



**Child Protection
and
Safeguarding Policy**

**September 2023
Review September 2024**

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

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

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children.
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) which identified how this now provides further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse including children, as well as strengthening measures to tackle perpetrators.
- [Guidance for staff on search protocols from police on school grounds](#) which will assist staff in recognising when a search is and is not reasonable or necessary.
- [Health and Care Act 2022](#) Part 5 outlines the illegality of virginity testing and hymenoplasty procedures in the UK.

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.

- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

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

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

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

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

4. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 9).
- Are young carers.
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Have English as an additional language.
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
- Are asylum seekers.
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- Are looked after or previously looked after.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

5.1 All staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The early help process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), FGM and radicalisation.
- The need to exercise 'professional curiosity' i.e., the need to be curious about whether the messages we are being given from parents / carers, children and both internal and external colleagues are accurate or there is more to be learned but the child is unwilling or unable to give more information. We must also recognise that there may be reasons why the child is not able to do this e.g., they may not have the words / understanding needed or they may have been threatened.

Section 13 and appendix 4 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

5.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

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DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	ALISON GOODE (ACTING) 07754 271016
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING DIRECTOR:	BRETT RUNCHMAN 07769 721504 brett@exceptional-ideas.co.uk

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The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Alison Goode – Senior Student Mentor and Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding. DSL responsibility for filtering and monitoring sits with Brett Runchman, Designated Safeguarding Director.

During term time, the DSL/ Deputies will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Alison Goode is contactable on the main office telephone 07754 271016.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies will act as cover.

If the DSL and deputies are not available, Brett Runchman – Designated Safeguarding Director, will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

The DSL and deputies will be given the time, funding, training, resources, and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of children.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- Promote educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced with mentors and school leadership staff.
- Participate in accessing safeguarding guidance updates and feedback from safeguarding forums to maintain their own knowledge of child protection procedures and best practice.
- Raise awareness of safeguarding issues including the risks of online harm with parents and carers to provide them with the information they need to support their young people.

The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

The activities of the DSL are supervised by Brett Runchman, RNLD – organisational DSL.

5.3 The headteacher

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

- Ensuring that staff are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL/ deputies have appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL/deputy is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3).

6. Confidentiality

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.

The 7 'Golden Rules' are:

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if,

in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. KCSIE 2022 states that it is also legitimate to share information without consent where it is not possible to gain consent. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information-sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, factual, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

8. If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

7. Recognising abuse and acting

Staff must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue, this includes indications or disclosures of potential low-level abuse.

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

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

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

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

7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret.

- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

7.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place, or a pupil is at risk of FGM

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4.

Any teacher who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have good reason not to, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff (Mentor/assistant mentor/ admin staff) who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

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

Figure 1 on page 12 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a Deputy DSL from one of our other schools, a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible. During this process all staff, but especially the DSL and deputies, should consider whether a student is at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence (see Appendix 4).

Early help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

7.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above).

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into extremism, or the local authority children's social care team.

