Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

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Associated Documents:	This policy should be read alongside all other relevant policies, procedures and guidance documents, including: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026 Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance

All group companies are detailed in the current legal structure.
This policy forms part of the Group Quality Management system ISO 9001

Key Contacts – Local Information available on the school's website

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1. Policy Scope and Aims

This policy applies to all individuals working in Polaris Schools. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Senior leaders and members of the Proprietor/Governing Body
- All employed staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency staff
- Students on placement or work experience

This policy is publicly available on the school website. A printed copy can be provided upon request. This ensures accessibility for children, parents/carers, visitors, and any individuals working with or on behalf of the school. Visitors to our school are expected to adhere to the safeguarding policies and practices and will be provided with guidance when they attend our site.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure compliance with the statutory requirements set out in ***Keeping Children Safe in Education*** and **Working Together Guidance**
2. Establish clear safeguarding expectations for all individuals connected to the school.
3. Promote the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of all pupils.

2. Safeguarding Statement

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. The child's best interests are at the centre of all decision-making

We believe that:

- All children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and to act in ways that protect them.

This means that we will:

1. **Never tolerate abuse, neglect, or exploitation** of children. We will always challenge and raise concerns about any words or actions that downplay, justify, or promote harm to children. This expectation applies to everyone connected with our school, whether on-site or working with us in any capacity.

2. **Be child-centred** in all decisions and actions, ensuring that the best interests of the child are at the heart of our practice. We will actively seek, listen to, and value children's voices and experiences, using appropriate communication methods or advocacy where needed, and involving children in decisions that affect them.
3. **Provide a safe and nurturing environment** where children can learn, grow, and develop, and where they feel confident to raise concerns for themselves or others.
4. **Respond promptly and appropriately** to any identified concerns, incidents, or allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
5. **Promote equality and fairness**, ensuring that no child or group of children is treated less favourably than others. The school will monitor safeguarding data for patterns relating to protected characteristics. We are committed to promoting an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture in which racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of our safeguarding responsibilities.
6. **Recognise and act on additional vulnerabilities**, taking positive steps to safeguard children who may be at greater risk of harm or discrimination.
7. **Work in partnership** with children, parents/carers, and external agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child in our care.
8. **Be professionally curious**. All staff maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" and understand that children may not always disclose abuse or recognise their experiences as harmful. Staff will exercise professional curiosity and raise concerns promptly with the DSL.
9. **Take all safeguarding concerns seriously**. The school recognises that all forms of abuse, including child sexual abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, are serious safeguarding concerns and will always be taken seriously. Staff are expected to act immediately and report concerns without delay.

This statement is underpinned by, and fully aligned with, the statutory guidance in:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- Relevant sections of the *Education Act 2002*, the *Children Act 1989* and *Children Act 2004*, and the *Human Rights Act 1998*.

Our approach ensures that safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of school life and that all staff and stakeholders understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities.

3. Implementation and Review

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently and effectively across the school. All staff and volunteers are expected to read, understand, and follow this policy as part of their safeguarding duties.

This policy will be:

- **Implemented** through robust recruitment processes, induction, ongoing safeguarding training, and clear reporting procedures.
- **Monitored** through regular safeguarding audits, case reviews, and feedback from children, parents/carers, and staff.
- **Reviewed** annually, or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or local safeguarding arrangements. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher in conjunction with the Managing Director for Education.

The Head Teacher includes a safeguarding impact report in each termly report to Governors. This report covers evaluations of concerns raised, trends observed, training effectiveness, policy compliance, Prevent-related activity, emerging risks, and any Prevent or Channel referrals made, where appropriate and in accordance with confidentiality requirements. Any weaknesses or deficiencies identified in the day-to-day application of this policy will be addressed without delay. Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will report issues to the Head Teacher (if the Head Teacher is not DSL), and the policy and procedures will be promptly updated and communicated to all staff.

Following each annual review, the Head Teacher will present the updated policy to the Governing Body. During this meeting, a report reviewing the previous 12 months of Child Protection activity will also be provided. The Governing Body will ensure the school actively contributes to interagency working, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, through effective implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures, and close cooperation with local agencies.

4. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on, and complies with, the Department for Education's statutory guidance:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTSC)**

We also follow the procedures set out by our Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Team and any other relevant inter-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In addition, this policy is informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**, Part 3 of the Schedule – duty on independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

- **Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015**, Part 1 of the Schedule - duty on non-maintained special schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- **Children Act 1989** and **Children Act 2004**, statutory framework for the care and protection of children.
- **Education Act 2002**, Section 175, duty on local authorities, governing bodies, and proprietors to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 and ISI inspection framework.**
- **Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**, Section 5B (11) as inserted by Section 74 of the **Serious Crime Act 2015** – statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- **Statutory guidance on FGM**, safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, outlining when individuals with criminal convictions can work with children.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**, Schedule 4 – definition of 'regulated activity' in relation to children.
- **Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty**, schools' duty under the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015** to protect individuals from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- **Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009** and **Childcare Act 2006**, setting out who is disqualified from working with children.
- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**, recognising a child as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear, or experience its effects, and have a relationship with either the victim or perpetrator, or if either holds parental responsibility for the child.
- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026**, including provisions relating to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, Family Help, and statutory information sharing duties.
- **Crime and Policing Act 2026**, introducing measures relevant to child protection, including child criminal exploitation, online harms, knife crime, violence against women and girls, and the protection of children from serious violence and abuse.

5. Links with Other Policies

This safeguarding policy is linked to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct (Staff Behaviour)
- Complaints
- Health and Safety
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance
- Online Safety
- First Aid
- Curriculum

- Allergy Safety
- Medical Needs

6. Definitions

The term 'Local Authority Safeguarding Team' is used throughout this policy; however, the name of this team may vary across different local authorities.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best possible outcomes.

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

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

Neglect is a form of abuse that involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Children include everyone under the age of 18.

As Ofsted guidance states:

"Safeguarding is not just about protecting children, learners and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. It also includes a wide range of issues, such as health and safety, online safety, and promoting positive behaviour."
(Ofsted – Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings, 2023)

7. Prevention of Child Abuse

We take seriously our duty of pastoral care and are proactive in seeking ways to prevent children from becoming victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

We take the following measures to promote prevention:

- **Provide a safe and supportive environment** in which children can learn and thrive.
- **Identify Family Help (including targeted early intervention and statutory support) needs** by recognising children who may benefit from additional support at the earliest opportunity.

- **Foster an open and trusting culture** in which children feel confident to share their concerns with any member of staff.
- **Educate children on safety and rights**, both through the curriculum and additional activities, ensuring they understand how to keep themselves safe, know their rights, and are aware of the actions to take if they or a peer feel unsafe, unhappy, or insecure.
- **Ensure visibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies**, with their contact details and role clearly displayed throughout the school.
- **Weekly staff briefings** to alert staff to children who may be experiencing difficulties, enabling all staff to monitor and respond to changes in a child's presentation or behaviour.
- **Regular safeguarding training for all staff**, ensuring they are confident in the procedures to follow if a child makes a disclosure or presents with indicators of concern.

8. Equality Statement

We recognise that some children are at an increased risk of abuse and that additional barriers may exist which can make it harder for them to recognise or disclose abuse.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and to recognising and respecting children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children receive equal protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give particular consideration and support to children who:

- Have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- Are young carers
- Are children in care (looked-after children), previously looked-after children, or children with an allocated social worker/known to Children's Social Care
- Are children living in kinship care arrangements or other informal family care arrangements
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are living in challenging circumstances, such as temporary accommodation, or in households affected by substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers or refugees

Our staff actively work to reduce the additional barriers these children may face and strive to provide a safe, supportive environment where children feel able to speak out and share their concerns. The school recognises that experiences of racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discriminatory behaviour can have a significant impact on children's welfare,

wellbeing, mental health and sense of safety. Such concerns will be taken seriously and responded to through safeguarding, pastoral and behaviour procedures as appropriate.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors working within the school and aligns with the procedures of our local Safeguarding Children Partnerships. It also applies to extended school and off-site activities. We work collaboratively with multiple Local Authorities involved with our children.

9.1 All Staff

All staff are required to:

Read and understand Part 1 of the most recent Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE*). The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure staff understanding through regular briefings.

All staff should be aware of:

- Indicators of abuse and neglect to identify children who may need help or protection.
- Staff should recognise that experiences of racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination may have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health and sense of safety. Such concerns should be considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.
- Risks related to the online world.
- The school's safeguarding policies, including the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and the role of the DSL.
- The Family Help (including targeted early intervention and statutory support) process and their role in identifying concerns, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals.
- Procedures for referring concerns to Local Authority Safeguarding Team and other statutory assessments, including their role in these processes.
- How to respond if a child discloses abuse or neglect, including issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM), while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. All staff must immediately report concerns relating to child sexual abuse, including historical abuse, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school will act in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and any statutory reporting duties in force at the time.
- Signs of different abuse types and specific safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), FGM, and radicalisation.

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children, including online. Staff should be aware of the safeguarding risks associated with technology and the school's

online systems and take appropriate action to protect children from harm. Staff should also be aware of the staff recruitment and induction process, safeguarding policies and procedures, the staff code of conduct, and the role of the DSL.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training, at least annually, delivered through various methods (emails, bulletins, staff meetings). This includes online safety training. Records of safeguarding training and training completion are maintained by the school.

9.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The contact details of the DSL are on the Key Contacts section on the school website.

The DSL holds lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. They will be available during school hours in term time for staff to raise concerns, either in person or via email. Contact details and availability during holidays are published. Appropriate safeguarding cover arrangements are in place whenever the DSL is unavailable, including access to trained Deputy DSLs and secure communication arrangements. The school maintains a shared safeguarding inbox/secure reporting mechanism to ensure safeguarding concerns are monitored whenever the DSL is unavailable.

