriate referrals to prevent and police channel team in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

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.

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.

The school will discuss any concerns about possible radicalisation identified in school with a child's parents/carers as with any other safeguarding or child protection issue unless there is reason to believe that doing so would place the child at risk; and will also support parents/carers who raise concerns about their children being vulnerable to radicalisation.

The school expects all staff, volunteers, governors, visiting professionals, contractors and individuals or agencies that hire school premises to behave in accordance with the school's Staff Professional Code of Conduct Policy, will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on school premises or at school events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

### **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. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered. Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that schools are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible. When the school becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement for a pupil that has not been notified to Children's Social Care, the school will encourage parents and private foster carers to notify Children's Social Care and will share information with Children's Social Care as appropriate.

## **Mental Health**

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout 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 is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Attendance can be impacted by mental health and any concerns should be discussed with the attendance lead.

The DfE have published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying and this will be used to support students whose mental health is impacted due to bullying.

## **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, as emphasised in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, the deputy DSL, the Headteacher and/or the chair of governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the student's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the child

In any of those circumstances, staff may make direct child protection referrals and share information without being subject to censure or disciplinary action. However, staff should inform the DSL and/or Headteacher at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

If in any doubt, members of the safeguarding team may consult the Children and Families Front Door via 01926 418608.

## **Submitting child protection referrals**

All child protection referrals should be made to the Warwickshire Front Door by completing a [Multi-Agency Contact Form \(MAC\)](#) and submitting it to the Triage Hub at [triagehub@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:triagehub@warwickshire.gov.uk).

All urgent child protection referrals, i.e. where there is an immediate concern about a child's safety, should be made in the first instance by telephoning the Front Door on 01926 414144. This should be followed by submission of a MAC as above.

Outside of office hours, immediate concerns about a child should be referred to the Emergency Duty Team on telephone number 01926 886922.

If staff are ever concerned that a child is in immediate danger, they will contact the Police by dialling 999. Staff may seek support directly from the Education Safeguarding Manager should they consider that necessary.

## **Safeguarding related policies:**

- Professional Code of Conduct Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Behaviour Policy



- Support Students with Medical Care Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEND & Inclusion Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phones Student Acceptable Use Policy
- Images – Safe & Appropriate Use Policy

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### Children who are looked after or were previously looked after

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 and ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after 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 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.

The Designated Teacher for children who are looked after (CLA) is Mr Mike Clancy:  
mclancy@avonvalleyschool.uk

### Work Experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard students undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervising students on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*. Details of these procedures are available from the schools Careers Lead, Mrs Owen: [lowen@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:lowen@avonvalleyschool.uk)

### Local Issues

As a school, we attend Rugby's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) meetings to contribute to discussion on gang activity, youth violence or any active extremist groups from which children may need to be safeguarded.

## REVIEW

As with all statutory policies, this policy will be reviewed annually.

### Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools

The school's child protection and safeguarding responsibilities are inspected under the 'Quality of Leadership' and 'Behaviour and Safety' in Ofsted inspections. The following standards may assist schools in evaluating their practice. They should be used jointly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Designated Governor for Safeguarding to ensure the school is effective in safeguarding matters.

In best practice, schools:

- Have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to

- Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties
- Work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure
- Are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby all members of staff report such cases to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or – in her/his absence – the deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and are aware of Local Authority and Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures so that information is passed on effectively to the relevant professionals
- Monitor children who have been identified as in need of early help or at risk; maintain clear records of pupils' progress and welfare *in a secure place*; maintain sound policies on confidentiality; provide appropriate information to other professionals; and submit reports to and attend child protection conferences
- Provide and support regular child protection training and updates for **all** school staff at least every three years and ensure that Designated Safeguarding Leads attend refresher training every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date; and ensure that targeted funding for this work is used solely for this purpose
- Contribute to an inter-agency approach to safeguarding and child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies
- Use the curriculum to teach children about safeguarding and raise their awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others, taking into account the guidance for governors on [relationships and sex education and health education](#)
- Provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children and young people on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the school's approach to bullying
- Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying – face to face, online, physical, verbal and indirect - and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the school's position on this issue and who they can contact for support
- Take particular care that pupils with SEND in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills
- Have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times, using the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023* and WSCB inter-agency child protection procedures
- Have a written whole school policy, which is produced, owned and regularly reviewed by all school staff, taking into account the views of children, parents/carers and governors, and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards
- Ensure that specified information is passed on in a timely manner to the Local Authority for monitoring purposes
- Have a Single Central Record in place that fully complies with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*

## Reference Documents

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)

Warwickshire Safeguarding

Revised Prevent Duty Guidance (HM Government 2023)

Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE 2017)

Children missing education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE 2016)

Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UK Council for Child Internet safety 2017)

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE 2018)

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2022)