

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Southend High School for Girls Academy Trust





## Southend High School for Girls Academy Trust

<b>Governor Policy 5S</b>	<b>Author:</b>	<b>Authorised by: Board of Governors</b>
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### Reviewing authority:

<b>Date for review</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Reviewed by Board</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Date of new edition</b>
Sept 2018	Full Governors		*			
Sept 2019	Full Governors		*			
Nov 2019	Full Governors		*			
Jan 2020	Full Governors		*			
Sep 2020	Full Governors			*		
Sep 2021	Full Governors			*		
May 2022	Full Governors			*		
Sep 2022	Full Governors	13/09/2022		*		
Sep 2023	Full Governors	12/9/2023		*		
Sep 2024	Full Governors	24/09/2024		*		

**A = accepted with no amendments**

**B = accepted with amendments**

**C = new edition created**



## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

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## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Children's Services, Southend on sea City Council: Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.  OUT OF OFFICE HOURS: To make URGENT referrals	01702 215007  <a href="mailto:mash@southend.gov.uk">mash@southend.gov.uk</a> (unsecure)  0345 606 1212
SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR and LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO):  SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR:	<a href="mailto:LADO@southend.gov.uk">LADO@southend.gov.uk</a> 01702 534 591 ALLISON FRANCIS 01702 534539 <a href="mailto:allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk">allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk</a>  SHARON LANGSTON 01702 534591 safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk



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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Southend High School for Girls is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all students and to creating a culture of vigilance to safeguard and protect all in its care. We expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interests of the child. Staff should share any concerns they have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, it should be remembered 'that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and raising concerns to the DSL'.

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

## 2. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2024\)](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners. This policy is also based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)



- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or gender questioningphobic bullying; or racial discrimination

### 3. DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

**Child protection** is part of this definition 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 and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and 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.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

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

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping children safe in education (2024) (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

### 4. EQUALITY STATEMENT



Southend High School for Girls acknowledges that certain students, for example those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), certain health conditions and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and an increased risk of abuse. They may have communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening. The school will ensure that students with SEND will be supported to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon. All staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the student's disability and be aware that students with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing from education
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. At Southend High School for Girls, we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by providing a safe space for them to speak with Pastoral Support Officers.

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff will:

- Read and understand part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping children safe in education (2024), and review this guidance at least annually. Staff will also read:
  - Staff Code of Conduct
  - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
  - School's Behaviour Policy
  - School Policy for Children Missing Education
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance and undertake an assessment (a record is kept).
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents.



- Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBT to speak out and share their concerns
- Raise any concerns that they may have about a child in the school promptly and by following the procedures in section 6

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy and the safeguarding response to children who are absent from school
- The early help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or gender questioning (LGBT) can be targeted by other children
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection
- The school's filtering and monitoring system and their role within the operation and review of this system. In addition staff must receive cyber-security training and be aware of their responsibilities within keeping themselves and the school safe online

Staff should share any concerns they have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, it should be remembered that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and raising concerns with the DSL'. (see KCSIE 2024 paragraph 19)

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding and child protection at Southend High School for Girls. The key role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- manage referrals from school staff or any others from outside the school
- work with external agencies and professionals on matter of safety and safeguarding
- undertake training
- raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the staff and parents
- ensure that child protection information is transferred to the student's new school



- be aware of students who have a social worker\*
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school and college leadership staff as appropriate
- work with others to ensure that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are functional and effective

Our DSLs are Mr Lee Boney, Deputy Headteacher and Mrs Anna Leman, Assistant Headteacher. The DSLs also keeps the Headteacher informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

*\* The Local Authority Virtual Headteacher has responsibility to promote the education of children who have a social worker*

### **The Governing Board**

The governing board will approve this policy at each review and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, where appropriate.

