Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Southend High School for Girls Academy Trust

Southend High School for Girls Academy Trust

Governor Policy 5S	Author: Jude Nzemeke	Authorised by: Board of Governors
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Reviewing authority:

Date for Review	Reviewed By	Date of Review	A	B	C	Date of New Edition
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Sep 2026	Full Governors	29/09/2026	*			

A = accepted with no amendments
B = accepted with amendments
C = new edition created

Safeguarding Contact Information

Key Safeguarding Contacts (school, college, trust)

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role
Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Jude Nzemeke Pam Hopkins
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Helen Riebold Penny Bowman Isobel Boyson Rob Prior
Safeguarding & Attendance Manager	Pam Hopkins
Special Educational Need Coordinator (SENCo)	Rebecca McMahon
Designated Teacher for Looked After/Previously Looked After Children	Jude Nzemeke
Senior Lead(s) for Mental Health and Wellbeing	Helene Marcel
Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHE)/Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Lead	Ruth Marx
Senior Leadership Digital Lead	Jude Nzemeke
Data Protection Officer	Emma King

The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) can be contacted via safeguarding@shsg.org and the main school office on 01702 588852.

All other staff can be contacted via office@shsg.org or 01702 588852.

Designated Safeguarding Governor	Terry Myers	tmyers@shsg.org
Chair of Governors	Lianne Lambert	llambert@shsg.org

SAFEGUARDING OUR STUDENTS: AN IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL STAFF, STUDENTS AND VISITORS

Southend High School for Girls

AN ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION TEAM



Mr J Nzemeke
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs P Hopkins
Safeguarding & Attendance Manager



Mrs P Bowman
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Miss H Riebold
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Ms I Boyson
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mr R Prior
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Enderby
Pastoral Support Officer Lower School ~ Year 7



Mrs Bernier
Pastoral Support Officer Lower School ~ Years 8 & 9



Mrs Poxon
Pastoral Support Officer Middle School ~ Years 10 & 11



Mrs Stafford
Pastoral Support Officer Sixth Form

If you have a concern about a child or young person, DON'T IGNORE IT - REPORT IT
The safety of children and young people at Southend High School for Girls is EVERYONE'S responsibility.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN:

You have a concern about a pupil in the school.
TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION.

Is it an emergency? - i.e. is the child in **IMMEDIATE DANGER?**

YES

Speak in person to the **DSL/DDSL** staight away.

If a member of the safeguarding team is not available, staff can call the **POLICE 999** or make a referral to **Children's Social Care** if appropriate.

Record on **CPOMS as soon as possible** afterwards.

NO

Record the concern on **CPOMS.**

"ASSIGN" on **CPOMS** to: **Mrs P Hopkins**
Safeguarding & Attendance Manager.

"ALERT" Mr J Nzemeke (DSL), the student's **Head of Year** and **Pastoral Support Officer(s).**

FOR HELP OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL
NSPCC: 0808 800 500

Report online abuse: CEOP REPORT ceop.police.uk

All disclosures must be reported, **CONFIDENTIALITY MUST NEVER BE PROMISED TO THE CHILD.**

All safeguarding or child protection concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Team through **CPOMS.**

ANY member of staff can contact **Children's Social Care or the Police** directly in an emergency where no member of the Safeguarding Team can be contacted.

Allegations or concerns regarding staff/adults must be made in person directly to the **Headteacher**. If the concern is regarding the **Headteacher**, report to the **Chair of Governors.**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for concerns about adults can be contacted at:
LADO@southend.gov.uk Telephone: 01702 534 591

PREVENT DUTY To raise concerns about a young person vunerable to Radicalisation/Extremism:
prevent@essex.police.uk

In an EMERGENCY call the POLICE 999

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CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE: Any member of staff can contact Children's Social Care directly in an emergency where no member of the safeguarding team can be contacted.
Southend: 01702 215 007 **Essex: 0345 603 7627** **Redbridge: 0208 708 3885** **Barking & Dagenham: 0208 227 3811**
Newham: 0203 373 4600 **Thurrock: 01375 652 802** **Tower Hamlets: 0207 364 5006** **Waltham Forest: 0208 496 2310**

Key Safeguarding Southend City Local Authority Contacts

Referrals to Children's Social Care in the Local Authority	Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person, a referral should be made through the Southend Children's Services Portal **Out of Hours:** 0345 606 1212
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Where school have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child, they should contact the local authority duty officer (LADO): Email: LADO@southend.gov.uk Tel: 01702 534539
Essex Police	• 999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies • Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) via 101 • Also see *When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges*
Education (Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding)	Email: Servicesforschools@southend.gov.uk Education Safeguarding is led by the Head of Service for Education Performance, Partnership & Safeguarding.
Children Missing from Education	Email: me@southend.gov.uk
Southend Virtual School	Email: Southend Virtual School
School Nursing Team	Email: schoolnursing@southend.gov.uk Tel: 01702 534843

Key Safeguarding National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, children and young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on: • Text 88858 • Tel: 0808 800 5000 • Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Helpline Report Abuse in Education	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance including for non-recent abuse: • Tel: 0800 136 663 • Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice	Free advice and support for professionals concerned about how Child Protection issues are being handled in their organisation: • Tel: 0800 028 0285 • Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
UK Safer Internet Centre professional advice line	Helpline for professionals working with children and young people in the UK with any online safety issues they may face themselves or with children in their care: • Tel: 0844 381 4772 • Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line number	Tel: 0800 789 321

