Bedfordshire Schools Trust Safeguarding Policy

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Contents

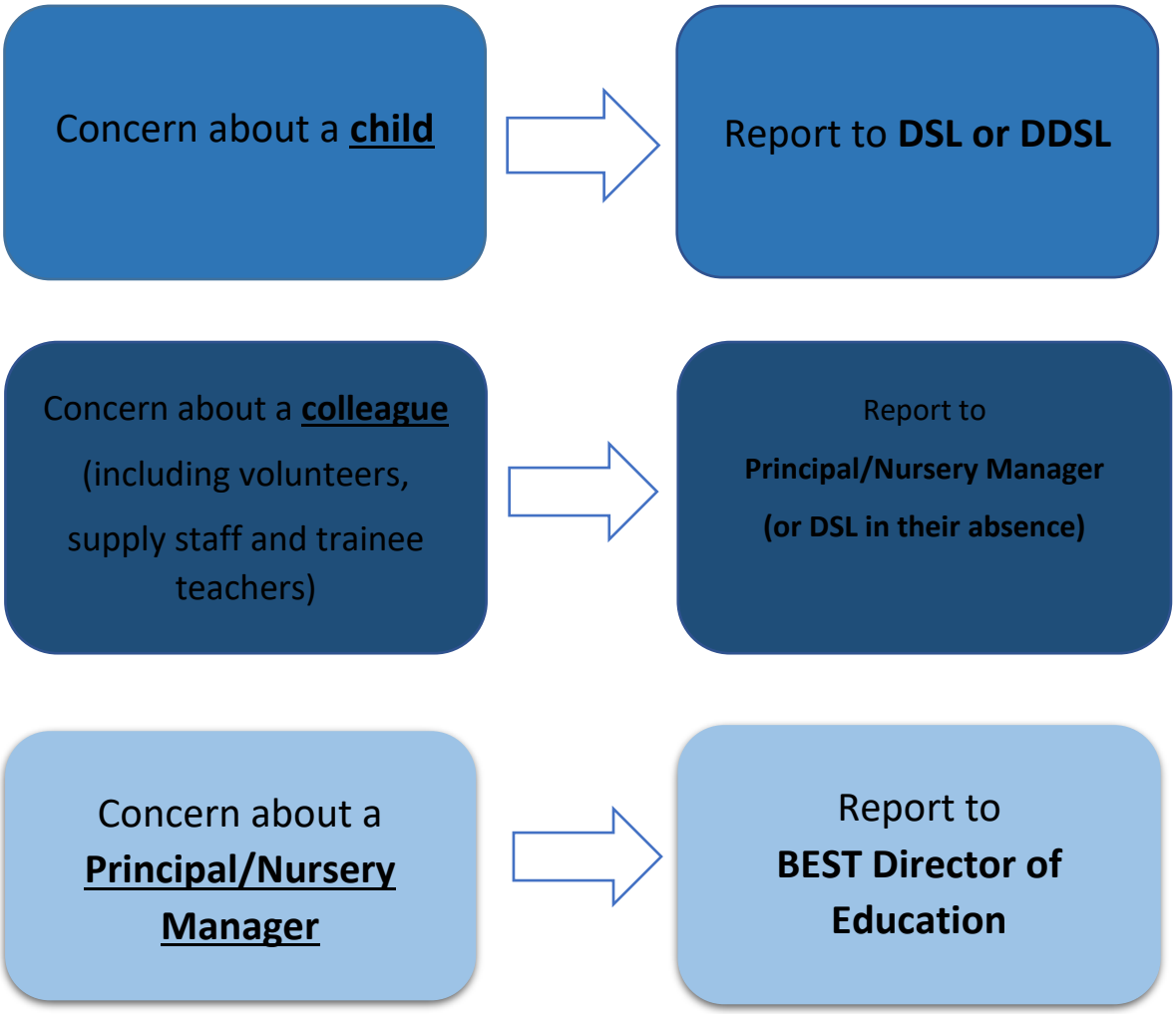
WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN 4
SECTION A - INTRODUCTION & LEGAL SCOPE 5
EACH ACADEMY/NURSERY WILL ENSURE THAT: 7
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 7
THE TRUST 7
LOCAL COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD (LCB) 8
PRINCIPAL/MANAGER – Debbie Randall 9
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD–Tracy Rowlands– to be read in conjunction with Annex B of KCSIE 10
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS – Debbie Randall, Karen Bowskill & Gary Gotham 10
DATA MANAGER 10
MEMBER OF SLT WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF IT 11
THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER 11
THE PREMISES MANAGER/SITE AGENT 11
ICT NETWORK MANAGERS 11
PUPILS (to an age appropriate level) 11
ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING COMMISSIONED SERVICES (SUCH AS COUNSELLORS AND IT CONTRACTED STAFF) 12
WHAT STAFF NEED TO KNOW 12
SECTION B - PRINCIPLES, PROCEDURES, PRACTICE AND PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT 13
SAFER RECRUITMENT & SELECTION 13
SAFE PRACTICE 15
SEPARATING PUPILS FOR SAFEGUARDING REASONS 16
SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION FOR PUPILS 16
PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS 16
WEARABLES AND RECORDING DEVICES IN MEETINGS 17
PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHERS 17
ACADEMY/NURSERY TRAINING AND STAFF INDUCTION 17
SUPPORT, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR STAFF 17
RELATED ACADEMY/NURSERY PRACTICE AND POLICIES 18
HEALTH AND SAFETY 18
INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY 18
PUPIL INFORMATION 20
RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION 20
MOBILE PHONES 21