### **The Headteacher**

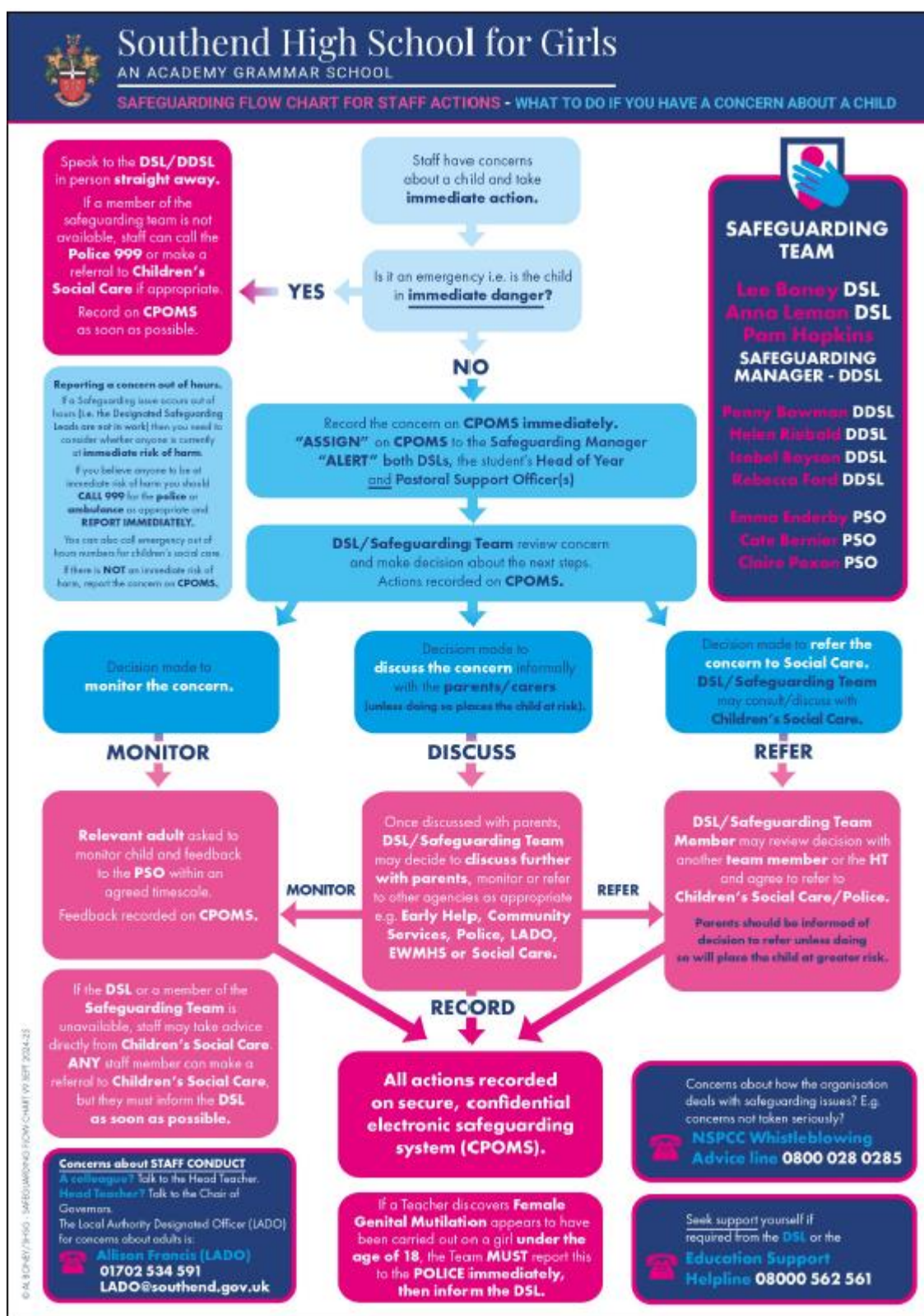
The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Communicating this policy via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate



## 6. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CONCERNS AND TAKING ACTION

Staff, volunteers and governors should follow the procedures set out in the flow chart below in the event of a safeguarding concern about a child





**If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger**


If you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger and the DSL or Deputies are unavailable, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Any individual may refer to social Care/police where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child. Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher. If, for any reason, nobody is available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. The link below is the GOV.UK webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>



If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should follow the advice below:




# Southend High School for Girls

AN ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL


## GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES

### WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE:




**STAY CALM AND REASSURE**

**Stay calm** and **reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. An abused or neglected child or young person needs to know that you are available to help them. Showing shock may make the child feel anxious or discourage them from continuing their disclosure. A calm response reassures that what has happened is not so bad and can be worked through.




**LISTEN**

**Listen** carefully and actively to the child. At this stage there is no necessity to ask questions. Let the child guide the pace.




**NEVER PROMISE TO KEEP A SECRET OR CONFIDENTIALITY**

**NEVER promise to keep a secret or confidentiality.** You have a duty to ensure the information is passed on to the Safeguarding Team and possibly other agencies in order to keep the child safe. If a child requests confidentiality, use a 'prepared' response, such as 'I'm really concerned about what you have told me and I have a responsibility to help ensure that you are safe. To help make sure you are safe, I have to tell someone (name person) who will know how to help us to do this'. **Make sure the child understands what will happen next with their information.**




**GATHER FACTS - DO NOT INVESTIGATE**

**Gather facts - Do not investigate.** If you need to clarify what is being said and whether the child is at risk, ask open questions. You may wish to use the acronym '**TED**' as a reminder that the child can be encouraged to: '**Tell**', '**Explain**' and '**Describe**' the concern. You could use **what, when, who, how, where, do you want to tell me anything else?** Etc, but only to the point of clarification being achieved. **AVOID** the question '**why?**' as this can imply guilt/responsibility on the child.