The DSL is supported with sufficient time, funding, training, resources, and authority to:

- Advise and support staff on child welfare and protection issues.
- Participate in strategy discussions and multi-agency meetings or delegate appropriately.
- Provide Family Help (including targeted early intervention and statutory support) through agreed assessment, planning and intervention processes.
- Leading/participating in Family Help assessments.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team and other agencies.
- Refer suspected cases to relevant bodies (Local Authority Safeguarding Team, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, police) and support staff who make referrals.
- Ensure they receive refresher training every two years and that staff are trained regularly (at least annually).
- Ensure all staff access and understand the safeguarding and child protection policy.
- Be alert to the needs of children with special educational needs, disabilities, and young carers.
- Ensure new staff receive safeguarding induction training.
- Maintain accurate, confidential safeguarding records.
- Promote a culture of listening to children and considering their wishes and feelings.
- Ensure pupils understand their rights and know who to approach with concerns.
- Keep up to date with local risks and share these with staff.
- Liaise with safeguarding training providers (e.g., Polaris Learnative) for staff development.

- Ensure appropriate oversight of Prevent-related concerns, referrals and outcomes and maintain an awareness of local and emerging risks relating to radicalisation and extremism.

When children transfer schools, the DSL ensures child protection records are securely shared with the new school promptly and separately from the main file. For international transfers, the DSL will liaise with relevant authorities as far as possible. The full responsibilities of the DSL are detailed in their job description. The DSL is responsible for raising awareness by:

- Ensuring the safeguarding and child protection policy is reviewed annually and communicated to staff, parents, volunteers, and students.
- Making parents aware of the policy contents.

The Deputy DSL keeps the Head Teacher and DSL informed of safeguarding issues and liaises with local authority case managers and designated officers as needed.

9.3 Proprietor/Chair

The Proprietor and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have read and will follow the latest *KCSIE* guidance and any updates. The Proprietor approves the safeguarding and child protection policy at each review and holds the Head Teacher accountable for implementation.

The Proprietor has a legal duty to ensure the school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place, and that these are implemented promptly and appropriately. The DSL, who must be a member of SLT, leads safeguarding in the school. Adequate cover for the DSL role will always be ensured.

An allocated senior leader from the Proprietor body acts as the 'case manager' if an allegation is made against the Head Teacher. The Proprietor supports the DSL in fulfilling their role.

9.4 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing this policy by:

- Ensuring all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are informed about this policy as part of their induction.
- Communicating the policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring the DSL has adequate time, funding, training, and resources, including cover during absences.
- Making sure all staff undertake safeguarding and child protection training regularly.
- Acting as the case manager in allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers where appropriate.

10. Induction and Training of Staff

10.1 All Staff

- All staff members are provided with the most recent *Part One* of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, which covers essential safeguarding information for all staff. School leaders read the full document. Staff sign a declaration confirming they have read and understood Part One. This requirement applies to all staff, including those who do not work directly with children.
- This record is securely kept in the school office.
- All staff receive safeguarding training at least annually, with additional refresher sessions throughout the academic year as needed. Training content aligns with national guidance.
- Training includes safeguarding topics such as online safety and the government's anti-radicalisation strategy on Prevent, equipping staff to identify children vulnerable to radicalisation and challenge extremist ideas.
- Staff also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates through emails, bulletins, and meetings, at minimum annually.
- Volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training where applicable.

10.2 Induction

- All new staff undertake safeguarding and child protection training during induction, including whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems, their responsibilities, and how to recognise abuse or neglect signs. This training is regularly updated according to Local Authority Safeguarding Team for advice.
- Induction for all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) is delivered by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the DSL and includes:
    - An overview of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including procedures for reporting concerns.
    - The Staff Code of Conduct, with a copy provided.
    - Introduction to the DSL by name and photograph, along with contact details.
    - Requirement to read *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and sign to confirm this.
    - Online Safety guidance.

10.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies

- The DSL undertakes formal DSL-level safeguarding training at least every two years.
- Additionally, the DSL updates their knowledge and skills regularly, at least annually, through e-bulletins, networking with other DSLs, or reviewing safeguarding developments.
- The DSL and deputies also complete the **Prevent** awareness training and other relevant training.

10.4 Members of the Proprietary Body

- All members receive safeguarding training to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively.

10.5 Recruitment and Selection– Shortlisting, Interviewing and Appointment Panels

- Staff involved in all stages of the selection and recruitment process including school administrators, onboarding and other HR team members will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- At least one member of every interview or appointment panel for school posts will have completed safer recruitment training.
- This training covers, as a minimum, the statutory guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and aligns with local safeguarding procedures.
- The Proprietor and SLT are responsible for ensuring safe recruitment processes are followed and for maintaining an accurate **Single Central Record (SCR)** in line with statutory requirements.

10.6 Staff with Contact with Pupils and Families

- Staff who regularly engage with children and families receive ongoing support and training to promote children's welfare and interests.
- The school maintains an open-door policy encouraging confidential discussions of sensitive safeguarding concerns.

11. Confidentiality

Confidentiality and information sharing are vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Data protection requirements must never prevent the timely sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

A key factor identified in many Child Practice Safeguarding Reviews (CSPRs) has been the failure of practitioners to record, share, and act on important information. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families plays a role in identifying concerns, sharing relevant information, and taking prompt action.

- All matters relating to safeguarding are confidential, and every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality.
- However, staff have a professional responsibility to share concerns and information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other professionals involved in safeguarding investigations.
- Staff must never promise a child or young person that they can keep secrets or maintain confidentiality if the child's safety is at risk.
- **All** staff have a duty to report to the DSL any incident where they believe a child or young person's safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Summary:

- Timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding.
- Information must be shared on a need-to-know basis. Staff and leaders will share relevant information with appropriate agencies where this may assist in safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child. Information sharing decisions will be made in accordance with statutory safeguarding duties, data protection legislation and information sharing guidance. Consent is not required where there is a lawful basis to share information for safeguarding and child welfare purposes.
- Staff should never promise a child that they will keep information secret, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- The DSL or Head Teacher will only share personal information about a child with other staff on a **need-to-know** basis.
- All staff have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children.
- The school recognises the statutory Information Sharing Duty introduced by section 16LA of the Children Act 2004. Where the school holds information relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare and sharing that information may assist another relevant agency to take action, the information will be shared in accordance with statutory guidance unless doing so would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing.

We will usually seek to inform parents or carers before referring a child to local safeguarding services unless doing so could place the child at greater risk or interfere with a criminal investigation. In cases of uncertainty, the DSL will consult with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

1.1 If a child is in immediate danger

- **Notify:** Tell the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.
- **Action:** The DSL will Contact LA Safeguarding Team and/or the police immediately — *anyone* can make a referral.
- **Contact Local Authority Safeguarding Team:** DSL decides which Local Authority to contact — sometimes both — based on the child's residence or school's location.
  Social worker involvement: If the child has one, contact them directly.
- **Priority:** Never delay sharing information if a child is at risk.

1.2 If a child makes a disclosure

- **Listen and believe** them — no leading questions.
- **Stay calm** — don't show shock or upset.
- **Acknowledge** they did the right thing — don't criticise for not telling sooner.
- **Explain next steps** — don't promise confidentiality.
- **Record promptly** in the child's own words, stick to facts, sign/date, and pass to the DSL.
- If appropriate, make a direct referral and tell the DSL.

1.3 If you have concerns (but not immediate danger)

- **Speak to the DSL first** to agree next steps.
- Alternative advice: Contact NSPCC (0808 800 5000).
- Follow the school's flow chart for welfare concerns.

1.4 Family Help

Purpose: To support children and families, strengthen family resilience, and prevent needs from escalating.

Types:

- **Universal services:** Available to all children and families, including schools, health services and community services.
- **Family Help support:** Coordinated multi-agency support for children and families with additional or emerging needs.
- **Consent-based:** Family Help services are generally offered with the knowledge of the child and family. The school will share relevant information with partner agencies where necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child in accordance with statutory guidance and information-sharing duties.

DSL role: Liaise with relevant agencies, contribute to and coordinate multi-agency assessments and plans where appropriate, monitor progress, and escalate concerns where outcomes are not improving or risk increases. Where appropriate and in accordance with local assessment arrangements, assessments and plans may be coordinated by practitioners other than social workers. The school will work collaboratively with the lead practitioner and contribute information, support and professional expertise as required. The school will have regard to local safeguarding partnership arrangements, assessment pathways and referral protocols when supporting children and families and when participating in multi-agency assessments.

1.5 Referral

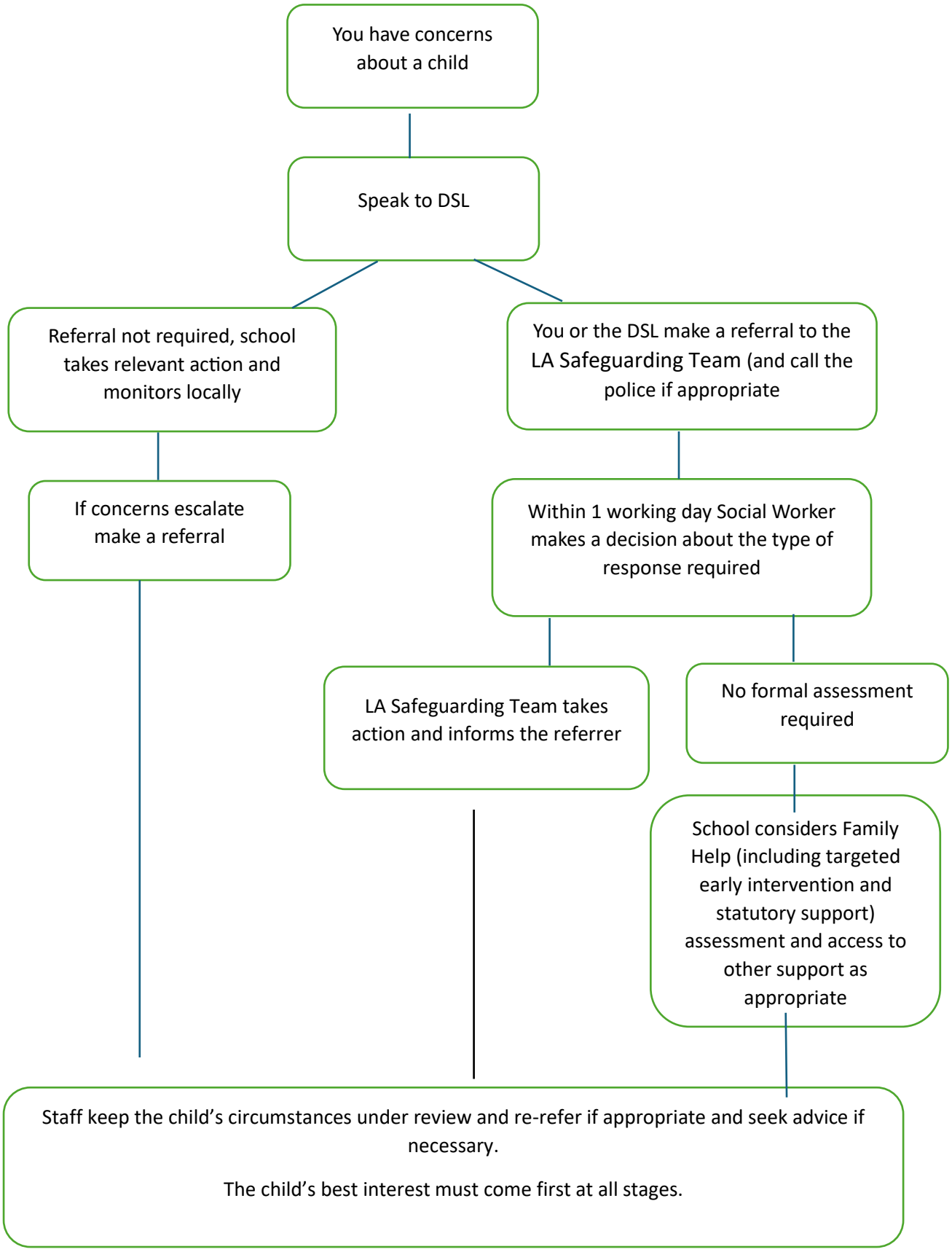
- **Preferred route:** DSL makes the referral (for good information-sharing and record-keeping).
- **Parental contact:** Usually before referral — except if it risks harm or compromises an investigation.
- **Follow-up:**
    - Local authority must respond within 1 working day.
    - If no update, follow up and record outcomes.
    - Escalate if no improvement.
- **Encouragement:** Share early signs, keep records, monitor, and challenge inaction.