SINGLE-SEX SPORT ... 21
SECTION C - IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT HARM ... 22
DEFINITIONS ... 23
INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT ... 23
PHYSICAL ABUSE ... 23
SEXUAL ABUSE ... 24
EMOTIONAL ABUSE ... 24
NEGLECT ... 25
POSSIBLE SIGNS IN OLDER CHILDREN ... 25
CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION ... 25
ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION ... 26
CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON ... 26
CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE (INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE) ... 26
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPOITATION (CCE) ... 28
COUNTY LINES ... 30
PREVENTING RADICALISATION ... 30
RECOGNISING EXTREMISM ... 30
FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) ... 31
HONOUR BASED ABUSE (HBA) AND CULTURAL BELIEFS (INCLUDING WITCHCRAFT) ... 32
DOMESTIC ABUSE ... 32
FORCED MARRIAGE ... 33
HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS (HSB) ... 33
Sexual harassment ... 33
SEXUAL VIOLENCE ... 34
SHARING NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES ... 35
Responding to an allegation of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence ... 35
MENTAL HEALTH ... 37
ONLINE SAFETY – read in conjunction with online safety policy ... 38
GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ... 38
FILTERING AND MONITORING ... 39
ONLINE HOAXES & CHALLENGES ... 39
CHILD ABDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INCIDENTS ... 39
HOMELESSNESS ... 40
CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES ... 40
Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After ... 40
VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD – EXTRA DUTIES ... 41

Section 41 -Statutory Children's Social Care Assessments and Services 41
Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm 41
Children who are lesbian, gay, biSEXUAL (LGB) 42
CHILDREN WHO ARE QUESTIONING THEIR GENDER 43
Vulnerable adults 44
PRIVATE FOSTERING 44
YOUNG CARERS 44
CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS 44
SECTION D - TAKING ACTION TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE SAFE AT EACH ACADEMY/NURSERY AND AT HOME 46
RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE 46
TIMING OF REFERRALS 47
ACTION BY THE DSL or DDSL in their absence 47
ACTION FOLLOWING A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL 48
RECORDING AND MONITORING 48
SUPPORTING THE CHILD AND PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS 49
WHISTLEBLOWING 49
ALLEGATIONS REGARDING PERSON(S) WORKING IN OR ON BEHALF OF THE ACADEMY/NURSERY (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS) – INCLUDING LOW LEVEL CONCERNS 49
The Use of RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND REASONABLE FORCE in Schools/NURSERIES 51
USE OF PREMISES FOR NON-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES 51
Alternative Provision 51
OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH SAFEGUARDING 52
SECTION E - SAFEGUARDING DURING GOVERNMENT MANDATED PERIODS OF SCHOOL/NURSERY CLOSURE52
MONITORING AND EVALUATION 54
APPENDICES 55
APPENDIX 2: FLOW CHART OF RESPONSE 57
APPENDIX 3: USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES 58
KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE 58
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES 59
APPENDIX 5: STAFF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS 61
APPENDIX 6 – CPOMS CATEGORIES GUIDE 62
APPENDIX 7 – UPDATES TO BEST SAFEGUARDING POLICY TEMPLATE 67

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN

To be read in conjunction with the BEST Safeguarding Policy and BEST Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy.