Organisation	Description and contact details
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge, Helpline Tel: 0808 2000247
Prevent Duty	Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line Tel: 0800 789 321 Government advice and trusted resources to help safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and to promote our shared values. Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism Guidance on how to make a Prevent referral: Making a referral to Prevent - GOV.UK
Operation Encompass	Information, resources and e-Learning for schools Home : Operation Encompass
Report harmful online content	• UK Safer Internet Centre – report online harm. A national reporting centre that has been designed to assist anyone in reporting harmful content online • CEOP – to report online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online • Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism
Report Abuse in Education helpline	• Young people who have experienced abuse at school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Services	• Stop it now! For worries about a child's sexual behaviour, 0808 1000 900. Includes Shore which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support. The aim is to prevent harmful sexual behaviours among young people.
Safer Recruitment	Guidance can be found in KCSIE, but further advice on Safer Recruitment for schools and colleges using recruitment and supply agencies can be found within the Better Hiring Institute's Education Supply Chains 'A Better Hiring Toolkit' advice: Better Hiring Toolkit for Education Supply Chains.pdf.
Children missing in Education	Statutory guidance for schools and local authorities, including policy checklist: Children missing education - GOV.UK

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Aims

Southend High School for Girls is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all students and fostering a culture of vigilance. We expect all adults working in our school to share this commitment. Staff take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage students to speak to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interests of the child. Concerns should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is important to remember that some children may not feel ready or able to disclose abuse, exploitation, or neglect — and may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from showing professional curiosity and raising concerns. Safeguarding is woven into the fabric of our school ethos and curriculum, fostering a culture where students feel safe, valued, and empowered to speak up, with protective behaviours and respectful relationships actively taught across all key stages.

Our aims are to ensure:

- Timely and appropriate action to safeguard children's welfare.
- All staff understand their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.
- Staff are trained to recognise and report safeguarding issues.

1.2 Statutory Context

This Child Protection policy enables Southend High School for Girls to carry out its functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in line with key statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- Department for Education's statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities, including:
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998) and Equality Act (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK
- Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023) and The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation (2023)
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Child Protection Procedures

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It is defined in this guidance as the activity undertaken to protect children who are suspected of suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

As defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children

- taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

1.2 School Context: Child Protection Policy Statement

Southend High School for Girls maintains an attitude of ***"it could happen here"*** and a whole school approach to this. We recognise that everyone in the setting has a role to play to keep children safe.

Our School is committed to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which children feel safe, listened to and respected, concerns are taken seriously, staff demonstrate professional curiosity and safeguarding is regarded as everyone's responsibility.

The best interests of the child are at the heart of our work to identify and act swiftly on concerns, share information, and ensure that children feel listened to, are taken seriously, and are safe. We will:

- ensure that all children are safeguarded while on or off school premises
- be proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children face in the wider community and online.
- have a Prevent action plan/risk assessment (this is compliant with Prevent guidance).
- be part of Operation Encompass - a statutory obligation on police forces to share Operation Encompass notifications with schools.
- implement any local or national learning where appropriate, e.g. learning from case reviews or audits.
- ensure that all relevant policies are updated to reflect 'lessons learnt' and consideration given to the wider cultural issues within the school/education setting.
- recognise the vital role we play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements working, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).
- understand our role within local safeguarding arrangements and operate in accordance with the Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding Procedures, including the local Threshold Guidance.

1.3 Responsibilities of ALL adults in the school/setting

ALL adults in the school have a duty to keep children safe by**:**

- providing safe environments, with secure access, where children can learn and develop
- acting in the best interests of children to protect them on and offline
- identifying children who are at risk of harm or have been harmed, or need additional help to keep safe
- taking swift, timely and appropriate action to safeguard children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer harm
- adhering to safe recruitment processes to make sure all adults in the school have the appropriate vetting checks in place
- clearly following managing allegations processes to address any concerns (including low-level concerns) about an adult's behaviour towards a child
- understanding the broader aspects of safeguarding in the context of care and education, such as behaviour, Special Educational Needs (SEN), attendance and educational visits.

The School recognises the strong link between attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing and educational outcomes and will take prompt action where attendance patterns, persistent absence or disengagement indicate possible safeguarding concerns.

All adults in this school follow the SET Procedures, including the suite of safeguarding policies, information, and guidance to support safeguarding for all Southend-on-Sea Schools, as listed below:

- Allegations against staff, volunteers and people in positions of trust who work with children (SET Procedures Part A, Section 7)

- Sharing Information (SET Procedures Part B, Section 3)
- Safer Recruitment (SET Procedures Part B, Section 12)
- Children Missing from Care, Home and Education (SET Procedures Part B, Section 20)
- Children Missing Education Guidance (to further support the SET Procedures chapter) The school will submit referrals made using Children Missing Referral Form
- Code of Conduct for staff
- Code of Conduct for governors in LA maintained schools
- Academy Trust Governance Code
- Attendance Policy
- Discipline and Dismissal at Work policy
- Disciplinary procedure (to support Dismissal at Work policy)
- Dismissals procedures (to support Dismissal at Work policy)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour policy guidance
- Letter of Assurance for visiting council staff (from the respective Head of Service)
    - Education Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding Team
    - Specialist Support Services
    - SEND, Access & Inclusion Team
    - Early Years Services

For students who do not reside Southend City Local Authority, instructions and thresholds for reporting child abuse or safeguarding concerns to their local council will be followed: Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK

Section 2: What is abuse?

2.1 Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child which may be caused by an adult, adults or by another child or children inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. The harm can involve:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- exploitation

Children can be at risk of abuse inside and outside of their home, in their community, inside and outside the school/education setting and online.

Safeguarding issues can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences or going missing from education, serious violence (including county lines), radicalisation, consensual/non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk. Abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events; in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children from a range of risks. Further information on indicators of abuse and neglect, as well as the safeguarding risks noted above, is available in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2026). These include the following risks and include abuse perpetrated by other children, as well as by adults:

- any concerns that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect (or Acts of Omission)
- child on child abuse, absence from school
- bullying, including cyber/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, discriminatory, racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, including misogynistic practices
- harmful sexual behaviours
- sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, and sexual violence between children. Including abusive messaging, upskirting and sharing of sexual imagery
- child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines, modern slavery
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour or behaviours covered by PREVENT duties
- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery
- misuse of artificial intelligence tools, including the creation, sharing or possession of AI-generated content, manipulated images, synthetic media or "deepfake" material which may place children at risk of harm, exploitation, bullying, harassment, abuse or reputational harm
- Online harm may include the creation, sharing or use of manipulated images, impersonation technologies, deepfake content, AI-generated sexual imagery, cyber-enabled abuse, online coercion and harmful online influence.
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship’ abuse)
- substance misuse – drugs and/or alcohol
- gang activity and serious violence, particularly affecting young males who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- domestic abuse
- faith or culture linked abusive practice such as forced marriage, marriage/civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation and so-called ‘honour-based’ abuse or adultification.