**REPORT ON CPOMS**

**Record on CPOMS.** Record factually what the child has told you or what you have observed as soon as possible on **CPOMS**. Make sure to include the **date, time and words used by the child**. Failure to accurately record information or writing down your 'interpretation' of the child's account may lead to inadmissible evidence. If you have seen **bruising** or an **injury**, use the **CPOMS** body map to record details.




**TELL A MEMBER OF THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

**Tell a member of the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible** but do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another staff member. This is stressful for the child. The more times a child is asked to tell their story the greater the chance of the facts becoming lost and any subsequent investigation being compromised.



**BE SUPPORTIVE**

**Be supportive** - Maintain contact with the child. They have trusted you enough to '**tell**', will need to know that they are not rejected as a result and may need continued support.



**SEEK SUPPORT IF NEEDED**

**Seek support if needed.** Ensure that you have support for yourself in managing the information you have received. You can speak to a member of the **Leadership Team** or Call the **Educational Support Helpline for Professionals** on: **08000 562 561**.

**REMEMBER: If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE: 999**

**SHSG Designated Staff for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

<b>Lee Boney</b> Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ext: 113	<b>Anna Leman</b> Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ext: 114	<b>Pam Hopkins</b> Safeguarding Manager/Deputy DSL	Ext: 262	<b>Penny Bowman</b> Deputy DSL	Ext: 111
<b>Helen Riebold</b> Deputy DSL	Ext: 236	<b>Isobel Boyson</b> Deputy DSL	Ext: 278	<b>Rebecca Ford</b> HeadCo	Ext: 201		

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**If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)**

Follow the flow chart on the first page of this policy. If in exceptional circumstances the DSL or Deputy is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

If early help is appropriate, the DSL or member of the pastoral team will lead on liaising with other agencies. If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL or other appropriate member of the safeguarding/pastoral team will make the referral or support you to do so. If you make a referral directly you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

**If you have concerns about extremism**

Follow the reporting concerns flow chart on the first page of this policy. The DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team. The Essex reporting link can be found here: [Refer someone to the Prevent Team | Essex Police](#) The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a student. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

**If you discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) has taken place or a student is at risk of FGM**

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Any teacher who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a student under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a student is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine students.

## **7. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children. The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests. Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record- keeping, and allegations of abuse against staff.

## **8. NOTIFYING PARENTS/CARERS**

Wherever possible/appropriate, the school will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to children's social care, with parents/carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the children's social care and/or police for advice on



when to share information with parents/carers. If the child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. The school may seek advice from social care about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Deputies, will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to children's social care, ensuring they contact the correct Local Authority for the child.

## **9. RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING**

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions made are recorded electronically on CPOMS. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible using CPOMS, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or appropriate member of the safeguarding team) will then decide on appropriate action and record this in CPOMS accordingly.

Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. The school follows guidance set out in 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services' (DfE, 2024). Keeping children safe in education (2024) states 'The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.'

## **10. TRANSFER OF CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS**

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main student file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school where possible and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

Where a student joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment. Any paper child protection records received are scanned and uploaded to CPOMS and then shredded. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the student's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting.

## **11. CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING**

Southend High School for Girls acknowledges the importance of considering wider environmental factors in a child's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare. This is known as Contextual Safeguarding and is referred to in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018); and in Keeping Children safe in Education (2024). The school assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its pupils. KCSIE (2024), paragraph 21 says:

'All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.'

### **Opportunities to Learn about Safeguarding**

Children at Southend High School for Girls are taught about how they can keep themselves and



others safe, including online. To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

## **12. ONLINE SAFETY AND THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY (Including filtering and monitoring)**

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but it also presents challenges and risks. We aim to equip our students with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as 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
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as 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
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

**To meet our aims and address the risks above we will:**

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
  - To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Train staff on online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year including training about cyber security.
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings.
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems. Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring includes:
  - Physical monitoring
  - Live software monitoring
  - Monitoring user logs
  - Monitoring individual devices
- ensure that any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.
- Review, each year, our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure that they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. This will be carried out by our



designated safeguarding lead, along with our IT team and a governor, They also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.