Please note that members of the Local Committee of the Board should be considered as a volunteer. If the concern relates to a member of the Trust Board, the Chief Executive Officer should be notified.

SECTION A - INTRODUCTION & LEGAL SCOPE

This policy is in line with:

- Department for Education Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2026
- 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' issued April 2012
- Relevant sections of the Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children safe in Education Sept 2026
- UKCCIS guidance: Sexting in schools and Colleges, responding to incidents and safeguarding young people Sept 2016
- DfE Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people, 2024
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024
- DfE Information sharing, 2024
- Safer working practice Feb 2022
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- 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
- 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 which has been amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA)
- 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
- Where a school or college has charitable status, Charity Commission guidance on charity and trustee duties to safeguard children is available at Charity Commission Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education has been extended from early years, schools and colleges to cover 16-19 academies (and apprenticeships).There is reference to the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 which amends the Education Act 2002 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and places safeguarding duties on 16 to 19 academies and further education to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood and prohibiting funding being given if safeguarding requirements not complied with.

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

- 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,
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, supply staff and visitors working in or on behalf of Bedfordshire Schools Trust.

We will seek support from the local authority through universal services and community-based early help and the targeted early help level of Family Help. We will ensure that we will comply with our duties under all relevant legislation and will ensure this policy and our procedures are effective and comply with the law at all times, this includes training for all staff.

We will ensure that all our parents and working partners are aware of this policy by mentioning it in our academy/nursery prospectus, displaying appropriate information in our reception and on the academy/nursery website and by raising awareness at meetings with our parents/carers.

Everyone at Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) shares an objective to help keep pupils safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in education settings
- Identifying pupils who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.

ACADEMY/NURSERY COMMITMENT

The staff and Local Committee of the Board at this academy/nursery are committed to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of all of its pupils and it aims to create a culture of vigilance. Each pupil's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some pupils may be especially susceptible to abuse e.g. those with Special Educational Needs, those living in adverse circumstances. The academy/nursery recognises that pupils who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Staff recognise that some pupils who have experienced abuse may harm others. Staff will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order to support all pupils. We will always act in the best interest of the pupil.

We teach pupils about safeguarding, including online threats, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

THE AIMS OF THIS POLICY ARE:

- To promote children's welfare
- To support pupil's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard pupils and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse or risk of abuse
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring pupils known or thought to be susceptible or at risk of harm
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff both within individual academies as well as across sites
- To explain the system and procedure within the academy/nursery which will be followed by all staff if they are worried about a pupil's welfare or if they are being abused

- To develop and promote effective holistic working relationships with other agencies such as the Education Welfare Service, Education Psychology Service, Police and Children's Services
- To ensure that all adults within our academy/nursery who have access to pupils or who have access to information, data or meetings concerning children have been checked as to their suitability via their references and the disclosure and barring agency.

EACH ACADEMY/NURSERY WILL ENSURE THAT:

- They have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is a senior member of staff on the senior leadership team, with skills and expertise in the role. They will be trained to the appropriate level, and undertake regular training, in line with KCSIE. The role of DSL will be named in their job description.
- They have at least 2 additional members of staff who will act in the designated teacher's absence
- A member of the Local Committee of the Board is designated to monitor Child Protection and the Director of Education (DoE) of Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) is responsible for monitoring Safeguarding overall
- All members of staff will undergo basic safeguarding and Child Protection training and develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and receive updated training every year, in line with designated good practice
- All members of staff know how to respond to a pupil who makes an allegation or appears to be vulnerable or at risk – all staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused
- All temporary staff and regular volunteers, having contact with our pupils, will be checked (DBS) and given a copy of this policy or a brief checklist of what to do.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures
- All pupils are made aware of who the Child Protection Team are and who they can speak to in the academy/nursery if they are worried or concerned
- Their procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated and reported, as appropriate, to the Local Committee of the Board. (Report produced by Designated Teacher)
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of the academy/nursery's Child Protection Procedures as part of their induction into the academy/nursery
- Child Protection Awareness and updates will be carried out as part of INSET and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- All staff will receive annual refresher training with a review of the Policy taking place in September each year

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At BEST we recognise the possibility that adults working in the academy/nursery may harm children.