- children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom illness is fabricated or induced (FII)
- homelessness

This list correlates with the key priorities outlined in The Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy 2024/2027 that can be found here: Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership – One Page Strategy Summary 2024-27 | Safeguarding Southend Partnership. Further information about abuse and support as collated by the Southend Safeguarding Partnership can be found here: *Information for Children | Safeguarding Southend Partnership*.

2.2 Terminology

For the purposes of this policy, we use the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' as this is in line with KCSIE (2026). As a school we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. We will use language that reflects the child's preference and comfort. In some cases, the individual displaying harmful behaviour may also be vulnerable. While perpetrator(s) is a standard term, we will consider the context and the potential impact of such language, especially when speaking in front of children. Terminology will be chosen sensitively and appropriately on a case-by-case basis.

2.3 Vulnerable students

Southend High School for Girls recognises that some students may face increased safeguarding risks, both on and offline. These students may find it harder to express concerns or disclose abuse. We are committed to ensuring their voices are heard and acted upon. We promote anti-discriminatory practice and ensure all students receive equal protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to students who:

- Have SEND, disabilities, or health conditions
- Are young carers
- Face discrimination due to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Live in challenging circumstances (e.g. temporary housing, domestic violence, substance misuse)
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are affected by mental health issues (their own or within the family)
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing from education
- Are being withdrawn for elective home education

Children with SEND or certain health conditions may face additional safeguarding challenges. We recognise that barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that behaviours, moods, or injuries are related to a child's condition without further exploration.
- Greater vulnerability to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying).
- A disproportionate impact of behaviours such as bullying, without visible outward signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in reporting concerns.

Staff are alert to these barriers and provide extra support through our pastoral and SEND provision.

Being LGBTQ+ is not a safeguarding risk, but these students may be more vulnerable to bullying or abuse. This includes children perceived to be LGBTQ+, regardless of how they identify. We aim to reduce barriers by providing safe spaces and trusted adults—such as our Pastoral Support Officers—so students feel supported and able to speak openly. In line with KCSIE (2026), our safeguarding approach includes specific consideration for gender-questioning children, ensuring

that staff are equipped to respond with sensitivity, support, and awareness of the unique safeguarding risks these students may face.

Where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school, we will follow the principles set out in KCSIE (2026), including that the school will:

- not initiate any action on social transitioning
- not adopt any changes relating to social transitioning unless a decision has been made by the school and parents/carers have been involved
- inform parents/carers of a student's request to socially transition, unless in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might place the student at greater risk than not involving them
- not allow students into facilities designated for the opposite biological sex, including toilets, changing rooms and residential accommodation, with no exceptions.

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. Staff are not expected to be trained to diagnose mental health conditions but may notice behaviours of concern. Mental health concerns are taken seriously. Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff take immediate action.

Section 3: Safeguarding roles and responsibilities

3.1 Training

All staff and governors will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe, as set out in KCSIE (2026), by receiving:

- safeguarding training at induction
- safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities and which is regularly updated (including training to level 3 and local requirements for the Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- safeguarding training which will include awareness of emerging safeguarding risks including online harms, generative artificial intelligence, synthetic or deepfake content, cyber-enabled abuse, exploitation and technology-assisted abuse
- online safety knowledge and for children to be taught about safeguarding, including in relation to keeping themselves safe online and digital literacy.
- attendance information, with dedicated attendance training for any staff with a specified attendance function in their role
- data protection information (including recording protocols) and cyber security, relevant to the roles staff undertake
- training for those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children including Safer Recruitment
- support and training for those involved with Managing Allegations against staff.

All staff and governors know and understand their responsibilities and have knowledge of school policies and procedures related to safeguarding. **Staff are professionally curious**. They know and understand the safeguarding response to all forms of abuse (including child-on-child abuse), even if a child is unable or unwilling to disclose abuse. A lack of disclosure should not prevent staff from acting on the signs or indicators of harm. All staff know the roles and names of the key staff in school for safeguarding: Designated Safeguarding Leads, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, the designated teacher for looked after children and the senior mental health lead.

All staff and governors at Southend High School for Girls will read and understand the following documents:

- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (reviewed annually).
- The staff/governors Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Staff sign a declaration each academic year confirming they have reviewed the guidance and completed the safeguarding assessment (records are kept).

All staff receive regular safeguarding and Child Protection updates, including online safety (for example, via 'Twilight' training sessions, staff e-bulletin, staff briefing/meetings) as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively, which is recorded and monitored by a Senior member of staff to ensure all training is up to date.

Staff build by their expertise by completing safeguarding training and through managing safeguarding concerns daily and seeking information from safeguarding professionals when appropriate to do so. Staff report concerns about a child promptly, following the procedures outlined in this policy. Staff contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

3.2 Staff induction

Staff and governors will have an induction appropriate to their roles in line with any advice from local safeguarding partners. New staff will also receive information about systems within the school which support safeguarding, including online safety and copies of policies. All staff undergo safeguarding

and Child Protection training, including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction.

Section 4: School accountability responsibilities

4.1 Governance

As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) part 2 'The Management of Safeguarding' the governing body exercise strategic leadership oversight of all aspects of safeguarding in the school, in line with statutory requirements. Safeguarding is a standing item at all governing body meetings and recorded in the minutes. To support this a safeguarding audit is undertaken every two years to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and processes.

The Governor who takes leadership responsibility for the establishment to follow local arrangements is Terry Myers.