- Ensure our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns. This includes annual cybersecurity training.
- Ensure risk management plans are put into place for those most vulnerable to the negative impacts of the online world

	<b>Content</b> Child as recipient	<b>Contact</b> Child as participant	<b>Conduct</b> Child as actor	<b>Contract</b> Child as consumer
<b>Aggressive</b>	Violent, gory, graphic, racist, hateful and extremist content	Harassment, stalking, hateful behaviour, unwanted surveillance	Bullying, hateful or hostile peer activity e.g. trolling, exclusion, shaming	Identity theft, fraud, phishing, scams, gambling, blackmail, security risks
<b>Sexual</b>	Pornography (legal and illegal), sexualization of culture, body image norms	Sexual harassment, sexual grooming, generation and sharing of child sexual abuse material	Sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual messages, sexual pressures	Sextortion, trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, streaming child sexual abuse
<b>Values</b>	Age-inappropriate user-generated or marketing content, mis/disinformation	Ideological persuasion, radicalization and extremist recruitment	Potentially harmful user communities e.g. self-harm, anti-vaccine, peer pressures	Information filtering, profiling bias, polarisation, persuasive design
<b>Cross-cutting</b>	Privacy and data protection abuses, physical and mental health risks, forms of discrimination			

To minimise inappropriate use of the internet through pupils' own data plans, as a school we educate pupils about how to stay safe online, and how to report concerns should they see something online that makes them feel uncomfortable, upset or distressed. Students sign a mobile phone contract at the start of the academic year.

The remote teaching and learning policy sets out how children will be kept safe when they are accessing 'online learning' whilst out-of-school.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones or cameras. We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school. Please refer to the student mobile phone policy and staff code of conduct for further details. Please refer to the student mobile phone code of conduct.

### Filtering and monitoring

- Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring can include:
  - Physical monitoring in classrooms
  - Live software monitoring
  - Monitoring user logs
  - Monitoring individual devices
- We make sure that any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.
- Each year (at least) our designated safeguarding lead, along with our IT team and a governor, review our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure that they effectively prevent access to



harmful or inappropriate content. They also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.

- All our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns

All our staff have taken part in annual cybersecurity training

### **13. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES (SEND)**

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. We recognise the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

At Southend High School for Girls we provide extra pastoral support and attention for these children through:

- curricular opportunities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation
- an ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community
- liaison with other agencies and specialist services such as the Educational Psychologist service, Speech and language therapy service, our intervention tutor and mentors and St Christopher's school which supports the pupil

### **14. STUDENTS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER**

At Southend High School for Girls we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most students. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health. We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

Where we are aware that a student has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

### **15. LOOKED-AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN**

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads
- The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to



- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how student premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

The Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children is Mr L Boney.

## **16. MENTAL HEALTH**

All staff at Southend High School for Girls are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern. Mental Health concerns are logged on CPOMS. The school's Senior Mental Health Lead is Helene Marcel ([Hmarcel@shsg.org](mailto:Hmarcel@shsg.org)), if staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## **17. CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE AND INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARRASSMENT BETWEEN STUDENTS**

We recognise that children are capable of abusing other children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We also recognise the gendered nature of child on child abuse. However, all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns.

Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including nudes and semi nudes)

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student:

- You must record the allegation on CPOMS and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. Risk assessments will include any actions required to make the location safer.
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services EWMHS, if appropriate

### **Impact on any siblings**

It is important to understanding intra-familial harms and identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

The victim may ask the school or college not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim



does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies. For example, the public task basis may apply, where the overall purposes is to perform a public interest task or exercise official authority, and the task or authority has a clear basis in law. Advice should be sought from the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who should consider the following:

- parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care, and the police
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

Ultimately, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

KCSIE 2024 pages 112-113 sets out in greater detail how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. We will follow the steps in this guidance when responding to incidents.