1.6 Reporting and Recording

- **Systems:** Use the school's safeguarding system (online).
- **Notify DSL** after recording.
- **Details to include:**
    - Names, location, date, time.
    - Exact words (quoted), not interpretations.
    - Non-verbal behaviour if relevant.
    - Injury details on body map.
- **Focus:** Record facts, not opinions.

Weekly review in DSL/SLT Meeting to check actions and timeliness.

The following flow chart demonstrates the procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare



1.7. Notifying Parents/Carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with their parents or carers. Other staff should only speak to parents or carers about such concerns after consulting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If we believe that informing the parents or carers might increase the risk to the child, we will first consult with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team before taking any action.

In cases where allegations of abuse are made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all children involved.

1.8 Allegations Against Staff (see Appendix 33)

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, resolving the matter quickly will be a priority, and unnecessary delays will be avoided. All allegations will be taken seriously.

If a child discloses that a staff member or volunteer has acted in an abusive manner, the disclosure must be reported to the Head Teacher immediately.

If the allegation concerns the Head Teacher, it must be reported directly to the Safeguarding Lead for the proprietary body, **contact details are located in the key contact's section on the website.**

Further details on the procedure for handling allegations can be found in the **Polaris Whistleblowing Procedure** and the **Polaris Guidance for Dealing with Allegations and Safeguarding Concerns**. A referral should also be made to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Such concerns will always be taken seriously by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Staff are reminded that failure to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk is a disciplinary offence.

If a staff member does not feel able to raise a child protection concern internally, they may contact external organisations, listed in the Whistle Blowing Procedure.

Appendix 2 - Definitions of Child Abuse

There are 4 types of abuse that are commonly understood:

- Physical abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect;
- Sexual abuse

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. Safeguarding concerns may overlap, and children may experience multiple forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harms at the same time. Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can be interconnected and should consider the wider context when assessing concerns and deciding on appropriate action.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve but is not limited to:

- Hitting, slapping, punching, or kicking
- Shaking or throwing
- Poisoning
- Burning or scalding,
- Drowning or suffocating
- Biting or scratching
- Confining a child in a dark space
- Otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Female genital mutilation is considered to be a form of physical abuse.

Physical abuse involves injury that is a deliberate attack or due to a failure to take responsible steps to protect any child, young person or a vulnerable person.

Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse is the most common element in all forms of abuse. Neglect, physical or sexual harm all involve damage to a child's emotional and social development;

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which is inflicted with the intent to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development;

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

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child 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 penetration with an object), or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.
- It may also include forcing a child to undress or touch another person.
- Sexual Abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as exposing or flashing, involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- Children are more likely to know the person abusing them than not. Sexual abuse can occur within the family, an institution, a community setting, or online.
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse. It can involve individuals or groups grooming or luring children under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the child needs or wants, such as money, gifts, food, drugs, alcohol, affection, status, or protection. A child may not always recognise that they are being abused or exploited.
- Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology. Children may be persuaded, manipulated, or threatened into creating, sharing, or posting nude or semi-nude images or videos. This can occur through social media platforms, online gaming, messaging services, and dating applications. Cases of child sextortion are increasing and are often perpetrated by organised criminal groups whose primary motivation is financial gain.
- Staff will remain alert to the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI), deepfake technology, and other digital tools that may be used to create, alter, or distribute sexualised images of children.

- The boundary between abusive behaviour and normal childhood or adolescent sexual development can sometimes be unclear. Decisions about whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will consider factors such as consent, age and developmental stage, power imbalance, coercion, and exploitation. This may include children who exhibit a range of sexually harmful or problematic behaviours towards adults, peers, or younger children.
- A child under the age of 13 can never legally consent to any sexual activity. Sexual activity involving a child under 16 is also an offence, regardless of any apparent agreement, subject to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Developmental Sexual Activity -encompasses behaviours may be expected as children and young people develop an understanding of their physical, emotional and social relationships with others. Such activity is typically characterised by mutuality, age-appropriate curiosity, and the seeking of consent.
- Sexual Behaviour can be socially inappropriate developmentally inappropriate or both. When considering whether behaviour falls into this category, it is important to assess its impact on those involved and concerns it raises about a child or young person. Some behaviours may be motivated by curiosity or information-seeking but still result in significant distress, confusion, worry, or harm. In some cases, sexualised behaviour may represent "acting out" and may indicate that the child has been exposed to inappropriate sexual experiences or abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Children may be malnourished or undernourished. They may have inadequate clothing or bedding or shelter, live in unsuitable conditions, or be deprived of appropriate medical care. Neglect can take many forms and may be difficult to identify. Broadly, neglect can be categorised into four areas.

Physical Neglect - A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or protection from harm, are not adequately provided for.

Educational Neglect -A parent or carer fails to ensure that a child receives a suitable education or consistently attends school.

Emotional Neglect -A child does not receive the emotional support, nurture, stimulation, encouragement, or affection they need. This may include ignoring, humiliating, intimidating, rejecting, or isolating the child.

Medical Neglect

- A child is not provided with appropriate healthcare, including dental treatment, prescribed medication, or access to medical advice and treatment. This may include failing to follow medical recommendations necessary for the child's wellbeing.
- Children who experience neglect may show signs of faltering growth, developmental delay, poor health, or failure to thrive.
- Neglect may also occur during pregnancy as a result of parental substance misuse.
- A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institutional, or community setting, by people known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Online Abuse

Online abuse is any form of abuse that takes place using the internet or digital technology. It can occur through social media, messaging apps, email, online gaming, live streaming, online forums and other digital platforms. Children may be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. Online abuse may occur on its own or alongside abuse taking place offline. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place through digital technology and online platforms.

Children with Disabilities

Research has shown that children with additional care needs and disabilities are significantly more vulnerable to abuse than children who do not have additional needs. Research also indicates that children with disabilities are more likely than non-disabled children to be looked after by local authorities because of neglect or abuse.

We are aware that this should be borne in mind when considering whether a child with disabilities is subject to abuse, and guidance should be sought regarding how this should be explored. Communication with the child or young person and how this is achieved is of critical importance. Close liaison with all professionals involved with the child is also vital to ensuring that information is shared and decisions made regarding safe care practice are agreed by all given the likelihood of the child or young person's medical and intimate care needs being met.

Signs and Indicators

Every child is unique and it is difficult to predict how their behaviour will change as a result of adverse childhood experience
s of abuse. Listed below are some physical and behavioural indicators that may be commonly seen in children who are abused but remember they may only be an indication and not confirmation that abuse is taken place.

It is also important to consider the impact of adultification. The concept of adultification bias is where adults perceive children of ethnic minorities as being older that they are. It is a form of bias where black, asian and minoritised ethnic communities are perceived as being more 'streetwise', more 'grown up', less innocent and less vulnerable than other children. This particularly affects black children, who might be viewed primarily as a threat rather than as a child who needs support.

It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these signs and indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse or neglect is occurring.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as death of a loved one, or the birth of a new baby in the family, relationship problems between parents/carers, etc.
Staff should seek to understand what life is like for children to remain curious about sudden changes that may be indicative of something that requires further investigation.

Physical Abuse	
Physical Signs	**Behavioural Indicators**
• Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body • Bruises which may reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching) • Cigarette burns • Bite marks • Broken bones • Scalds	• Fear of parents being approached for an explanation • Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts • Flinching when approached or touched • Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather • Depression • Withdrawn behaviour • Running away from home

Emotional Abuse	
Physical Signs	**Behavioural Indicators**
• A failure to thrive or grow • Sudden speech disorders • Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress	• Neurotic behaviour, e.g., hair twisting, rocking • Being unable to play • Fear of making mistakes • Self-harm • Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour The signs of emotional abuse can also be different for children at different ages.

Sexual Abuse	
Physical Signs	**Behavioural Indicators**
• Pain or itching near the genital/anal areas • Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas • Sexually transmitted infections • Vaginal discharge or infection; • Stomach pains • Discomfort when walking or sitting down • Pregnancy	• Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g., becoming aggressive or withdrawn • Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people • Having nightmares • Running away from home • Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development age • Sexual drawings or language • Bedwetting • Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about • Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts • Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia • Unexplained gifts and money • Secretive behaviour with family or friends, for example.