4.2 The Governing Body Responsibilities

They will ensure:

- compliance to the Equality Act (2010) and the Human Rights Act (1998).
- that the school adheres to the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- appropriate policies and procedures are in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare in line with Section 157/175 of the Education Act.
- an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school leadership team, is appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- a clear job description for the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in place which clearly sets out their lead responsibility for safeguarding and Child Protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems processes.
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the significant level of responsibility and duties of the post.
- allocate sufficient time, funding, training, resources, and support to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to empower them to carry out the role effectively.
- additional deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) are appointed as required.
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead including any deputies are trained to undertake their role as set out in local requirements those involved in safeguarding work understand and apply the Threshold document, and the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures. They follow the local information sharing protocols to supply information, as requested by the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership, so that partners can perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including information related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- staff and governors have the right safeguarding training, allowing them to undertake their roles effectively. This includes recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse, mental health concerns, risks associated with non-school attendance, any additional safeguarding barriers for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or specific medical or health conditions, protected characteristics and the use of 'reasonable force'.
- the School recognises that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to recognising abuse, reporting concerns and accessing support and may therefore require increased vigilance, targeted support and reasonable adjustments
- children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.
- procedures for Safer Recruitment are robust, including the hire of any school premises or facilities and the use of any alternative provision provider.
- rigorous procedures are in place to report and manage any allegation raised about an adult's behaviour towards a child.

- the School will maintain procedures for reporting, recording, reviewing and responding to low-level concerns regarding adults working with children and will ensure that concerns are addressed consistently and in accordance with the School's Code of Conduct and Managing Allegations procedures
- that Jude Nzemeke as designated teacher, works with Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered students who are looked after.
- the school works effectively with the Local Authority in line with the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education.
- safeguarding policies, staff Codes of Conduct, Managing Allegations procedures, Whistleblowing arrangements and Discipline and Dismissal policies are reviewed regularly and remain consistent with one another

The Governing Body will review this policy annually and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. The policy will be published on the school website.

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.

4.3 Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher adheres to the Headteacher Standards (2020) to ensure the protection and safety of students and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care. The Headteacher ensures that the policies and procedures adopted by their governing body are understood and followed by all staff. This includes working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputies, and other senior leaders to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding within the school and to promote the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker. The Headteacher also ensures that sufficient information is provided to the governance board to enable them to undertake their safeguarding role effectively.

4.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Lead Responsibilities

*Training***:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies have the appropriate training, knowledge and skills required to carry out their duties of their role. This includes how to identify, understand, and respond to specific needs that can increase children's vulnerability, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk. In addition, the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care at the Local Authority in which they reside. This training is updated at least every two years. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies also undertake Prevent awareness training. Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are at times delegated to a trained deputy, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This lead responsibility is not delegated.

*Availability***:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead is available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide advice and guidance and act on safeguarding concerns.

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead are unavailable, staff should report the concern to the most senior member of staff on site, who will ensure that appropriate safeguarding action is taken. If a concern requires an immediate response, staff should not wait for the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to become available.

*Responsibilities***:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). These are specifically outlined in KCSIE (2026), and primarily include:

- providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters
- responding to and act on any concerns or disclosures in a timely manner, triaging these against Local Authority thresholds using all of the available information and refer or seek advice as necessary
- ensuring child protection records are appropriately maintained and updated, including detail about decision making and further actions or outcomes and the threshold level reached in line with local procedures
- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children and being a key point of contact with safeguarding partners
- informing the Headteacher of issues, including ongoing section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- being the lead contact when working with the school's leadership team for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school.
- regularly updating and reviewing school safeguarding procedures working with the governing board lead for safeguarding.
- ensuring all staff have access to and understand this policy, including part-time staff and new staff at induction.
- ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for students attending alternative provision.

4.5 Teachers and Non-teaching Staff Responsibilities

Teachers adhere to the Teachers' Standards (2021). All staff – teaching and non-teaching - manage behaviour effectively and ensure a good and safe educational environment; this requires teachers and non-teaching staff to have a clear understanding about the needs of all students.

This includes:

- knowing, understanding and following school safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures.
- all staff are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times, including when communicating electronically, using social media, engaging in online activity or where conduct outside the workplace could affect the safety and welfare of children, professional suitability or the reputation of the School
- supporting educational outcomes of students subject to safeguarding concerns to be met and following advice when this is provided, such as reasonable adjustments, implementing actions in a statutory safeguarding plan.

4.6 Reporting concerns

All staff must follow the school's procedure for raising safeguarding concerns through CPOMS (see section 5). Concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay and recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible. Staff should also alert the relevant member of the pastoral team, including the child's Head of Year and Pastoral Support Officer, to any 'new safeguarding incidents' where appropriate, so that swift action can be taken.

4.7 Concerns about an adult

Where a safeguarding concern relates to staff or an adult on site, it should be reported to the Headteacher. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, it should be reported to the Chair of Governors in accordance with the school's procedures for allegations against staff and adults (see Appendix A).

4.8 Visitors including Contractors Responsibilities
Visitors, including contractors, will read the school's 'safeguarding leaflet' provided upon arrival at Reception. This sets out the school's safeguarding commitment and how they should report concerns about a child.

The school operates a colour coded lanyard safeguarding system for all adults on site:

- BLACK lanyards are worn by all staff.
- GREEN lanyards are worn by catering 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.

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.

Visitors must present their DBS certificate on arrival or will have had their DBS checked in advance by the HR Manager in order to receive a yellow lanyard and work unsupervised on the school site.

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 member of staff who has arranged for the person to visit the school. They will confirm if this is 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.

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times and appropriate checks will be undertaken. We will not knowingly invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views or views that do not uphold British values.

4.9 Online Safety
We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community, including the expectation that our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default, through our school mobile phone policy.
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

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, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories

- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, 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** – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images including those generated using AI and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

The School will ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to safeguard children when accessing the internet and digital technologies to protect them from the four 'C's (detailed above). School devices used offsite are also subject to these procedures. The Governing Body will receive assurance annually that filtering and monitoring arrangements remain effective, proportionate and appropriate to the age range, needs and risks of students.