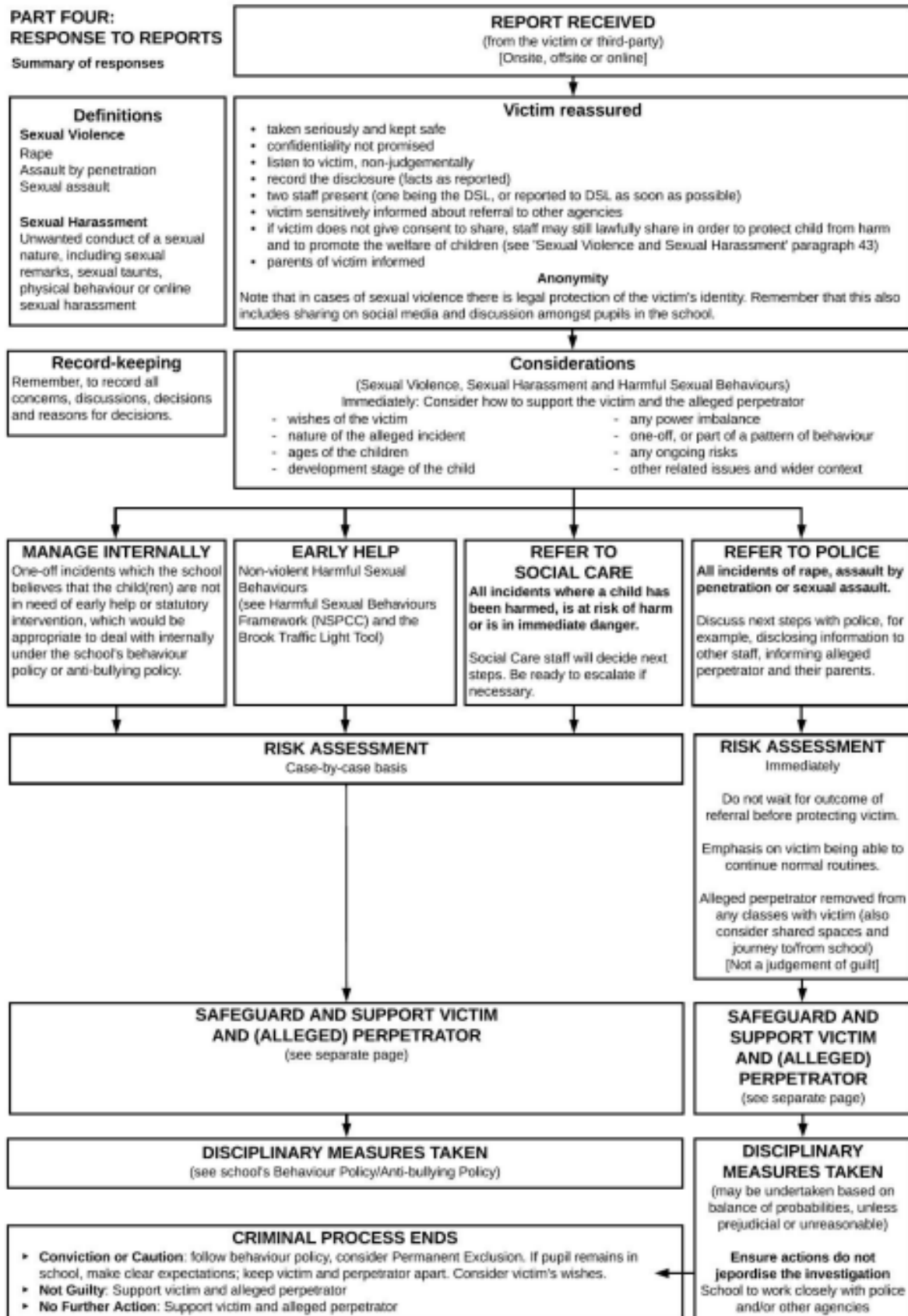
We will minimise the risk of child on child abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring students know they can talk to staff confidentially
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

The school will follow the flow chart below in response to a report of sexual harassment or violence between children. The school sanctions regarding harmful sexual behaviour are outlined in the consequences ladder under section 5. Section 5 behaviours are classified as 'Gross Misconduct/Illegal Activity'. Harmful sexual behaviours result in a parent meeting with the Headteacher and Year group SLT Link. The student will receive an external exclusion. Some harmful sexual behaviour offences may lead to permanent exclusion.



**PART FOUR:  
RESPONSE TO REPORTS**  
Summary of responses





## 18. SHARING NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES

In cases where nudes or semi-nudes have been shared, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (December 2020) and the Government Guidance Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes: Advice for Education Settings working with children and young people.

[New UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes - Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident where a student has shared nude or semi nude images (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a student to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the student to delete it
- Ask the student(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the student(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the student(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

### Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to student(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the students involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the students involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident. See [[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) ANNEX A] for further information on assessing adult-involved incidents
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)



- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any student in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a student is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

#### **Further review by the DSL**

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks. They will hold interviews with the students involved (if appropriate). If at any point in the process there is a concern that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

#### **Informing parents**

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the student at risk of harm and/or social care/police have advised the school not to.

#### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialling 101.

#### **Recording incidents**

All incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded on CPOMS.

#### **Curriculum coverage**

Students are taught about the issues surrounding sharing nudes and semi nudes as part of our Relationships and Sex Education programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to sharing nudes and semi nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Students also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

### **19. STUDENT ABSENCE**

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children. We monitor absence carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.