Neglect	
Physical Signs	**Behavioural Indicators**
• Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others • Constantly dirty or unkempt • Weight loss, or being constantly underweight • Inappropriate dress for the conditions • Unwashed and heavily soiled clothes • Anaemia • Medical or dental issues • Regular illness or infections • Repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision • Skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies and ringworm • Untreated injuries • Weight and growth concerns	• Complaining of being tired all the time • Not seeking medical assistance when needed and/or failing to attend appointment • Having few friends • Mentioning they are being left alone or unsupervised • Becoming clingy, aggressive, withdrawn, depressed or anxious • Changes in eating habits • Finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities • Missing school • Showing signs of self-harm • Using drugs or alcohol

Appendix 3 - Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

Under the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015**, all schools have a legal duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Our school leaders are responsible for:

- Using existing mechanisms to understand the risk of extremism.
- Ensuring staff understand these risks and develop the skills to address them.
- Promoting awareness of this duty to all staff.
- Ensuring the duty is implemented effectively in daily practice.

We recognise that radicalisation is a **safeguarding issue** and have clear procedures in place to assess and protect students from this risk. General safeguarding principles, as outlined in statutory guidance, apply equally to preventing radicalisation. Concerns relating to radicalisation will be managed through the school's existing safeguarding procedures and recording systems in the same way as other safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider whether advice, support, monitoring or referral to Prevent or Channel is appropriate.

Staff should remain alert to patterns of behaviour that may indicate vulnerability to radicalisation. These may include significant changes in behaviour, social withdrawal, changes in friendship groups, increasing use of intolerant or divisive language, a growing interest in extremist ideologies or narratives, or concerning online activity. No single indicator is evidence of radicalisation and concerns should always be considered within the wider context of the child's circumstances.

If You Have Concerns About Radicalisation or Extremism

1. **If a child is NOT at immediate risk of harm**

- Speak to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** first to agree on the next steps.

2. **DSL action**

The DSL will assess the information available, taking into account the child's circumstances, vulnerabilities, protective factors and any relevant safeguarding information, and determine the most appropriate course of action. This may include monitoring, seeking advice from relevant agencies, or making a referral where appropriate.

The DSL will maintain effective links with local Prevent partners and will seek advice from relevant agencies where appropriate before making a Prevent or Channel referral. Where a child is accepted onto the Channel programme, the school will work with Channel partners and other relevant agencies, attend meetings as required, and implement agreed actions to support the child and reduce identified risk.

The DSL will assess the level of risk and decide which agency to contact, which may include:

- **Channel** – the government's programme to support individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- A referral to the **Local Authority Safeguarding Team.**

3. **Additional support**

- **Department for Education Extremism Helpline**: 📞 020 7340 7264

  ✉ counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

  (Not for emergencies)

4. **In an emergency**

- Call **999** immediately.
- Call the **confidential anti-terrorist hotline** on 0800 789 321 if you:
    - Think someone is in immediate danger.
    - Believe someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group.
    - See or hear something that could be terrorist related.

Appendix 4 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

If You Discover That FGM Has Taken Place or a Child Is at Risk of FGM, staff must follow the Safeguarding procedures set out below.

Definition

The Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education* defines **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** as:

"All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons."

FGM has **no health benefits** and causes lasting harm. It involves removing or damaging healthy tissue, interfering with natural bodily functions.

FGM can be called by different names, some common names for FGM include female circumcision, cutting, sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan.

Age and Risk

- FGM can occur at any age – from newborn to adulthood – but is most common between **ages 5 and 8**, meaning girls in this age range are at **higher risk**.
- It is more likely in communities known to practise FGM.

Legal Status

- FGM is **illegal in the UK**.
- It is a **form of child abuse** with long-term physical and psychological consequences.
- It may also be referred to as *female genital cutting*, *circumcision*, or *initiation*.

Possible Indicators of FGM (not limited to these)

- Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing comfortably.
- Frequent or prolonged visits to the toilet; urinary or menstrual problems.
- Reluctance to participate in PE, swimming, or physical activities.
- Sudden unexplained school absences (especially linked to overseas travel).
- Talk of a "special procedure," "ceremony," or "becoming a woman."
- Family history of FGM (mother/sisters/relatives).
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or significant change in behaviour.
- Avoidance of health/sex education lessons.
- Disclosure (direct or indirect) by the child or friends.

Mandatory Duty for Teachers

If you are a **teacher** and you discover that **FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18**, you **must**:

1. **Report directly to the police** (this is a *personal statutory duty*).
2. **Inform the DSL immediately** after contacting the police.

Failure to comply may result in **disciplinary action**. If unsure always seek advice from the DSL in the first instance.

Other Staff Responsibilities

If you are **not a teacher** but discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18:

1. **Inform the DSL immediately**.
2. Follow **local safeguarding procedures**.

If you suspect a pupil is **at risk of FGM** or discover that someone **aged 18 or over** has been a victim of FGM:

1. **Speak to the DSL**.
2. Follow **local safeguarding procedures**.

Important: Staff must **not examine pupils** to confirm suspicions.

Emergency Contacts

- **Police (immediate risk):** 999
- **Guidance on Mandatory Reporting:**
  UK Government – Mandatory Reporting of FGM Mandatory Reporting of FGM
- In addition, if you have any concerns that a child is at risk discuss this with the DSL.

Appendix 5 -Concerns About Child-on-Child Abuse

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up” or harmless behaviour. Most cases of inappropriate behaviour between children will be managed through the school’s Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying Policy.

However, where behaviour raises safeguarding concerns, including where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will apply, and the matter will be referred to the appropriate agencies where necessary.

In the event of physical, emotional, sexual, or online abuse of one child by another child or group of children, the situation will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with the school's Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy as appropriate.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

The school recognises that harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum, ranging from inappropriate sexualised behaviour through to serious sexual violence. Harmful sexual behaviour may occur online, offline, or both, and may include, but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Sexual coercion
- Image-based abuse
- Sharing, creating, or threatening to share nude or semi-nude images without consent. All incidents involving the sharing, creation or possession of nude or semi-nude images will be treated as safeguarding concerns and responded to appropriately, whether the activity is believed to be consensual or non-consensual.
- Online sexual abuse
- Misogynistic behaviour and attitudes
- Harmful behaviour influenced by online content, including pornography

Any concerns regarding harmful sexual behaviour will be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Appropriate action will be taken in line with this policy and local Safeguarding procedures.

The school recognises the escalatory nature of misogyny and understands that unchallenged sexist or misogynistic attitudes, language and behaviours can contribute to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Staff will challenge such behaviour promptly and consistently and will respond to concerns in a proportionate and safeguarding-focused manner. Early identification and intervention are important in preventing the escalation of harmful behaviours and promoting a safe and respectful culture.

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Children who display abusive behaviours may themselves have experienced abuse, trauma or other adverse experiences and may require support alongside appropriate intervention. The school also recognises that child-on-child abuse is not an inevitable part of growing up and can often be prevented through a whole-school approach, early identification, education and timely intervention.

Examples of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to, behaviour that:

- Is serious and potentially a criminal offence
- Could place other children in the school at risk of harm
- Involves forcing another child to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, including indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sharing sexually inappropriate images or videos
- Involves upskirting, which is a criminal offence
- Is violent or results in serious physical harm
- Involves threats, intimidation, coercion or the use of weapons
- Racist abuse.
- Faith-targeted abuse.
- Other discriminatory behaviour based on protected characteristics.

If a Child Makes an Allegation Against Another Child

- Inform the DSL immediately and record the allegation — do not investigate yourself.
- The DSL will consider the need for referral to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team and/or the police and will follow local safeguarding procedures.
- Following advice from the Local Authority Safeguarding Team, the DSL will create a risk assessment and support plan for all children involved (both the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s)), including identifying a named adult whom they can speak to.

Minimising the Risk of Child-on-Child Abuse

We will:

- Challenge all forms of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- Remain vigilant to issues that may affect different groups of children, — for example:
    - Sexualised or aggressive touching, grabbing or harassment directed towards girls.
    - Initiation or hazing-type violence or other harmful behaviours directed towards boys.

    - Educate children about healthy relationships, respectful behaviour, boundaries, and consent through the curriculum.
- Ensure children know how to report concerns and access support by:
    - Creating a culture where speaking up is normal, encouraged and taken seriously.
    - Using assemblies, tutor time, PSHE lessons, and pastoral support systems
- Train staff to recognise that a child displaying abusive behaviour towards a peer may also be experiencing abuse or harm themselves.
- Provide age-appropriate education to help children recognise abusive behaviour, understand warning signs, and know how to access support both within school and externally (for example, Childline, CAMHS and the Police).

Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Challenge any derogatory, prejudicial, sexualised, or abusive language and behaviour.
- Be vigilant to sexualised, coercive, or aggressive behaviour, including unwanted touching, grabbing, or intimidation.
- Recognise that sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexual behaviour are safeguarding concerns and must never be dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up", or inevitable.
- Follow KCSIE and school procedures for reporting, recording, and responding to concerns relating to child-on-child abuse.
- Report all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

Children at Higher Risk

Some groups of children may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse, including:

- Girls
- LGBT+ children, or those perceived to be LGBT+
- Children with SEND

We will ensure that these children have appropriate support and access to trusted adults and are protected from:

- Sexual harassment and sexual violence
- Upskirting
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic abuse
- Racist, sexist, and other discriminatory behaviour

Recording and Monitoring

- All disclosures, concerns, and incidents will be recorded and reviewed by the DSL promptly and in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- The school will maintain records of child-on-child abuse, including incidents of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexual behaviour, to identify patterns, inform risk assessments, and support preventative action.

Appendix 6 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both **CSE** and **CCE** are forms of abuse that occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity.
This may happen:

- In exchange for something the child needs or wants
- Through the use of violence or the threat of violence
- Over time or as a one-off occurrence
- In person or online

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is a form of child abuse and exploitation. It can include human trafficking, slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. Children may be exploited by individuals, groups, organised criminal networks or gangs and may not recognise themselves as victims. Children who are exploited may identify with, trust, depend upon, or believe they are part of the group exploiting them. Any concerns that a child may be a victim of modern slavery will be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will consider referrals to Children's Social Care, the police and other relevant agencies where appropriate, taking account of the Modern Slavery statutory guidance.