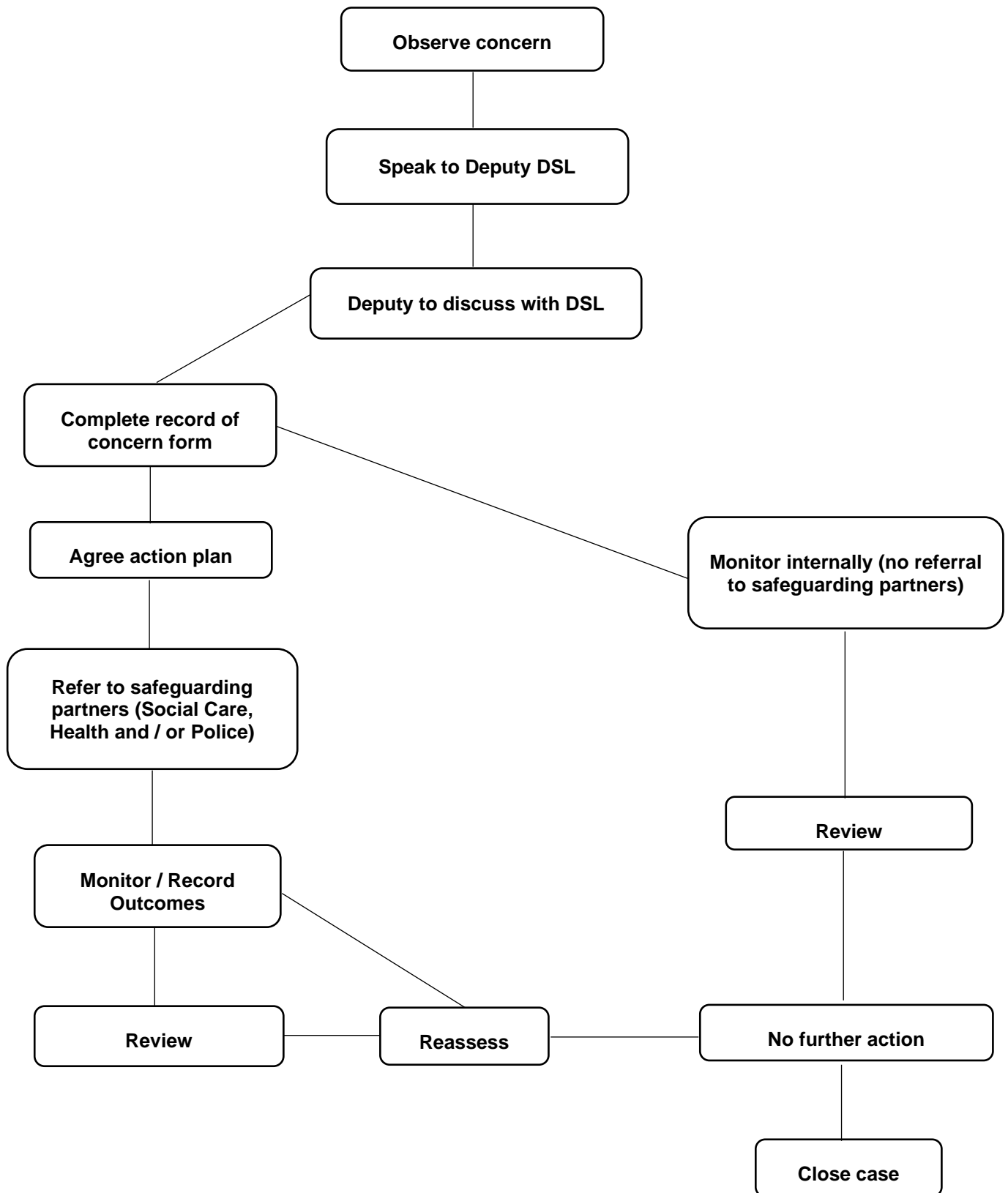
The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a student. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

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

Figure 1: Procedure if you have concerns about a child’s welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 7.4 for what to do.)



7.6 Concerns about a staff member

If you have concerns about a member of staff, please see the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

7.7 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils (Child-on-Child Harm)

As educators we have a responsibility to protect children from harm in whichever form or direction this harm is coming from. We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers whether this is physically, emotionally or sexually. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child harm / abuse (previously listed as peer-on-peer abuse) (i.e., that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys will be perpetrators). However, all child-on-child harm is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils harming other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence.
- Could put students in the school at risk.
- Is physical including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol.
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting) or upskirting - where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence listed in The Voyeurism (Offences) Act.
- Is an emotional harm e.g., bullying or discrimination.

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

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

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child harm by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images.

- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys.
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
- Ensuring a full and rigorous RSHE curriculum is delivered to students to help them to understand how to avoid becoming involved in child-on-child harm either deliberately or accidentally.

Please see separate Child-on-Child Abuse Policy for more information.

7.8 Sexting

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’), you must report it to the DSL/deputy immediately.

You must **not**:

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

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

Initial review meeting

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

- Whether there is an immediate risk to the student(s).
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children’s social care. Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (2019) advises that if a concern is criminal in nature, then it should be the police who raise the concern. **It is important to ensure that if a social care referral is required that it is identified which party (school or police) will be responsible for ensuring the referral is made.**
- If it is necessary to view the imagery to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed).

- What further information is required to decide on the best response.
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown).
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services.
- Any relevant facts about the students involved which would influence risk assessment.
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the students involved (in most cases parents should be involved).

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

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs).
- What the DSL/deputy knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage or are violent.
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any student in the imagery is under the age of 13.
- The DSL/deputy has reason to believe a student is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

If none of the above apply then the DSL/deputy, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL/deputy will conduct a further review.

They will hold interviews with the students involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents

The DSL/deputy will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the student at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through contacting the local neighbourhood police, dialling 101. Crime reference numbers should be obtained and recorded in confidential safeguarding communication sheet.

Recording incidents

All sexting incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 12 of this policy also apply to recording incidents of sexting.