In response to the guidance in Keeping children safe in education (2024) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
  - a. leave school to be home educated
  - b. move away from the school's location
  - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
  - e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority. When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

### Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phone call.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

If a child is absent from school the following procedures will be followed:

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7), by calling the school's absence line, which can be contacted via 01702 583081. They should provide details of who the pupil is and a clear, unambiguous reason why they are unable to attend school e.g. Has high temperature and extreme nausea, and not, is sick/unwell/ill. In addition, please say whether you expect them to be in school the follow day or not.
- The school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not had any communication.
- **Failure by parents/carers to contact the school or respond to staff calls and other forms of communication regarding absence may trigger a home visit from school staff, a local authority representative, the police or children's social care. As a school we have a duty of care to our pupils which includes knowing they are safe if they do not arrive at school. We will never assume that a child is at home unwell.**
- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, for example medical evidence is not provided for the illness after the 5<sup>th</sup> day of absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.
- Parents/carers must contact the school on every further day of absence, again by 9:00 am, unless specific medical evidence has been provided (e.g., medical certificate) **and** the school has confirmed that this is no longer a requirement.
- Parents/carers must ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible following an absence.
- Where a child has been absent for five days a home visit/MsTeams online meeting may be arranged and carried out to ensure that the child is where the school believes them to be.
- if the school is informed that a pupil is moving out of the borough and the parent/carer has



provided the school with the destination details, the school will wait 10 working days before making a CME referral to give time for the pupil to start the destination school and the CTF to be requested.

- If the school is informed that the pupil is moving to a different country a series of safeguarding activities will be carried out to ensure the wellbeing of the pupil.
- If the whereabouts of a pupil is not known then the school will make reasonable enquiries within a 10-working day period. These reasonable enquiries include:
  - conducting home visits
  - contacting the parent via letter/ phone/email
  - contact the emergency contacts that school hold for the pupil to try to ascertain the family whereabouts
  - contact local schools if they know a sibling attends.

Following the school making reasonable enquiries a CME referral will be made.

As a school we have a duty of care to our pupils which includes knowing they are safe if they do not arrive at school. We will never assume that a child is at home unwell, until we have been provided with a reason for the absence, or absence has been requested in advance.

### **Moving Abroad**

Where a parent notifies the school that their family are going to move abroad, the school will take effective safeguarding steps to ensure that the information that has been received is a true record of what the family intend to do. Staff meet with the family and the student (separately) and ask the following questions:

- Do parents have a clear and settled plan?
- Can they provide a forwarding address in the new country?
- Does the child know where they are going and why?
- Does the child's understanding match what the parents have said?
- Is the child fearful of the move?
- What are friends of the child saying?

## **20. INTERAGENCY WORKING**

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any child protection conference called for children on the school roll. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). Whoever attends will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference. If a child is subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings.

## **21. VISITOR PROCEDURES**

All visitors to the school (including contractors) must only enter and leave the school via the main reception area. Southend High School for Girls operates a colour coded lanyard safeguarding system for all adults on site.

- BLACK lanyards are worn by all staff
- YELLOW lanyards are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked visitors.
- RED lanyards are for visitors who have not been DBS checked and cannot be left unaccompanied with children or at any time whilst they are on school premises.

If the visitor presents their DBS certificate on arrival, reception staff will check the certificate and record the visitor name and certificate number in the confidential log book behind reception. The DBS certificate must only be photocopied with the visitor's permission. Visitors must present their DBS certificate or will have had their DBS checked in advance in order to walk around the school site unsupervised.



For most regular professional visitors (counsellors/social workers/school nurse/school improvement partners) written confirmation and DBS details will be provided to SHSG and checked in advance. Reception staff will check the list at reception and/or with the HR Manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Learning Manager/member of staff who has arranged for the person to visit the school. They will confirm if this a regular visitor and that their details are held on school records. These visitors will be issued with a YELLOW lanyard and may be on site unaccompanied.

Posters around school inform staff and students to be vigilant and report any unsupervised visitor wearing a red lanyard to a member of the safeguarding team.