Additional Exploitation Risks
Children may experience multiple forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm at the same time. In addition to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and modern slavery, children may also be vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse, stalking and financial exploitation. Staff should remain alert to indicators that a child may be experiencing overlapping safeguarding concerns.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Definition:
CSE is a form of sexual abuse. It involves a child being coerced, manipulated, or deceived into sexual activity, which may include:

- Assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object)
- Non-penetrative acts (e.g., masturbation, kissing, rubbing, touching outside clothing)
- Unwanted pressure from peers to have sex
- Sexual bullying, including cyberbullying
- Sexual grooming
- The creation or sharing of sexual images or videos (sometimes without the child's immediate knowledge)

Key points:

- It can occur online or face-to-face, with or without physical contact.
- Some children may not show any outward signs of abuse.
- A child may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Victims of child sexual exploitation may be criminalised for offences they have been compelled to commit as part of their exploitation.
- Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can also occur through the use of technology.
- CSE can happen without a child's awareness (e.g., images shared on social media).
- CSE may be committed or facilitated by individuals, groups, organised criminal networks or gangs.
- Child sexual exploitation may constitute modern slavery and human trafficking.

Possible indicators:

- Changes in behaviour, mood, or appearance
- Unexplained gifts, money, or possessions
- Relationships with older individuals or groups
- Repeated absences from school or going missing from home
- Increased secrecy or withdrawn behaviour
- Signs of sexualised behaviour or language unusual for their age

Staff action:

If you have concerns a child may be at risk of CSE:

- Speak to the DSL immediately
- Record your concern using the online form and pass it to the DSL
- Do not investigate yourself

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Definition:

CCE occurs when children are exploited and coerced into committing crimes for the benefit of others. The school recognises that children who are criminally exploited are victims of abuse and should be safeguarded and supported appropriately.

This can involve:

- Transporting drugs or money ("county lines"). County lines is a term used to describe organised criminal networks or gangs exploiting children and vulnerable individuals to transport, store or sell drugs and money, often across geographical areas using

dedicated mobile phone lines. Children involved in county lines activity are victims of exploitation and should be recognised and safeguarded as such.
- Working in cannabis factories
- Shoplifting or pickpocketing
- Vehicle crime
- Threatening or committing serious violence

Key points:

- Girls' experiences of CCE can be different from boys', but both are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- CCE can happen in person or online.
- Children may not recognise they are being exploited and may view themselves as willing participants or as part of the group exploiting them.
- CCE may be committed or facilitated by individuals, groups, organised criminal networks or gangs.
- Child criminal exploitation may constitute modern slavery and human trafficking.

Possible indicators:

- Frequently going missing from home or school
- Travelling to locations far from home without clear reason
- Unexplained money, clothing, or possessions
- Having multiple phones, SIM cards, or social media accounts
- Changes in friendship groups or relationships with older individuals
- Poor school attendance or disengagement from education
- Sudden change in behaviour, secrecy, or hostility when questioned
- Evidence of physical injury without explanation

Staff action:
If you have concerns a child may be at risk of CCE:

- Speak to the DSL immediately
- Record your concerns using the online form and pass it to the DSL
- Do not investigate yourself

Note:
In both CSE and CCE cases, the DSL will:

- Assess the risk and contact the LA Safeguarding Team and/or the police where appropriate
- Work with relevant safeguarding partners and agencies
- Put a safety and support plan in place for the child

Appendix 7 - Gangs and Youth Violence

Where there is suspicion that a child may be at risk of involvement with gangs and/or youth violence, the school will promptly alert the relevant LA Safeguarding Team and other relevant authorities and work in partnership with other professionals to safeguard the child.

The school recognises that involvement in serious violence can have a significant impact on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. Serious violence may be associated with a range of safeguarding concerns, including child criminal exploitation, county lines activity, modern slavery, gang association, substance misuse and peer-on-peer abuse.

Children may be both victims and perpetrators of serious violence and may be at risk through coercion, intimidation, grooming or exploitation. Staff should be aware that children involved in serious violence may not recognise themselves as victims and may require safeguarding and support.

The school will adopt a preventative approach through education, early identification of risk factors, information sharing and partnership working with families, safeguarding partners and relevant agencies.

All staff must remain vigilant to signs that may indicate a child is either already involved in, or vulnerable to being drawn into, gang activity or youth violence. Possible indicators include, but are not limited to:

- Sudden changes in friendship groups or unexplained associations with older individuals.
- Wearing specific colours, symbols, or clothing linked to gang affiliation.
- Unexplained injuries or physical confrontations.
- Carrying or having access to weapons.
- Threats of violence or intimidation towards others.
- Being the victim of violence, intimidation or coercion.
- Significant changes in behaviour, presentation or emotional wellbeing.
- Possession of unexplained money, expensive items, or mobile phones.
- Use of language, gestures, or social media content associated with gangs.
- Reluctance to discuss activities outside of school or secretive behaviour.
- Truancy, poor school attendance, or sudden decline in academic performance.

Weapons and Serious Violence

Staff should be alert to concerns that a child may be carrying a weapon, have access to a weapon, be threatening to use a weapon, or intend to use a weapon. Any such concerns must be treated as a safeguarding matter and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will assess the risk and liaise with the police and other agencies where appropriate.

If any member of staff has a concern that a child is involved in, or vulnerable to being involved in or influenced by, gang activity, they must report these concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay, in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Staff should be aware that the likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors including social exclusion, adverse childhood experiences, association with gangs, exploitation, peer influence, substance misuse, attendance concerns and previous experiences of abuse or neglect.

The DSL will:

1. Record all concerns and actions taken in accordance with safeguarding record-keeping procedures.
2. Assess the level of risk, including consultation with the child and their parents/carers where appropriate.
3. Liaise with external agencies such as:
    - Local Authority Safeguarding Team.
    - Youth Offending Team (YOT).
    - Police (including Safer Schools Officers).
    - Specialist gang intervention projects or community outreach services.
4. Develop a multi-agency plan to safeguard the child and reduce the risk of harm.
5. Consider links between serious violence, child criminal exploitation, county lines activity, trafficking and other safeguarding concerns.

All interventions will be guided by the principles of information sharing and safeguarding in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and the local authority safeguarding procedures.

Appendix 8 - Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one where one or both spouses cannot consent, and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, or emotional pressure. Globally, 11% of girls marry before age 15, and in the UK, one in three victims of forced marriage are under 18.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff must recognise signs that may indicate a child is at risk of forced marriage, understand how to respond to concerns, and know where to seek advice. Support can be accessed nationally via the Forced Marriage Unit and locally through the police safeguarding team or the LA Safeguarding Team.

While all staff have safeguarding responsibilities, teachers and school leaders should not undertake roles better suited to social workers or police officers.

16.1 Characteristics That May Indicate Forced Marriage

The following signs may raise concerns, though none alone confirm forced marriage:

- Extended absence from school or college, including truancy
- Drop in academic performance or motivation
- Excessive parental control or restriction of movements
- History of siblings leaving education early to marry
- Parental control of income or limited career choices for the child
- Evidence of self-harm, depression, suicide attempts, social isolation, eating disorders, or substance abuse
- Family disputes, domestic abuse, or running away from home

Staff should avoid assumptions or stereotyping — for example, a prolonged holiday may be entirely legitimate.

What to Do

If you suspect a child is at risk of forced marriage, discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Appendix 9 - Honour Based Violence (HBV)

Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community. It often arises when someone is believed to have brought shame by violating unwritten rules of conduct.

Examples include:

- Involvement with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- Desire to leave an arranged or forced marriage
- Wearing clothes or engaging in activities considered non-traditional within the culture
- Conversion to a different faith
- While women and girls are most commonly affected, men and boys can also be victims

Forms of Honour Based Crimes

HBV may not always involve physical violence and can include:

- Domestic abuse
- Threats of violence
- Sexual or psychological abuse
- Forced marriage
- Being held against one's will or taken somewhere unwillingly
- Assault

Staff Action

If staff believe a child is at risk of HBV, the DSL will contact the LA Safeguarding Team. However, if there is evidence a crime has been committed or the child is at immediate risk, the police must be contacted immediately.

It is vital that family or community members are **not** approached before police or the LA Safeguarding Team are involved, as this could increase risk to the child.

Appendix 10 - Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Types of abuse include:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour involves acts intended to make a person subordinate or dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting their resources, depriving them of independence, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour includes assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation, or other abuse used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim.

Impact on Children

Children living in homes affected by domestic abuse are at serious risk of harm and may experience:

- Aggressive or anti-social behaviour
- Depression, anxiety, or emotional distress
- Difficulties forming trusting relationships
- Challenges in concentrating or engaging at school
- Low self-esteem or feelings of helplessness
- Physical injuries or signs of neglect

Witnessing domestic abuse is recognised legally as **significant harm**.

Child-to-Parent or Caregiver Abuse

The school recognises that abuse can also be perpetrated by a child towards a parent, carer or other family member. This is sometimes referred to as child-to-parent or caregiver abuse and can include physical, emotional, verbal, psychological, financial, or coercive and controlling behaviour. Such behaviour may indicate that a child and their family require additional support and intervention. Concerns of this nature will be treated as a safeguarding issue and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures.

Possible Signs in Children

Staff should be alert to signs including:

- Frequent absences or lateness
- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or activities
- Reluctance to go home or fearfulness about parents/carers
- Physical injuries with unlikely explanations
- Regression to younger behaviours (e.g., bedwetting)
- Poor academic performance or concentration difficulties

Supporting Children in School

- Create a safe, supportive environment where the child feels valued and listened to
- Reassure children that the abuse is not their fault
- Encourage them to share their feelings when they are ready
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality but follow safeguarding procedures if there is a risk of harm
- Liaise with the DSL and external agencies as needed to provide further support

Staff Action

If you suspect a child is living with domestic abuse:

- Report your concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Record observations and conversations factually and promptly
- Do not investigate or question the child yourself beyond what is necessary to ensure their safety

The DSL will assess the situation and decide whether to refer to the LA Safeguarding Team or other support services.

The school will participate in Operation Encompass and will act upon notifications received from the police in accordance with safeguarding procedures and acted upon appropriately to support affected children.

Appendix 11 - Faith Abuse and Cultural Safeguarding Considerations

Overview

Child abuse linked to accusations of **"witchcraft" or "possession"** is rare but extremely serious. It arises when a child is perceived as "different" because of behaviour, health, disability, or circumstance, and this difference is attributed to supernatural or spiritual causes. Such beliefs can lead to harmful practices, including so-called "exorcisms" or rituals involving **beating, burning, starvation, cutting, stabbing, isolation, or other forms of physical and emotional abuse**. Abuse typically occurs within the family or community setting but may also involve others in positions of influence.