Online safety is embedded in the curriculum, covering:

- safe use of social media, the internet, and technology.
- keeping personal information private.
- recognising and reporting unacceptable online behaviour
- reporting cyber-bullying, whether as a victim or witness.

Content is age-appropriate and sensitive to vulnerable students, including children with SEND or those who have experienced abuse.

All staff are trained on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff will receive refresher training as required at least once each academic year.

Parents/carers are educated about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings.

Section 5: Responding to concerns about a child's welfare

5.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
Everyone (including staff, supply staff, governors, volunteers, visitors etc.) must follow the school's safeguarding processes if they have concerns about a child's welfare:

- take the action necessary in an emergency to help the child, for example, call 999 for medical assistance or if a crime needs to be reported
- speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy straight away if the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, or they are unsure
- report all other concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy as swiftly as possible, using CPOMS.
- follow the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and remember this information is confidential
- ensure record keeping is up to date and accurate. CPOMS reports should be logged as quickly as possible, on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises
- seek support for the child if they are distressed through the school pastoral teams – Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Officers.

Staff must always **immediately** inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy **in person** if there are any:

- concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, including suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- searching incidents where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a learner was in possession of a prohibited item or where a search has revealed a safeguarding risk
- behaviour or changes in presentation, including changes in school attendance, which gives rise to suspicions that a child may not be receiving adequate care or may be suffering harm
- hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child
- concerns that a person(s) who may pose a risk to children is living in a household with children present
- concerns about online abuse including cybercrime, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, sharing nudes and semi nudes and/or where any adult appears to be sexually communicating (e.g., email, text, written note or verbally) with a child
- concerns about child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment
- information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (this is known as private fostering)
- concerns that a child is at risk of domestic abuse or so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including forced marriage, marriage, or civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, virginity testing or hymenoplasty
- concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, including county lines; or that a child or their parent/carer may be a victim of modern slavery (trafficked)

Southend High School for Girls

AN ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING FLOW CHART FOR STAFF ACTIONS - WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

Staff have concerns about a child and take **immediate action.**

Is it an emergency i.e. is the child in **immediate danger?**

YES → Speak to the **DSL/DDSL** in person **straight away.** If a member of the safeguarding team is not available, staff can call the **Police 999** or make a referral to **Children's Social Care** if appropriate. Record on **CPOMS** as soon as possible.

NO

Record the concern on **CPOMS immediately.** **"ASSIGN"** on **CPOMS** to **Pam Hopkins,** Safeguarding Manager and **DSL. "ALERT" Jude Nzemeke DSL,** the student's Head of Year and Pastoral Support Officer(s)

DSL/Safeguarding Team review concern and make decision about the next steps. Actions recorded on **CPOMS.**

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Jude Nzemeke DSL
Pam Hopkins DSL
and **SAFEGUARDING MANAGER**

Penny Bowman DDSL
Helen Riebold DDSL
Isobel Boyson DDSL
Rob Prior DDSL

Emma Enderby PSO
Cate Bernier PSO
Claire Poxon PSO
Lucy Stafford PSO

Reporting a concern out of hours.
If a Safeguarding issue occurs out of hours (i.e. the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not in work) then you need to consider whether anyone is currently at **immediate risk of harm.**
If you believe anyone to be at immediate risk of harm you should **CALL 999** for the **police** or **ambulance** as appropriate and **REPORT IMMEDIATELY.**
You can also call emergency out of hours numbers for children's social care.
If there is **NOT** an immediate risk of harm, report the concern on **CPOMS.**

Decision made to **monitor the concern.**

MONITOR

Relevant adult asked to monitor child and feedback to the **PSO** within an agreed timescale.
Feedback recorded on **CPOMS.**

Decision made to **discuss the concern** informally with the **parents/carers** **(unless doing so places the child at risk).**

DISCUSS

Once discussed with parents, **DSL/Safeguarding Team** may decide to **discuss further with parents**, monitor or refer to other agencies as appropriate e.g. **Early Help, Community Services, Police, LADO, EWMHS or Social Care.**

MONITOR ← | → **REFER**

Decision made to **refer the concern to Social Care. DSL/Safeguarding Team** may consult/discuss with **Children's Social Care.**

REFER

DSL/Safeguarding Team Member may review decision with another **team member** or the **HT** and agree to refer to **Children's Social Care/Police.**
Parents should be informed of decision to refer unless doing so will place the child at greater risk.

RECORD

All actions recorded on secure, confidential electronic safeguarding system (CPOMS).

If the **DSL** or a member of the **Safeguarding Team** is unavailable, staff may take advice directly from **Children's Social Care. ANY** staff member can make a referral to **Children's Social Care,** but they must inform the **DSL as soon as possible.**

Concerns about STAFF CONDUCT
A colleague? Talk to the Head Teacher.
Head Teacher? Talk to the Chair of Governors.
The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for concerns about adults is:
01702 534 591
LADO@southend.gov.uk

If a Teacher discovers **Female Genital Mutilation** appears to have been carried out on a girl **under the age of 18**, the Teacher **MUST** report this to the **POLICE.** The **Safeguarding Team** will support them in doing this.

Concerns about how the organisation deals with safeguarding issues? E.g. concerns not taken seriously?
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice line 0800 028 0285

Seek support yourself if required from the **DSL** or the
Education Support Helpline 08000 562 561

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There will be occasions when there may be the suspicion that a child may be at risk, but there is no 'real' evidence. For example:

- the child may need support with their mental health.
- the child's behaviour, social interaction and/or appearance may have changed
- attendance at school may have reduced
- the child's ability to concentrate and focus may have altered
- other behavioural and or physical indicators but inconclusive signs

In these circumstances, the adult should try to give the child the opportunity to talk as the signs noticed may be due to a variety of factors.

It is not the responsibility of the school or its staff to determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. This is the responsibility of children's social care at the Local Authority. All staff however have a duty to recognise where extra support is needed or where there are complex needs or child protection concerns requiring intensive or specialist support.