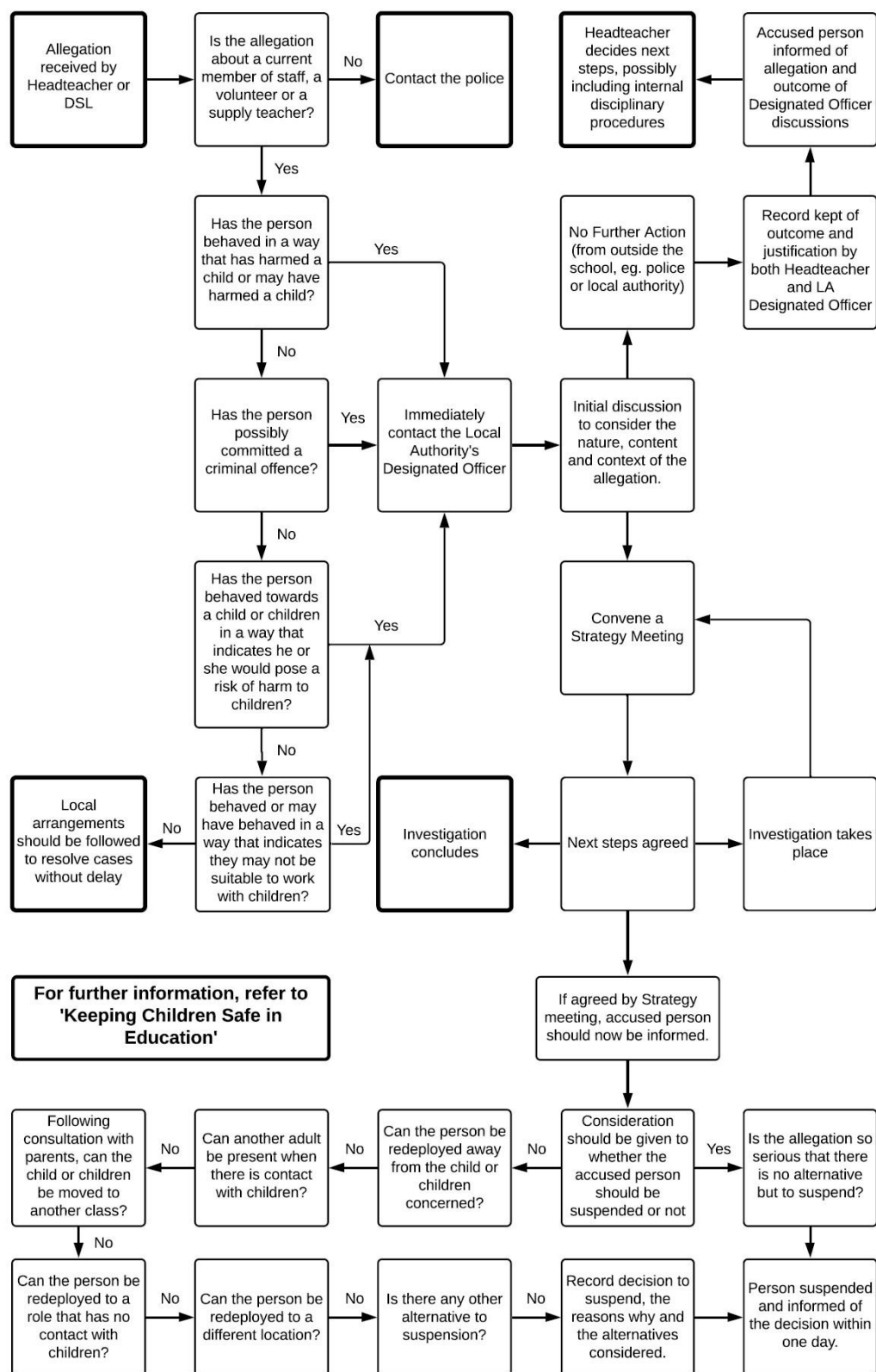
All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise students or staff.

## **22. USE OF REASONABLE FORCE**

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. The Department for Education believes that the adoption of a 'no contact policy' at a school can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their students. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.



## 23. ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST STAFF





### **Allegations that may meet the harms threshold**

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If the school is in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult out local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### **Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved**

Suspension of the accused 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 there 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

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's personnel adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

### **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, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **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)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

### **Procedure for dealing with allegations**

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below



- Discuss the allegation with the designated officer 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 children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – 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 designated officer 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 designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services 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 designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. 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 1 working day, 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 designated officer 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 designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services 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 considering what other support is appropriate.
- 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 children's social care services 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 (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- 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 Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school 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.



### **Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff**

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

### **Timescales**

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

### **Specific actions**

#### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer 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 children's social care services.

#### **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 school will 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 school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency 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, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

### **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

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 children's social care services, 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

### **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.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other 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.



## References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

## Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer 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

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

## Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

## Low level concerns about the behaviour of an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteers or contractors

At Southend High School for Girls we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the headteacher without delay; any concerns about the headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted by email [nslaughter@shsg.org](mailto:nslaughter@shsg.org).

Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff, supply teachers, volunteers or contractors should be reported to the headteacher/principal.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

The headteacher/principal has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

## Allegations



It is an allegation if the person\* has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (also includes behaviour outside the school).

(\*Person could be anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.)

Allegations should be reported to the LADO 'without delay'.

Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school or college, or a combination of these.

### **Low-level Concerns**

Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person\* has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher/principal should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name\* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

(\* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.