Curriculum coverage

Students are taught about the issues surrounding sexting as part of our RSHE education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to sexting:

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

Students also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

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

This policy on sexting is also shared with students so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

8. Notifying parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

9. Students who are likely to require additional support with protecting themselves

9a. Students with special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.

- Students being more prone to peer group isolation than other students.
- The potential for students with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

We offer extra pastoral support for students with SEN and disabilities. This includes: 1:1 therapeutic teaching and supervision. We also use dynamic risk assessments to track changes in progress as well as other baseline assessments.

9b. Students who are listed as having protected characteristics

It is important that we acknowledge the barriers that are faced by students of certain communities or who are listed as having protected characteristics. We must ensure that they are protected from discrimination and that they have a space that they can discuss any concerns they have or problems they are experiencing in a private, safe environment where they are both comfortable to speak and are assured of the confidentiality they deserve.

These protected characteristics include:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

10. Students with a social worker

Some students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs or because they are looked after children (LAC). They may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

Local authorities should share the fact a student has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. It is also important for the designated safeguarding lead to make contact with the social worker to identify themselves, to familiarise themselves with any ongoing issues and provide contact information for any future communication.

The DSL or Deputies must engage with any requests to attend child in need / child in care meetings / team around a child (TAC) / team around a family (TAF) meeting and we will ensure that a representative of the safeguarding team is in attendance.

11. Mobile phones and cameras

Staff can bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to agreed WhatsApp purposes, that reduce risks around the students and facilitate team communication.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

School cameras are available along with school mobile phones that can be used for the recording of students' work and school related communication.

12. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies

12.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff. For further guidance please see the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

12.2 Whistleblowing

Please see separate Whistle Blowing Policy.

13. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely in a lockable, fireproof cabinet and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained until age 25 of the student.

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

- Currently each premises has a paper copy of child protection record. Accessible only to the designated safeguarding lead and the deputy for each school.
- Locked filing cabinet keys issued to DSL and deputy.

13.1 Transfer of safeguarding documentation from one organisation to another

The following steps should be followed when safeguarding files are requested due to a student transitioning to a new provider:

1. Verify the identity of the school and the DSL that the files will be transferred to.
2. Create a receipt for delivery with date, time, name of person delivering and the name of the person receiving to be signed on delivery.
3. Ensure that files are contained in plain packaging with DSL name on the outside. These should also be marked as 'Private and confidential'.

4. Delivery should be made in person with the file transported in a locked briefcase and locked in the boot of the car during the journey.
5. Receipt should be signed on handover and retained in the original child protection file.

NB: Where it is not possible to deliver these documents by hand, a discussion should be held with the DSL / DSL Director to consider suitable alternatives. Documents should not be posted as part of a regular mail delivery.

14. Training

14.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake 'safeguarding and child protection' training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be updated annually and will be in line with guidance from Level 1 Child Protection training and advice from the 3 safeguarding partners.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

14.2 The DSL and deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by Alison Goode, DSL and signed off by Director – Brett Runchman.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Capability and Conduct
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Complaints
- Health and Safety
- Attendance

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- First Aid
- Curriculum
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-bullying
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
- Acceptable Use Policy – digital devices.
- Lone Working
- FGM
- Prevent
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously looked after Children (PLAC) policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse

These appendices are based on the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education

Appendix 1: Types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate.
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Ill treatment of others consists of witnessing any of the above types of abuse on other people whether adults or children.

Appendix 2: Other areas of concern for safety of children

Children absent from education

A child absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

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

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

- Come from new migrant families.

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Missing students

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. Please see missing child procedure.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

This can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, but does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam.

Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol.

- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late.
- Regularly missing school or education, or not taking part in education.

Child criminal exploitation

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

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of criminal exploitation are:

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

County lines

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

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and / or store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines from a range of locations including schools. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims and possibly their families if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. If a staff member is concerned that a student is at risk of or involved in county lines a record of concern must be completed and a discussion held with the DSL or Deputy. The DSL / Deputy should consider a referral to the National Referral Mechanism alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines that the behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

- a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- b) the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is considered “abusive” if it consists of physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; psychological, emotional, extra-familial harms or other abuse and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or has occurred over a prolonged period.

Witnessing domestic abuse can be highly distressing and frightening for a child – it can cause serious long-term harm. Children can experience domestic abuse in different ways, including witnessing or hearing the abuse, noticing a parent’s injuries or distress, or being affected due to being too close to the abuse or trying to stop it. In the eyes of the law, children that witness abuse are also regarded as victims of domestic abuse. Children living in a home where domestic abuse occurs are at an increased risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect themselves. This can have a significant impact on children’s ability to access learning and the social environment in school.