All staff should receive appropriate 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 and that online safety training is provided as part of regular updates.

THE TRUST

- BEST has strategic leadership responsibility for the academy/nursery's safeguarding arrangements, and there is a whole academy/nursery approach to safeguarding

- Ensures that there is a safeguarding policy, procedures and training in place which are always effective and comply with the law. The policy is made available publicly
- Makes sure that the policy will be reviewed at least annually or more often, for example in the event of new guidance or a significant incident
- Operates safer recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Furthermore, the Principal, a nominated Governor and other staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training
- Ensures that procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers/ people in a position of trust
- Makes sure that there is a senior member of the academy/nursery leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding and child protection (the "Designated Safeguarding Lead" or deputy) and should always be available during academy/nursery hours, and there is always cover for this role (at least one deputy) with appropriate arrangements for before/after school and out of hours and out of term activities
- Ensures that the Principal/Manager, and all other staff and volunteers who work with children undertake appropriate training which is regularly updated (at least every year); and that new staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the academy/nursery's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities (including this policy and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education). Training should include FGM/Prevent/Child Exploitation
- Makes certain that any deficiencies or weaknesses in these arrangements brought to the attention of the Trust will be rectified without delay
- Assigns the Director of Education (Alison Wilshaw) to deal with any allegations of abuse made against the Principal, with advice and guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ensures that effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually including a behaviour "code of conduct" for staff and volunteers - "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who work with children in education settings February 2022".

LOCAL COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD (LCB)

- Governors will have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS
- Governors will have a section 128 check, to ensure that they are not disqualified from being a governor - this will be carried out using the DfE's Check a Teacher record.
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. This is part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum
- Has a named Governor for Safeguarding, Jo Hankins, who meets with the Designated Safeguarding Lead termly using BEST recommended templates, reporting to the Local Committee of the Board. They will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the academy/nursery
- Ensures that the academy/nursery contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2026 including providing a co-ordinated offer through universal services and community-based early help and the targeted early help level of Family Help for children who require this. This support may be offered directly through our academy/nursery provision or via referral to an external support agency. Safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority
- In terms of GDPR- the Local Committee of the Board and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information we hold safe and secure in

- Makes sure that the academy/nursery complies with all legislative safeguarding duties, including the duty to report suspected or known cases of FGM and the duty to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism. In conjunction with the Principal/Manager and DSL they should assess the level of risk within the academy/nursery and put actions in place to reduce that risk
- Ensure that the academy/nursery operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks (DBS and prohibition) are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children
- Ensure that the academy/nursery has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures
- Makes sure that there is a member of the academy/nursery's leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, and reports to the Local Committee of the Board at every meeting
- Ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated
- Be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure that all staff undertake appropriate 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. The training should be regularly updated
- Remedy, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection arrangements
- Where services or activities are provided on the academy/nursery premises by another body, the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and liaises with the academy/nursery on these matters where appropriate; and they review their policies and procedures annually and provide information to the LA about them and about how the above duties have been discharged
- Includes e-safety[1] and filtering and monitoring systems in its work and reviews effectiveness of provision in this area
- Review the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems at least once every academic year
- Ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have awareness and understanding of the provisions in place for filtering and monitoring and manage them effectively, and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Review Consider the number and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

PRINCIPAL/MANAGER – DEBBIE RANDALL

- Ensures that the policies and procedures adopted by the Local Committee of the Board / Trust Board are fully implemented, and followed by all staff
- Allocates sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities

[1] Throughout this policy, reference to e-safety includes Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Enables all staff and volunteers to feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and addresses such concerns sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle blowing policies
- Allocate a member of SLT via telephone for all out of hours/out of term activities.
- Will be the point of contact and respond to any allegations against staff including low level concerns. Implement robust cover arrangements when the DSL is unavailable and consider using a confidential shared mailbox to ensure responses to concerns are not delayed