Staff must ensure all early concerns are recorded using CPOMS, or for staff who do not have access to CPOMS (such as cleaners or invigilators) a yellow 'Safeguarding Concern Form'. If a child or adult discloses that a child is being harmed, follow the advice in the section *'If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse'*.

Concerns should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. Staff should not presume someone else will do this or has done so.

For children living in Southend City, professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to submit a C-SPOC referral via the online portal website when it is believed or suspected that a child is a:

- Child in Need: needs more complex interventions from statutory children's services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development; and/or has a permanent and substantial disability which significantly limits their everyday lives
- Child in need of Protection: has suffered significant harm and/or is likely to suffer significant harm

For children residing outside of Southend City, the school will follow the safeguarding procedures for making referrals to children's social care in their local authority.

5.2 If a child chooses to tell an adult about a concern or abuse

It takes a lot of courage for a child, parent, carer, or other significant adult to disclose that they are worried or have concerns. They may feel ashamed, the abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. It is important they are reassured that they are being taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe. They should not be made to feel they are creating a problem, blamed or ashamed for making a report. Reports, particularly those about sexual violence and harassment, should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy); however, this might not be possible in all cases.

If a child or adult talks about any risks to a child's safety or wellbeing they will need to be told that this information will be passed on – secrets are not allowed to be kept. The point at which you tell them this is a matter for professional judgement.

During the conversation with the child (or their parent/carer or significant adult) the staff member will:

- allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and avoid asking leading questions
- keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature (tell me, explain, describe) i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?
- remain calm and not overreact

- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- avoid admonishing them for not disclosing earlier. For example, saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing'; this may intend to be supportive but be interpreted as they have done something wrong
- not be afraid of silences – remembering how hard this must be for the child or adult
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; this may not be comforting to a child who has been abused
- not promise confidentiality and at an appropriate time tell the child or adult that to help them you must pass the information on
- tell them what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if not, let them know that this staff member will come to see or contact them before the end of the day
- ensure that children are not asked to write statements about abuse or any concerns that may have happened to them or sign the staff record

Key points to remember

Any adult with a concern about a child's welfare (from the conversation or beyond this) will:

- in an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- do not assume a colleague or another professional will share information that might be critical to keeping a child safe. Early information sharing is vital in keeping children safe, whether this is when problems first emerge, or when a child is already known to children's social care at the Local Authority.
- report your concern, including any possible private fostering arrangements, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy as soon as possible (by the end of the day at the latest) using CPOMS, or if the child is in immediate danger, in person to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- if you are unsure speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy/report verbally to them.
- if the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy is not present, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the school that day. The concerns and any action taken must then be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as it is possible.
- if the concerns are about sharing nudes and semi-nudes do not view, copy, print or share the images.
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family.
- formally record in writing the conversation or record of concerns on the same day, and ideally before the child leaves the premises using CPOMS, assigned to the Safeguarding Manager & Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or HR Manager. This may be sometime after the disclosure.

Remember: If you are unsure, you should always have a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy

5.3 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy following identification of concerns

Whenever the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy receives information regarding concerns about a child, including via police domestic abuse notifications via Operation Encompass, they will:

- review the information received and assess if any urgent actions are needed, i.e. medical, actions to secure a child's immediate safety
- check what is known about the child, for example, when they arrived (or not) at school today, how they present physically and emotionally, any changes in behaviour
- consider what is already known about the child and their family, including whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff or if they are already known to children's services at the Local Authority (targeted Early Help or Social Care)
- consider what 'checks' need to be carried out and how best these can be achieved
- inform relevant school staff who have a specific need to know, i.e. Head of Year, Pastoral Support Office, form tutor or any other relevant staff
- where appropriate use relevant national, local, and education-based risk identifying, assessment tools and guidance to support the identification of needs and decision making, such as: school records, assessments, and chronologies, including any contextual factors/placed based risks.
- use national guidance and assessment tools, e.g. Stop it now (sexual behaviours), Contextual safeguarding tools, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (2024). The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool is a safeguarding tool focused specifically on identifying, understanding, and responding to children's sexual behaviours. It is used in situations that involve potential child on child abuse (also known as peer-on-peer abuse) but also in broader safeguarding contexts where a child might be experiencing abuse from an adult.
- not directly approach a child or parent/carer about an incident when the school have received a domestic abuse notification and instead make general enquiries with the child about how they are.
- follow the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and use the Southend Threshold document to support decision making about the child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention. Possible options include internal support via school setting pastoral systems, Early Help Assessment and referral to statutory services such as the children's services at the Local Authority. Where the child resides outside of Southend City, safeguarding referral routes will be used for their local authority.
- consider whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm
- if unsure about the action to take, including if a Child Protection referral should be made, seek advice from children's social care at the Local Authority or another appropriate agency
- if the concerns are about radicalisation or violent extremism, contact the Local Authority Education Performance, Partnerships and Safeguarding team for advice and where appropriate make a referral to the police Prevent Team
- where the child has complex needs or where there are child protection concerns, refer as appropriate to children's services at the Local Authority via agreed processes, providing a copy of the Early Help Assessment, action plan and any other relevant assessments
- notify the appropriate Children's Services at the Local Authority of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child. Notifications will contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and made in writing
- if a child is at risk of immediate harm, and/or where it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, including sexual violence and harassment, referring to the police. See NPCC When to call the police; guidance for schools and colleges. Safeguarding considerations must take priority and include how screening, searching, and confiscating powers will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately, including undertaking a police strip search on a child and the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult.; see Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance (2022)

More information about the Early Help Assessment in Southend City can be found here: Southend Early Help Framework.