Children may be particularly vulnerable where families are under stress, experiencing separation, loss, or financial difficulties, or where there is pressure from within faith or community networks.

Cultural and Community Sensitivities

- Abuse linked to faith or cultural beliefs can be complex, as it may be hidden behind family or community traditions.
- While **cultural diversity should be respected**, safeguarding legislation makes clear that **no cultural or faith-based justification can override a child's right to protection**.
- Staff must be aware that faith-linked abuse can manifest as **physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse**.

Guidance for Staff

- Always **prioritise the child's safety and wellbeing** when dealing with concerns linked to faith or cultural beliefs.
- Approach discussions with **sensitivity and respect** but remain clear and firm that abuse is never acceptable.
- Avoid stereotyping or making assumptions about cultural or religious practices; focus on the **impact on the child**.
- Listen carefully to the child and family, showing empathy and patience, but **escalate concerns immediately** if there are safeguarding risks.
- Share concerns with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- The DSL will then discuss with the LA Safeguarding Team who may also involve external agencies with expertise in cultural safeguarding issues.
- Remain alert to **indirect indicators** such as a child expressing fear of being cursed, mentioning harmful rituals, or describing being "prayed over" in distressing ways.

Action if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

- If a child is in **immediate danger or at risk of significant harm**, the DSL will follow the usual safeguarding referral process by contacting the **LA Safeguarding Team** and relevant multi-agency partners.
- The school will work collaboratively with families, safeguarding partners, and—where appropriate—community leaders, but this will **never delay or replace statutory safeguarding action**.
- Staff training will include **cultural competence and awareness of faith-related abuse indicators**, ensuring staff are confident in identifying, responding to, and escalating concerns.

Appendix 12 - Parental/Carer Substance Misuse

Indicators for Staff to Recognise

Staff should be alert to signs that may indicate parental substance misuse, including but not limited to:

- Frequent unexplained injuries or signs of neglect in the child
- The child appearing consistently tired, hungry, or unkempt
- The child displaying sudden changes in behaviour or mood swings
- The child expressing anxiety, fear, or distress about going home
- The child having frequent absences or arriving late to school
- Evidence or suspicion of the child being left alone or unsupervised for extended periods
- Reports or observations of the child talking about or bringing drugs or drug paraphernalia to school
- The child taking on inappropriate caring responsibilities for siblings or adults

Supporting Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse

- Provide a safe and trusting environment where the child feels heard and valued.
- Offer consistent emotional support and reassurance, affirming that the child is not to blame for the situation.
- Encourage participation in school activities to promote social inclusion and build friendships.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure the child receives appropriate help, including referrals to counselling or external support services if needed.
- Monitor academic progress and wellbeing, offering additional support or adjustments where necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality while following safeguarding protocols; share information only on a need-to-know basis.

Appendix 13 - Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

Definition:

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) is a form of abuse that occurs when a parent or carer deliberately causes, fabricates, or exaggerates the symptoms of a child's illness. This can involve falsifying medical records, manipulating test results, or physically inducing symptoms.

School's Role:

The school recognises FII as a serious safeguarding matter requiring prompt and coordinated action. We work closely with health professionals, LA Safeguarding Team and other agencies to assess concerns and ensure the child's safety and well-being.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Any member of staff who suspects a child may be at risk of FII must **immediately report their concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- Concerns must be recorded in writing, including factual observations, conversations, and any patterns noticed.
- Staff must not discuss concerns with parents/carers or attempt to investigate independently.
- The DSL will follow local safeguarding partnership procedures and contact the LA Safeguarding Team.

Indicators may include:

- Discrepancies between reported symptoms and clinical evidence.
- Frequent, unexplained absences from school for medical reasons.
- Symptoms reported only by the parent/carer and not witnessed by others.
- Unusual patterns of seeking medical interventions.

Appendix 14 - Drugs, Alcohol, and Substance Misuse

Definition:

Substance misuse includes the use, possession, or supply of:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco and nicotine products (including vapes/e-cigarettes)
- Illegal drugs
- Misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medication
- New psychoactive substances ("legal highs")
- Volatile substances (e.g., aerosols, solvents, glue)

School's Role:

The school has a statutory duty to promote childrens' health and well-being, which includes preventing substance misuse. Through our curriculum, assemblies, and pastoral support, we educate children on the risks of drugs, alcohol, and other substances, and provide Family Help (including targeted early intervention and statutory support) where concerns arise.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Any suspicion that a child is at risk due to substance misuse must be reported **immediately to the DSL**.
- Concerns should be recorded factually and in detail.
- Staff must not search for or confiscate substances unless acting in line with the Department for Education's *Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance*. This guidance underpins and informs several of our key school policies and procedures. Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- The DSL will liaise with parents/carers (where appropriate), the LA Safeguarding Team, the police, and specialist substance misuse services.

Appendix 15 - Gender-Based Violence / Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Definition:

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) encompass a range of harmful behaviours, including:

- Stalking and harassment
- Forced marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Sharing of private sexual images without consent ("revenge pornography")
- Domestic abuse, including coercive or controlling behaviour
- Honour-based abuse
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Sexual exploitation and risk of sexual harm

School's Role:

The school is committed to preventing GBV and VAWG through education, awareness, and early intervention. We teach children about healthy relationships, respect, consent, and the unacceptability of abuse, challenging harmful attitudes through the curriculum and pastoral work.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Any concern that a child may be at risk of GBV or VAWG must be reported **immediately to the DSL**.
- All concerns must be recorded factually and in writing.
- Staff must not attempt to investigate or confront alleged perpetrators or family members.
- The DSL will contact the LA Safeguarding Team.

Legal Duty:

- All staff must be aware of the **mandatory reporting duty** for known cases of FGM in under-18s, which requires direct reporting to the police (see Appendix 4).

Appendix 16 - Mental Health

Definition:

Children and young people may experience a range of mental health issues that can impact their well-being, learning, and safety. These include, but are not limited to:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Hyperkinetic disorders (e.g., ADHD)
- Eating disorders
- Substance misuse
- Deliberate self-harm
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Safeguarding and Mental Health

- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has experienced or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, exploitation or other adverse childhood experiences.
- Children who have experienced abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, bereavement, trauma, discrimination or other adverse experiences may be more vulnerable to mental health difficulties. Conversely, children experiencing mental health difficulties may face additional safeguarding risks.
- Staff should be particularly alert to indicators such as persistent sadness, anxiety, withdrawal, changes in behaviour, self-harm, suicidal ideation, substance misuse, unexplained physical symptoms, or significant changes in attendance, presentation or engagement.

- Mental health concerns should be considered within the wider safeguarding context and should not be viewed in isolation.

School's Role:

The school is committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional well-being. We work with relevant professionals and specialist agencies, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and make use of national and local resources (e.g., Public Health England guidance). We aim to identify concerns early and provide timely, appropriate support. The school adopts a preventative and early intervention approach to mental health and wellbeing. Where concerns are identified, the school will work with children, families and partner agencies to ensure appropriate support is provided at the earliest opportunity.

Staff Responsibilities:

- All staff must be alert to signs that a child may be experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Staff should understand that mental health difficulties can be both a consequence of safeguarding issues and, at times, an indicator that a child has experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation or trauma.
- Staff should report concerns relating to self-harm, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts or significant deterioration in emotional wellbeing immediately to the DSL.
- Any concern must be reported **immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).**
- The DSL will contact the LA Safeguarding Team who may involve CAMHS and other mental health support services.

Appendix 17 - Missing Children

Definition:

A child who is *missing from education* — whether absent without explanation, persistently missing lessons, or running away — may be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other harm.

School's Role:

We monitor attendance closely and act swiftly when patterns of absence are identified. Persistent or unexplained absence will be investigated and may result in referrals to the LA Safeguarding Team, the police, or other agencies.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Follow school absence reporting procedures and refer concerns to the DSL.
- The DSL will investigate patterns of absence, liaise with parents/carers where appropriate, and seek advice from external agencies.
- In suspected cases of sexual abuse or exploitation, the school will make an immediate referral to the LA Safeguarding Team.
- We will report unauthorised absences without delay, in line with statutory and local authority requirements.

For further detail, see the Attendance Policy.

Appendix 18 - Looked After Children (LAC)

Definition:

A *Looked After Child* is one who has been taken into care by the local authority or has been accommodated under a voluntary care arrangement. Looked after children may live in foster care, process of being adopted, residential homes, with relatives, or occasionally with birth parents under supervision.

School's Role:

We recognise that looked after children are among the most vulnerable pupils, often due to experiences of abuse and/or neglect. We avoid using acronyms to label or single out children and treat them as individuals with equal rights to opportunities and respect.

Kinship Care

The school recognises that children living in kinship care arrangements may experience many of the same vulnerabilities as children in care and may require additional educational, emotional and safeguarding support.

The school will work collaboratively with kinship carers, local authorities and relevant professionals to promote the welfare and educational achievement of these children.

Staff Responsibilities:

- The SEN and pastoral teams will liaise with all professionals involved in the child's care.
- Staff must be aware of the child's legal status, care arrangements, delegated authority levels, and contact arrangements with birth parents or carers.
- The Designated Teacher will maintain contact with the child's social worker and the Virtual School Head.
- The Proprietor will ensure staff receive appropriate training to meet the needs of looked after children and to safeguard and promote their welfare effectively.

Appendix 19 - Supporting Vulnerable Children

Definition:

Children who are abused, neglected, or witness abuse may experience low self-worth, feelings of helplessness, humiliation, and self-blame. Their behaviour may change — becoming withdrawn, aggressive, or unusually passive — while others may show no visible reaction to harm.

School's Role:

We recognise that school staff may provide the only stability in a vulnerable child's life and can play a vital role in safeguarding them and supporting recovery. The school will act upon notifications received regarding children placed in temporary accommodation and will consider any resulting safeguarding, welfare and educational support needs.

The school recognises that children with a parent or close family member in prison may be particularly vulnerable and may require additional support to promote their welfare, emotional wellbeing and educational achievement.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Be vigilant for any sign that a child may have been harmed, in or outside the school setting.
- Report concerns **immediately and in writing** to the DSL.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies involved in safeguarding.
- Ensure each child has a trusted adult identified and regular contact with them.
- Provide ongoing support to children about whom there have been concerns, in line with safeguarding procedures.