If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

## **24. WHISTLEBLOWING**

Where there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in the school, staff should refer to the Whistle-blowing Policy.

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- an legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government, the number is 0808 800 5000.

## **25. TRAINING**

### **All staff**

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems, their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners. All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through staff briefings) as required.

Induction training is mandatory and includes:

- Keeping children safe in education (2024) Part One and Annex B
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings. (Safer Recruitment Consortium April 2020).
- the child protection policy
- the behaviour policy
- the staff code of conduct
- the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education;
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

### **The DSLs and Deputies**

The DSLs and Deputies will attend training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All other staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

### **Governors**



Members of the Governing Body of the school take part in mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that they can assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective. This training is regularly updated.

### **Recruitment Interview panels**

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process.

## **26. USE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the school premises, the Headteacher and Governing Body will seek written assurance that the organisation concerned meets the guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition' (DfE, 2023) i.e has appropriate policies and procedures in place with regard to safeguarding students and child protection and that relevant safeguarding checks have been made in respect of staff and volunteers. If this assurance is not achieved, then an application to use premises will be refused.

Also, whilst the provider is responsible for their own safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, the school will follow their own safeguarding and child protection procedures where they have concerns about the out-of-school provider. This may include contacting the local authority designated officer in the case of concerns about adults.

## **27. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is for all teachers, support staff, parents, governors, volunteers, visitors to the school site, contractors and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school. It should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Online safety Policy



## APPENDIX 1: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

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

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

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

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

All staff should be aware that child sexual and child criminal exploitation are forms of child abuse.

Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. (KCSIE 2024 paragraph 26)



## APPENDIX 2: SAFER RECRUITMENT AND DBS CHECKS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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.

### 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 (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- 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
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. Where available, these will include:
  - For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants
  - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked
- 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

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

### Regulated activity

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

### 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 moves 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:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or



- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); This includes whether they have:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
  - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- 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**

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). 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

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

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.

### **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.

### **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
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

### **Governors**

All governors, trustees, local governors and members 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. All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:



- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under [section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#)). [Section 128 checks are only required for local governors if they have retained or been delegated any management responsibilities.]
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

### **Staff working in alternative provision settings**

Where we place a student with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

### **Students staying with host families**

Where the school makes arrangements for students to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people. Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

## **APPENDIX 3: SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES FOR MORE DETAILS REFER TO KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2024**

### **Children who are absent from school (formerly known as Children missing education (CME)).**

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
  - a. leave school to be home educated
  - b. move away from the school's location
  - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards);  
or
  - e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.



There are many circumstances where a child may become absent from school, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

### **Child criminal exploitation**

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

### **County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks



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

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

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

More information can be found in:

- Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

**It is worth noting that CSE includes young people aged 16 and 17 who are over the age of sexual consent.**

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues. Potential vulnerabilities include:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- Recent bereavement or loss



- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- Sexual identity.

More information can be found in:

- Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

## **Domestic abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

(a) physical or sexual abuse

(b) violent or threatening behaviour

(c) controlling or coercive behaviour

(d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse

People are 'personally connected' when they are or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

(The definition can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

Southend High School for Girls is part of [Operation Encompass](#). This means that if police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance



with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

### **So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- a visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

### **Symptoms of FGM**

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (for example, withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

### **Female Genital Mutilation reporting procedures**

Keeping children safe in education (2024), paragraph 42 says 'whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the



profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police'. It is recommended that the teacher makes a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

In most cases 'reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, and best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day'.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure (unlike in the medical profession where an observation may have been made).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

The procedures below set out what information is needed, in order to make a report.

See here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information-accessible-version#reporting>

### **Legal age of consent for marriage and forced marriage.**

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 came into force in February 2023 means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. Any concerns that students may be getting married should be referred to the DSL.

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the student about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk)
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

### **Preventing radicalisation**

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.



We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

The DSL will use the reporting form found here: [Refer someone to the Prevent Team | Essex Police](#)

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

**Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups

**Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces

**Terrorism** is an action that:

- Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people
- Causes serious damage to property
- Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

### Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a student is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves



- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations
- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- Advocating violence towards others

### **Private Fostering**

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility. School staff should notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

### **Child on child abuse**

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child on child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to):

- abuse within intimate partner relationships
- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm



- sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

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

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

### **Sexual violence**

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 available at [Legislation.gov.uk](http://Legislation.gov.uk) as described below:

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

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

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

### **Sexual harassment**

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment.

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

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual “jokes” or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- online sexual harassment

This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence It may include:

- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos
- sexualised online bullying
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media



- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
- upskirting

### **Upskirting**

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.