5.4 Responding to concerns or disclosures.
The Designated Safeguarding Lead reviews all available information and uses this to triage the case and take appropriate action in line with the local authority thresholds. This includes referring cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the children's social care at the Local Authority and support to staff who make referrals to:

- children's social care at the Local Authority
- the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the police as required (NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures records of concerns or disclosures provide a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern. This includes:

- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome, referencing the local authority thresholds
- ensuring that Child Protection files are kept up to date, stored securely and confidentiality on CPOMS.
- ensuring a Child Protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term, when children leave the school
- ensuring receipt of a Child Protection file for any student new to school subject to statutory safeguarding intervention

Where there is concern for the welfare of a child who lives in Southend City, and the school is unsure whether the need warrants a referral for statutory involvement at level 4, the school can call the C-SPOC consultation line on 01702 215007 Option 1. Pre-contact consultations can be anonymous unless they become of high concern during the consultation, in which case, the school will be asked for the child's details or advised to inform the parent to contact Children's Social Care.

For children living outside of Southend City, the school will contact their local authority's children's social care for advice on next steps.

5.5 Notifying parents/carers
The school will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parent or carer. However, if the setting believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from children's social care at the Local Authority. If a child is in immediate danger, the school will refer to children's social care and/or the police immediately. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure all referrals are made promptly to the correct local authority for the child.

5.6 Pastoral/school-based support (universal support/low level needs)
In all cases, the school will consider what support could be offered via pastoral support processes. All students in school are supported by their form tutors, Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Officers. Support is kept under constant review to ensure that it is effective.

5.7 Early help support and assessment (emerging needs)
Where a child is likely to require co-ordinated support from a range of Early Help services, or where there are concerns for a child's well-being or a child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy will support the completion of an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and if needed, co-ordinate a team around the family (TAF).

Whenever a child and their family are supported via an EHA, the school/education setting will keep this under constant review and should the child's situation appear not to improve worsen, consideration will be given to a referral to children's services at the Local Authority.

5.8 Referral to children's social care at Southend City Local Authority

Non urgent concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to children's social care at the Local Authority Children's Services Portal using the agreed referral process as outlined in the Southend Threshold document.

If there are concerns that a child is at IMMEDIATE risk of significant harm professionals should telephone the Children's – Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) immediately on 01702 215007.

Requests for Support made on the telephone must be followed up with a written C-SPOC referral form via the online portal website immediately following the phone referral.

Where there is imminent danger call the emergency services on 999.

Anybody can make the referral.

In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to children's social care at the Local Authority using the online portal; however, they should also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy (as soon as possible).

Referrals for children living outside of Southend City, will be managed according to the local authority's thresholds for children's social care.

5.9 Female genital mutilation (FGM)

If the referral is about a 'known' case of female genital mutilation (FGM), in addition to a referral to children's social care at the Local Authority, the individual teacher also has a mandatory reporting duty; see Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation; procedural information (2015). Under this duty, 'known' cases of FGM where a girl under 18 informs the person that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or where physical signs appear to show that an act of FGM was carried out, this must be reported to the police on 101. This is a personal responsibility in addition to the referral to children's social care at the Local Authority and the professional who identifies FGM and/or receives the disclosure should make the report by the close of the next working day.

5.10 Action following a referral by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, deputy or other appropriate member of staff will:

- where a referral was made by phone, follow up the referral in writing using the online referral system. This is within 48 hours and attaching any existing assessment e.g., the EHA. In all cases the school/education setting will also include information held about any place-based risks (harm outside of the home)
- be aware that children's social care at the Local Authority should make a decision within one working day of the referral being made about what course of action they are taking and let the school/setting know the outcome. If the information is not forthcoming, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (deputy/alternative) should follow this up
- maintain contact with the allocated social worker and support them or other agencies following any referral
- contribute to any strategy discussion or meetings
- support any Section 47 enquiries or statutory assessments that are carried out

- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial and review Child Protection Conference. This includes sharing any reports with parents/carers and where appropriate, the child
- share the content of this report with the parent/carer and if appropriate the child, prior to the meeting
- attend core group meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection plan or Child in Need meeting for any child subject to a Child in Need plan
- where a child on a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or who is Looked After moves from the school/education setting or if there are unexplained absences from school, immediately inform the child's social worker/key worker in local authority children's social care
- if after the referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the Designated Safeguarding Lead should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves

5.11 Confidentiality and sharing information

The school recognises the importance of information sharing between the school and local agencies to effectively safeguard our learners. The setting operates with regard to HM Government Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2024), Information Commissioner's Office A 10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children (2023) and DDSCP Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners (2022).

All staff will be mindful of the Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) obligations. Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare, rather, they provide the legal framework under which information can, and in some cases, must be shared.

School staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or deputy, who will seek advice from the Data Protection Officer as required

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

All information sharing outside of 'business as usual', should be recorded on the appropriate logs.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy (or the most senior person on the premises in their absence), Headteacher or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That staff member will decide who else needs to have the information which they will share on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Consent will be sought to share information, where appropriate, however, where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as children's social care at the Local Authority in line with the law. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless doing so would increase risk.

5.12 Record keeping
All concerns, discussions and decisions made, including the rationale for those decisions, should be recorded in writing following the protocols in place by the school for safeguarding and Child Protection recording on CPOMS. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such children's social care at the Local Authority or the Prevent programme etc. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.

Records of concerns documentation, referrals and other written safeguarding information are kept securely on CPOMS. Records are confidential and only made available to relevant individuals.

Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, the rationale for these, and the outcome, as well as a review of any progress made
- any professional differences of opinion about the safety of a child will also be recorded

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new education provider in advance of a child leaving the school, e.g. children who have or who have had a social worker and those receiving support through the Channel programme.

When a child leaves the school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure a copy of their CPOMS records will be sent securely as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term) to any school or other education setting to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, the deputy and key staff will be informed when a child's safeguarding/Child Protection file is received. Paper files will be scanned and uploaded to CPOMS, after which paper copies are disposed of securely. Records are retained securely and confidentially for 25 years after the student's date of birth, or until transfer to another school or setting. In the case of files related to child sexual abuse, these will be retained until the child's 75th birthday.