Appendix 20 - Bullying

Definition:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally. This includes harassment, victimisation, and discrimination.

School's Role:

We are committed to ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all pupils. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy outlines our prevention strategies, response procedures, and support for both victims and perpetrators.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Treat all pupils and their families fairly and with respect.
- Act immediately upon witnessing or receiving a report of bullying.
- Record and report incidents to the DSL and follow the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Support affected pupils to rebuild confidence and feel safe.

Appendix 21 - Extreme Religious or Political Teaching

School's Role:

The promotion of extremist religious views or partisan political views in any aspect of the school's teaching, or during extra-curricular activities organised by or on behalf of the school, will not be tolerated.

Staff must ensure that children receive a balanced presentation of views and opinions, and that any external materials or visiting speakers meet these standards.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Avoid promoting partisan political or extremist religious views in teaching or school activities.
- Present information in a balanced, factual way.
- Challenge inappropriate or extremist content if encountered.
- Report concerns about potential extremist or partisan content to the DSL.

Failure to observe these expectations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Appendix 22 - Online Safety

The use of information and communication technology (ICT); is a vital part of the everyday functioning of and life in school. We also recognise the important role ICT plays in the lives of our children and their families.

Whilst there are many benefits and strengths in using ICT; there are also a number of risks to children's welfare and safety in school when using internet enabled technology; which are summarised in the following categories-:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes including sextortion (coercing children into sharing explicit images or videos and then blackmailing them for money, further images, or silence).
- **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm to children or others. for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and harassment.
- **commerce:** - illegal, inappropriate, or harmful online commercial activities that can compromise the health and wellbeing or security of children or others. risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

We adopt a whole school approach to online safety which aims to safeguard and educate our children and their families, staff, visitors and our school in our use and management of ICT (including the use of camera enabled; mobile and personal devices and the ICT systems we have in place). Our online safety policy outlines our approach.

- The Protocol regarding the use of mobile phones, iPads, iPods and cameras is contained within the 'ICT Acceptable Use' policies (both staff and student versions) and the 'Use of Mobile Phones' policy.
- Mobile Phones - The school follows current DfE guidance on mobile phones in schools and has measures in place to limit pupil access to mobile phones during the school day. These arrangements are designed to support safeguarding, minimise disruption to learning, and reduce risks associated with online activity and communication.
- Digital Safeguarding Infrastructure including filtering & monitoring (online safety) safeguarding systems
- The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems will be reviewed at least annually by the DSL, senior leaders and the central IT team.

- Polaris Education are supported by a central IT team who oversee the technology used in school. They monitor the infrastructure and safety of the IT such as Fire walls and smoothwalls.
- Staff undertake training around the safe use of IT including the use of AI and the dangers around AI-generated abuse (deepfakes) non-consensual image sharing. The DSL undertakes the role of Online Safety Lead and works closely with the central IT team.

Staff will remain alert to:

- AI-generated abuse
- Deepfake imagery
- Sextortion
- Image-based sexual abuse
- Online misogyny
- Online radicalisation
- Financial exploitation and online scams targeting children

Risks associated with generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including AI-powered chatbots, virtual companions and other applications that simulate interaction with children.

The school recognises the protections introduced by the Online Safety Act and will continue to educate children about online risks, report safeguarding concerns, and work with parents, carers and relevant agencies to promote online safety.
The school recognises cyber security as part of its safeguarding responsibilities and will take appropriate steps to protect school systems, safeguarding records and personal information.

Appendix 23 - Physical Contact and Intervention

School's Role:

Appropriate physical contact may be used to provide comfort, administer first aid, or support a child where necessary. Any such contact must reflect professional boundaries and be recorded.

Restrictive physical intervention is only permitted as a last resort, using the minimum force necessary to prevent harm to the child, another person, or property.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Ensure all physical contact is appropriate, proportionate, and professionally justified.
- Record any physical contact or intervention in line with school procedures.
- Use restrictive intervention only in emergencies and as a last resort.
- Be aware that unlawful, unjustified, or disproportionate physical contact may be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed under the school's disciplinary procedures.

See the Trauma-Informed Relationships and Behaviour Policy for further guidance.

Appendix 24 - Pupil Transfers – Pupil Records

School's Role:

When a child is offered a place at the school, an initial network meeting will be held. Information from the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the most recent annual review, and previous schools will inform the initial risk assessment, ensuring that we can meet all educational and safeguarding needs from the start.

Child Protection Records:

When a child on a child protection plan transfers:

- The DSL will contact the allocated social worker.
- If the receiving school is within the same local authority, the child protection records will be passed directly to its DSL.
- If moving to another local authority, only outline details (not minutes of conferences) will be shared, in accordance with data protection and safeguarding protocols.

The school will act in line with KCSIE requirements, ensuring that child protection files are transferred:

- Within 5 days for an in-year transfer; and
- Within the first 5 days of a new term, with confirmation of receipt obtained from the receiving school.

Appendix 25 - Helping Children to Keep Themselves Safe

School's Role:

Through PSHE, Relationships and Sexual Health Education, Computing lessons, and the wider curriculum, children are taught:

- How to understand and manage risk.
- How to behave responsibly and respectfully towards others.
- How to stay safe online and in the community.

We regularly remind children of anti-bullying and online safety procedures, maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, and promote an ethos of mutual respect.

Children are supported to learn about the risks of AI-generated images / deepfakes misogynistic/misandrist online abuse non-consensual image sharing explicitly.

Children are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult in confidence about any concerns.

Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

The school recognises that child abduction and community safety incidents are safeguarding concerns that may affect children both inside and outside of school.

Child abduction can occur through stranger abduction, family abduction, criminal exploitation, or other forms of coercion and manipulation. Community safety incidents may include serious violence, knife crime, anti-social behaviour, suspicious approaches by unknown adults, or other events that may place children at risk.

Staff should be aware of local safeguarding risks and share any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay. The school will work with parents, carers, the polic

e, local authorities and other relevant agencies where appropriate to safeguard children and promote community safety.

Through the curriculum and wider safeguarding education, pupils will be taught how to recognise risks, stay safe in the community, seek help from trusted adults, and report concerns.

Appendix 26 - Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

School's Role:

We deliver Relationships Education (primary) and Relationships and Sex Education (secondary) in line with statutory guidance.

We follow the *Education for a Connected World* framework (2020), which provides age-specific advice on the online knowledge and skills children should develop at different stages of their lives.

Our RSE curriculum promotes healthy, respectful relationships, consent, equality, and safety, both offline and online.

Appendix 27 - Staff Mobile Phones and Cameras

Staff Responsibilities:

- Personal mobile phone use is limited to non-contact time when children are not present.
- Phones may be used for safety when following a child who has left school premises.
- Personal devices must **not** be used to take photographs or videos of children
- Contact with parents/carers must be made via school phones, not personal devices.

School's Role:

We comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 in relation to taking and storing images or recordings of children for school purposes.

Appendix 28 - Checking the Identity and Suitability of Visitors

School's Role:

All visitors must:

- Verify their identity to staff satisfaction.
- Store personal belongings, including mobile phones, in a safe place.
- Sign the visitor's book and read the safeguarding information sheet (which includes DSL details and procedures for reporting concerns).
- Be always accompanied by a member of staff.

The school will not permit visiting speakers or guests who promote extremist views or attempt to radicalise children or staff.

Appendix 29 - Complaints and Concerns About School Safeguarding Practices

Complaints Against Staff:
Allegations relating to child protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's procedures for handling allegations against staff.

Other Complaints:
Non-safeguarding complaints follow the school's Complaints Policy.

Whistleblowing:
Staff are encouraged to raise any concerns about practice or conduct that could put children at risk.

- Whistleblowing concerns that involve safeguarding will be addressed in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Concerns not related to safeguarding will follow the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Staff can raise concerns directly with the Headteacher.

Appendix 30 - Supporting staff Involved in a disclosure or allegation of harm

School's Role:
We recognise that dealing with safeguarding disclosures and allegations of harm can be distressing and may have an emotional impact on staff.

Support Available:

- Staff should approach their line manager, mentor, or a member of the leadership team for support.
- Support is available through line management, training, and regular safeguarding refreshers.
- Safeguarding training is provided during induction, annually thereafter, and supplemented with regular updates throughout the year.
- All staff have access to Polaris Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is a confidential service covering a wide range of support. More information can be found on the EAP page on the Exchange.

Where the concern involves an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer, contractor, supply worker, governor or proprietor, staff must follow the procedures set out in **Appendix 33 – Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff**

Appendix 31 - Record-Keeping

School's Role:
We maintain detailed, accurate, and secure records of safeguarding concerns, discussions, and decisions.

Procedures:

- Record all concerns in writing and store them securely.
- Non-confidential records are accessible to relevant staff; confidential records are restricted to those with a professional need to know.
- Safeguarding records are retained until the child is 25 years old in compliance with GDPR and are stored securely in the DSL's office.
- Digital records are password-protected and accessible only to the DSL and Headteacher.

Appendix 32 - Safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

Our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

The school follows the Government's recommendations for the pre-employment check and employment of staff who work with children. The definition of staff is: Any person working at the school or the wider organisation whether under a contract of employment, or a contract for services.

Several categories of people fall outside the main regulations concerning appointment, but the school pays regard to KCSIE and will carry out the appropriate checks for this category of people.
The main groups are as follows:

- Staff involved in non-regulated activities.
- Staff who come on site on an infrequent basis and therefore do not meet the definition of regulated activity, occasions sports coaches etc. The school will ensure these people are supervised by suitably checked staff, and a fully documented risk assessment will be in place before such an individual works alongside children of the school.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children.

- Carrying out paid or unpaid work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children.
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not.

For such individuals the school may decide to undertake checks to be assured of the person's suitability and the school will always carry out its normal safeguarding procedures. Online searches for all short-listed candidates will be conducted to identify any publicly available safeguarding concerns. The school will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of their due diligence checks.

Volunteers and Regulated Activity

The arrangements for volunteers will vary by activity and individual.

The school will carry out checks on an individual involved in a regulated activity. Volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity will be appropriately supervised and subject to a risk assessment. The school will determine the appropriate level of supervision and vetting checks based on the nature of the role, frequency of contact with children and safeguarding risks identified.

For new volunteers in regulated activities the school must obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with a barred list check.