Any disclosures regarding domestic abuse should be managed using the normal reporting procedure. Children who witness abuse are very likely to need some kind of support. Wherever possible, this support should be given by the school’s Deputy DSL and any discussions with family should be directed to the School’s Child Protection Team. If required, assistance can be sought from Operation Encompass via calling 101 or from the National Domestic Abuse Helpline free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare.

The DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority, so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

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

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, virginity testing, hymenoplasty (a procedure to repair a previously broken hymen to give the impression of virginity) and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a student is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place.
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out.
- A family/student already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues.
- A girl:
 - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable.
 - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously).
 - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
 - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
 - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE.
 - Being repeatedly absent from school or absent for a prolonged period.
 - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour.
 - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations.
 - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem.
 - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

Potential signs that a student may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practicing FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider).
- FGM being known to be practiced in the girl's community or country of origin.
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out.
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues.
- A girl:
 - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM.
 - Having limited level of integration within UK society.
 - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman".
 - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period.

- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM.
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to consider the context of the discussion).
- Being unexpectedly absent from school.
- Having sections missing from her ‘red book’ (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication.

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. Forced marriage is different to an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage sees the families of both spouses taking a leading role in arranging the marriage, but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In addition, since a change in the law in February 2023, it is now an offence to carry out any conduct causing a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence, threats or other forms of coercion are **not** used and consent is given.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the ‘one chance’ rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

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

The DSL will:

- Speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place.
- Consider the safety of the student at all times and the danger of involving the victim’s family / community. They will also recognise the importance of immediate action and emergency protection where a case of forced marriage is identified.
- Not treat a forced marriage case as an incidence of domestic violence.
- Not approach a student’s family to discuss accusations of forced marriage.
- Never ignore, or fail to report, an indication of forced marriage and will allow it to be correctly investigated by the police.
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority’s designated officer.
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fm@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate.

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Further definitions relating to radicalisation are:

Extremism – a vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Terrorism - an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our students to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alerted to changes in students' behaviour.

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

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves.
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution.
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance.
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy.
- Converting to a new religion.
- Isolating themselves from family and friends.
- Talking as if from a scripted speech.
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views.
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
- Increased levels of anger.
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions.
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter.
- Possessing extremist literature.

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a student, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** act if they are worried.

Further information on the school's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors / contractors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out.

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

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the day, we will contact parents to agree a safe way home for the student.

Children requiring mental health support

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their students. 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 and can increase their overall risk of vulnerability. If a staff member observes behaviour that indicates a potential mental health problem, they will complete an incident form, or a record of concern if there is a safeguarding risk indicated, using the usual reporting procedures. As per procedure this will be discussed with the Operational Senior or DSL

and the student's parents / carers will be notified to ensure that this is appropriately investigated by a health professional and added to the dynamic risk assessment.

Online safety

We recognise the importance and risks surrounding online safety both in school and in the home. We also recognise the need for home schooling is essential to ensure that lessons are able to continue and a student's welfare monitored during school closures e.g. inclement weather, pandemic lockdown arrangements. To ensure that the student's safety online is maintained we follow the [Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in schools and colleges](#):

- Block access to social media / gaming & chat sites on the school network.
- Assess the risk of online activity for each individual student using a dynamic risk assessment.
- Provision of back up data recall system.
- Provide guidance to all staff, parents, carers and students during periods of home schooling.
- Ensure that a responsibility / usage agreement is signed for any student taking school computers away for home schooling purposes to identify clear boundaries.
- Incorporate online safety awareness into therapeutic lessons.
- Ensure that when teaching online or meeting with/about a child online, the online platform used is considered secure.
- Ensure that when teaching online, a parent/guardian is present if the child is on a video call.
- Ensure that where a parent/guardian cannot be present that the child uses typed chat feature and not video calling.

Children who are accused of a crime

We must ensure that students who are accused of, or being investigated for, a crime:

- are, first and foremost, treated as the children they are regardless of the alleged crimes committed.
- are treated with respect.
- are not subjected to unnecessary or unreasonable requests from adults attempting to exert their authority over the child including strip searches (see additional guidance in section 2).
- have their rights protected by our staff and an appropriate adult present if required, particularly if a search is required (see additional guidance in section 2).
- are still able to access education if out of school for any reason.