5.13 Support for adults involved in a safeguarding/child protection concern
Child neglect, abuse and exploitation are devastating for children and can result in distress and anxiety for staff involved. Support to all concerned is by:

- offering employee assistance, such as providing details of helplines, counselling, or other sources of external support
- responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- following the procedures laid down in policies, such as whistleblowing, complaints, and disciplinary procedures
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously

5.14 Staff Welfare, Support and Supervision
The School recognises that safeguarding work can be emotionally demanding. Appropriate welfare, supervision, debriefing and support arrangements will be available to staff involved in safeguarding and child protection matters.

Staff will have access to wellbeing support services, Employee Assistance Programmes (where available), Occupational Health advice and professional supervision where appropriate.

The School will promote a culture in which staff feel able to seek support following safeguarding incidents, disclosures, investigations or other child protection matters.

Section 6: Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment

6.1 Whole-school approach

The attitude by all staff and adults of *'it could happen here'* is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reported incidents or concerns, this does not mean it is not happening.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy

The school recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. We recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse, but all incidents will be treated with equal seriousness. While most incidents of students hurting one another are managed through the Behaviour Policy, this Safeguarding Policy applies where allegations raise safeguarding concerns.

The School will maintain a clear distinction between behaviour incidents that can be addressed through behaviour management processes and incidents that require safeguarding intervention. Where safeguarding concerns exist, safeguarding procedures will always take precedence.

The school takes child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. All reports and concerns will be responded to, including those alleged to have taken place outside of the school and online. It is recognised that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

6.2 What is child-on-child abuse?

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying)
- discriminatory be, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
- physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos, including those generated by AI.
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm

- initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Incel ideology and its associated behaviours are not legally defined as "child-on-child abuse" in themselves; rather, they are a radical, extremist online subculture that can lead to behaviours that constitute child-on-child abuse (also known as peer-on-peer abuse) when they manifest offline.

Child-on-child abuse can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour. Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum, and different forms of abuse may overlap. It can affect children of any age, sex, be between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children. Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:

- those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
- young people in care
- those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
- black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- there is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
- evidence shows that children with disabilities or children identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning are at greater risk

Child-on-child abuse is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children spend their time - home, school/education settings, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer.

Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a ‘vulnerability’ or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible. While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

6.3 Preventing child-on-child abuse

There is a whole school approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The school will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. The school has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The school:

- provides a safe environment
- promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour
- takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour
- has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously
- provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities.

This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of ‘*it could happen here’* and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

Behaviour by children on a day-to-day basis, and in most cases, will be dealt with via school processes as set out in the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy

6.4 Procedures for children to report child-on-child abuse

As outlined in previous sections, even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. Children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse and children may have additional barriers to making disclosures. Children may show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend, or staff may overhear conversations. All staff will be trained to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it. All staff will follow the school's reporting procedures for concerns about a child (section 5).

6.5 Action following a concern about child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Adults may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a concern is very important. Members of staff will take all concerns seriously and reassure the child/family that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. Conversations should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy) wherever possible, however it is recognised that this may not be possible in all cases.

The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the school is treated as seriously as that which has occurred within the school.

Staff must follow school procedures and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead - see *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare* (Section 5).

When an allegation is made by a child against another child, staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or Child Protection concerns. See *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare*.

Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- what are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- what is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? Were other children and/or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmfully sexual behaviours been displayed? Remember there may be other forms of abuse, in addition to what has been reported.
- what is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions, (including anything that might have had an impact on this, e.g. coercion), family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship? Do they live in the same household or setting? Do they attend the same school/setting, classes, or transport?

- what are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there are any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- are there any risks to the victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and/or others e.g., other children, adults, students, staff, others in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children around the child), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted.

Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. A risk assessment or plan will lay out how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from the setting.

For all other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment and forms of child-on-child abuse, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, school's premises and transport should be considered immediately.

All decisions are made in the best interests of the child/ren involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt by the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the Designated Safeguarding Lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care Local Authority and the police as required.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer to guidance and advice, such as, but not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) part five
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school
- Behaviour in schools
- School suspensions and permanent exclusion
- Southend Threshold Document or the child's local authority threshold document if they do not live in Southend City.
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures or the child's local authority procedures if they do not live in Southend, Essex or Thurrock.
- When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may seek further advice from local or national safeguarding contacts as outlined in *Key safeguarding contacts*

Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator/s
- all the other children (as well as staff and adult students) at the school, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s or from future harms
- the time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer
- when information can be disclosed to staff and other adults, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

Whenever children's social care at the Local Authority and/or the police are involved, the school will work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

All reports of child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded in the child's safeguarding/Child Protection file on CPOMS. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment plans.

Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via Early Help (emerging needs) or through children's social care at the Local Authority (complex/serious needs or Child Protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care as outlined in the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures or the child's local authority safeguarding procedures if they do not live in Southend, Essex or Thurrock.

All risk and needs assessments, and any action plans, whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

Tools used to self-assess our response to harmful sexual behaviour are:

- Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool
- The Contextual Safeguarding School Beyond Referrals Self-Assessment Toolkit & Guidance
- Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the new provider are made aware of any on-going support needs (the most suitable way of doing this is discussed with the victim, and where appropriate their parent/carer), as well as sending the safeguarding/Child Protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

Any suspicion or allegations that a child has been sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse another child (or adult) or where there are concerns about any other form of abuse, a referral must be made immediately to children's social care at the Local Authority and, where appropriate, the police.

Appendices

Appendix A: Concerns about an adult in school

At Southend High School for Girls we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, trainee or supply teachers and contractors. 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. 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.

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.)

The Headteacher will decide whether the concern is an allegation or a 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).

Allegations should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (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 about the behaviour of an adult working in the school
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.

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

If the school is in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult the 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 one 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 trainee teachers, 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 trainee teacher, 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.

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 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 give 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.

Use of 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' 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 is 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.

Where individuals or organisations use school premises, the school will ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. Allegations involving such individuals will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Appendix B: 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. The school will conduct online searches for shortlisted candidates as part of the recruitment process, to identify any publicly available information that may be relevant to safeguarding.

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
- For any existing volunteer who is considered to be engaging in a regulated activity from 1st September 2026, we will obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

- 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 C: Southend City Threshold Guidance Process