For existing volunteers who provide personal care the school will obtain an enhanced certificate with a barred list check.

For existing volunteers, the Headteacher may determine that a further DBS check, including children's barred list information where the volunteer is engaged in regulated activity, is appropriate if safeguarding concerns arise.

For volunteers who are not engaged in regulated activity, the school will determine the appropriate level of vetting and safeguarding checks through a risk assessment and in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance.

The school will consider the following items when deciding on whether they should seek an enhanced DBS check for a volunteer who is not engaging in a regulated activity:

- The nature of the work with children
- What the school knows about the volunteer
- Whether the volunteer has other employment or volunteers elsewhere where referees can advise on suitability
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check.

Should we dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child, or poses a risk of harm to a child or would have done so if they had not left, we will exercise our legal duty to refer this person to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any appropriate professional or regulatory body. The school will not permit any person who is barred from working with children to engage in regulated activity.

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

Appointing new staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity.
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity. We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months. Where an enhanced DBS certificate is obtained, the certificate should be presented for verification before appointment or, where permitted, within 30 calendar days of the issue date on the certificate.
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available –The school does not permit staff engaged in regulated activity to commence work with children before all required pre-employment checks have been complete.
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher. We will use the Department for Education's Check a Teacher's Record service to confirm any relevant prohibition, sanctions or restrictions where required.
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent.
- Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state.
- Ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek, wherever possible, references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. Recruitment processes will be fair, transparent and objective and will promote equality of opportunity whilst maintaining rigorous safeguarding standards.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification (Regulations) 2009 and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

We will obtain two references for all new staff and enhanced criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) for staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. Applicants for posts may be invited for interview where we follow the Children's Workforce Development Council – CWDC, Pre-employment Check Procedure. The Head Teacher and at least one person on any interview panel will have completed the Pre-Employment Check training. We keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, particularly those demonstrating that checks have been done, including the date and number of the enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check including the DBS Update service. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary, supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and is seen to be in compliance with the ISSR regulations before starting work at School. All volunteer helpers, contractors working regularly during term-time, such as contract catering staff are also vetted. All visitors to the school are signed in and issued with an identity badge.

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff.

We will also do this if an individual move from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

- We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult.

- Where the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. that no action or inaction occurred but the present risk that it could was significant).
- Where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.
- If there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009.
- If the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left.

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors and visitors

We will ensure that any regular contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity.
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.
- The school may obtain a DBS check for self-employed contractors or verify a valid DBS check already obtained by the contractor through a registered umbrella body, where appropriate.
- We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than necessary.

The school will take a proportionate and risk-based approach when determining whether contractors, visitors and other adults attending the site require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The level of check required will depend on the nature of the activity, the opportunity for contact with children, whether that contact is supervised, and whether the work falls within the scope of regulated activity. Where a visitor will have no contact with children, it is unlikely that a DBS check will be required. Appropriate supervision and safeguarding arrangements will be in place where required.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances. We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

When services are delivered by a third party or agency, education or otherwise, on the school site, we will follow the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service and check

that the person presenting themselves is the same person on whom appropriate checks have been made.

Our lettings and visitors' policies will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with and in the presence of children at any time. Community users organising activities for children are aware of and understand the need for compliance with the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.

We will carry out appropriate vetting checks on visiting speakers. Our school operates pre-employment check procedure. We hold a Single Central Record (SCR) which demonstrates we have carried out the range of checks required by law on our staff.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification (Regulations) 2018 and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check without barred list information, where appropriate, for volunteers who are not engaging in regulated activity, but who have regular opportunities for contact with children.
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity.
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification (Regulations) 2018 and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual fall outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our

assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Proprietary Body

All will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information. They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity. This is renewed every 3 years. The school may undertake periodic re-checks in accordance with Polaris policy and risk assessment.

- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK i.e. Right to work in the UK.

Adults who supervise children on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a child under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Appendix 33 - Allegations of abuse made against staff

Low Level Concerns

The school recognises the importance of creating a culture in which concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school can be identified and shared openly and promptly.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

• Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct; or
• Does not meet the allegations threshold but may indicate that an adult has behaved in a way that causes a sense of unease or concern.

All low-level concerns should be reported promptly to the Head Teacher. Where the concern relates to the Head Teacher, it should be reported to the Proprietor. The Head Teacher (or Proprietor where appropriate) will consider whether concerns raised meet the threshold for consultation with or referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with local procedures.

Low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately to help identify patterns of concerning behaviour and to ensure that appropriate action is taken where necessary.

Concerns that meet the harms threshold will be managed in accordance with the procedures set out below for allegations against staff.

This section applies to all safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to adults working in or on behalf of the school, including employees, volunteers, trainee teachers, agency staff, contractors, supply staff, governors and proprietors. Where concerns relate to a supply teacher, trainee teacher, contractor or other individual employed by a third-party organisation, the school will work in partnership with the employing organisation to ensure safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately and without delay.

It applies where it is alleged that an individual has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way. balancing child protection with support for the individual involved. Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Staff must report any concerns about colleagues to the head teacher. Should the concern be about the head teacher staff should inform the Proprietor using the contact information on the front page of this document.

Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned.
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children.
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children.
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted.
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the organisation.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive.
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence).

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Head Teacher (or Proprietor where the Head Teacher is the subject of the allegation) – the 'case manager' – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or the LA Safeguarding Team. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the LADO – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the LADO as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the LADO (and the police or the LA Safeguarding Team, where necessary). Where the police and/or the LA Safeguarding Team are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the LADO, police and/or the LA Safeguarding Team, as appropriate. We work closely with our own Polaris HR Business partner and Proprietor to ensure that all employment and safeguarding matters are managed appropriately.
- If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the LADO. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the

allegation or concern within 5 working days, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.

- If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the LADO what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.
- If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the LADO to initiate
- the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or the LA Safeguarding Team as appropriate.
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate including trade union representatives.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with the LA Safeguarding Team and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence).
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.
- If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the National College for Teaching and Leadership.
- Where the police are involved, wherever possible the proprietor will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 10 working days.
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days.
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the LADO whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or the LA Safeguarding Team.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's HR Business Partner will discuss with the LADO whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and HR Business Partner will discuss with the LADO whether to refer the matter to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.
The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Head Teacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Head Teacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the child(ren) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and the LA Safeguarding Team., as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared?
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises. It may be necessary for the Head Teacher /DSL to liaise with the Senior Manager within the Company Marketing Team.

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)
- If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual. We will retain these records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.
- This will be held with the file, but in a sealed envelope
- The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

Appendix 34 - Children Missing from Education (CME)

- **Definition:** A child missing from education may be an indicator of **abuse or neglect**.
- **Risks:** Such children are vulnerable to harm, exploitation, and radicalisation.

Children Particularly at Risk

- Those at risk of harm or neglect
- Children from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Children of service personnel families
- Children who run away or go missing from home/care
- Children supervised by the youth justice system
- Children who cease attending school
- Children from new migrant families
- Children subject to child criminal exploitation

Procedures

- Follow procedures for **unauthorised absences** and **repeated missing episodes**.
- Notify the **local authority** if a child leaves school without a new school being named.
- Share relevant information with the local authority when **removing a child's name from the admission register** at non-standard transition points.

Staff Training

Staff will be trained to **recognise signs and triggers** that indicate potential safeguarding concerns, including:

- Travelling to **conflict zones**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
- **Forced marriage**

Immediate Actions

If harm or neglect is suspected:

- Follow **local child protection procedures and discuss with the DSL**
- The DSL will make **reasonable enquiries**
- **Refer immediately** to:
    - Local Authority **Safeguarding Team**
    - **Police**, if the child is in **immediate danger or at risk of harm**

Appendix 35 - Missing Pupils/Children (from school site or site of educational activity)

The main aim is to ensure the child is promptly located and returned to supervision. School staff follow the 'child leaving the school or educational activity site without permission protocol' which is available on request by parents.

Procedure:

1. **Locate the child:**
    - Staff attempt to **locate the child**.
    - If found, a staff member follows **at a safe distance**, keeping the child in sight **without chasing**.
    - Parents are informed as soon as is practical that their child left the school or activity area
    - If not sighted within 30 minutes the local community police teams are informed by school.
2. **High-risk situations:**
    - If the child is **highly vulnerable**, concerns exist around **time, weather, or situation**, or the child **cannot be located**:
        - **Police** are notified promptly
        - **Parent/carer** is informed, following the **risk assessment** and the child's **care plan**.

Additional Information:

- Contact details for **Local Authorities** placing pupils/children at the school are **available in Reception** or online.

Appendix 36 - Non-collection of Children

If a child is **not collected at the end of the session/day**:

1. **Contact Attempts:**
    - Attempt to contact the **parent/carer**.
    - Contact other **named individuals** as appropriate (e.g., social worker).
2. **DSL Involvement:**
    - Inform the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, who will **risk assess** the situation based on available information.
3. **Supervision:**
    - A member of the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** remains on site with the child until further provision is made via the **LA Safeguarding Team** or the **Police**.

Appendix 37 - Children Questioning Gender

The school recognises that children questioning their gender may, in some circumstances, be vulnerable to bullying, discrimination, mental health difficulties, exploitation or abuse.

Staff should maintain a child-centred approach and report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The wishes, feelings and best interests of the child will be considered alongside the rights, safety and wellbeing of all children involved.

Any decisions relating to support arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of safeguarding, welfare, parental involvement where appropriate, and relevant statutory guidance.

Where requests for support relating to gender questioning are received, the school will consider such requests carefully, involve parents/carers unless doing so would place the child at risk of harm, and ensure that decisions, actions and safeguarding considerations are appropriately recorded.

The DSL will be involved in any case where safeguarding concerns are identified or where additional safeguarding oversight is required.

Staff should have regard to the Department for Education's guidance Gender Questioning Children: Non-Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges in England and any subsequent updates when considering requests for support and making decisions relating to safeguarding and welfare.

Review Dates

This Procedure will be reviewed every year unless there are legal, regulatory, or business reasons for earlier updates.

Date:	Version:	Summary of Changes:
September 2025	01	Updated in line with KCSIE
August 2026	02	Updated in line with KCSIE
October 2026	03	Updated in line with KCSIE, Information Sharing Guidance and the revised Prevent Duty Guidance.