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD– TRACY ROWLANDS – TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANNEX B OF KCSIE

- Takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place) during school hours
- Refers cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies
- Acts as a source of support, advice and expertise within the educational establishment
- Strategic oversight of educational outcomes for children with a social worker and those in kinship care
- Liaises with Principal/Manager to inform them of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role under Section 47 of the Children's' Act 1989
- Keeps detailed, accurate, secure written records of safeguarding concerns, decisions made, and whether or not referrals have been made, and understand the purpose of this record-keeping
- Updates the Trust Safeguarding Policy Template as and when it is reviewed to include setting specific details.
- Recognises how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral
- Has a working knowledge of how the LSCB operate, the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these
- Ensures that all staff have access to and understand the academy/nursery's safeguarding policy
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes effective Local authority training (in addition to basic child protection training) and this is refreshed every two years. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals (at least annually) via safeguarding e-briefings etc
- Ensures that all staff have induction training
- Obtains access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years
- Liaises with the named Governors for Safeguarding
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during academy/nursery hours) for staff in the academy/nursery to discuss any safeguarding concerns (availability via phone and or online video call).
- The school must have robust cover arrangements in place for periods when the DSL is unavailable.

DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS (DEBBIE RANDALL, KAREN BOWSKILL & GARY GOTHAM)

- All deputies should be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, as set out above, remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead; this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

DATA MANAGER

- The Data Manager is responsible for maintaining correct information on pupils.

MEMBER OF SLT WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF IT

- Liaises with staff, the Local Authority (LA), IT technical staff, Governors and SLT on all issues related to e- safety
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures that need to be followed in the event of an e-safety incident taking place
- Provide training and advice for staff
- Receive reports of e-safety incidents and creates a log of incidents to inform future e-safety developments
- Co-ordinate and review the academy/nursery's e-safety education programme.

THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- The Attendance Officer, Designated Person or other appropriately designated staff is responsible for notifying Children's Services if a child on a Child Protection Plan is absent for more than two days.

THE PREMISES MANAGER/SITE AGENT

- The Premises Manager is responsible for maintaining the safety and security of the site and ensuring safe access for pupils with disabilities.

ICT NETWORK MANAGERS

Each site's Network Manager is responsible for maintaining safe systems of internet access, blocking any undesirable (e.g. pornographic, racist, violent) sites. This includes checking that:

- Ensure that the IT infrastructure in the academy/nursery is secure and meets e-safety technical requirements
- Ensure that the academy/nursery's password policy is adhered to
- Make sure that the academy/nursery's filtering policy is applied and updated on a regular basis and that its implementation is not the sole responsibility of any single person
- Ensure that the academy/nursery filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content)
- Make sure that the Co-ordinator keeps up to date with e-safety technical information
- Ensure that the academy/nursery's IT infrastructure (network, remote access, e-mail, VLE etc.) is regularly monitored during school hours in order that any misuse or attempted misuse can be reported to the E-Safety Manager, SLT, HOY or PSO for investigation/action/sanction
- Ensure that when children use the academy's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems.
- Have due regard for DfE filtering and monitoring standards, and cyber security standards – see Appendix 3 for links to resources and useful information

PUPILS (TO AN AGE APPROPRIATE LEVEL)

- Are responsible for using the academy IT systems in accordance with the Pupil Acceptable Usage Agreement, which they will be required to sign before being given access to academy systems
- Parents/carers will be required to read through and sign alongside their child's signature
- Understand the importance of reporting abuse, misuse or access to inappropriate materials and know how to do so
- Understand the importance of adopting good e-safety practice when using digital technologies out of the academy and realise that the E-Safety Policy also covers their actions out of the academy, if related to their membership of the academy.

ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING COMMISSIONED SERVICES (SUCH AS COUNSELLORS AND IT CONTRACTED STAFF)

- Fully comply with BEST/the academy/nursery's policies and procedures
- Attend appropriate training
- Inform the designated persons of any safeguarding concerns
- Read and sign that they have understood appropriate policies.

WHAT STAFF NEED TO KNOW

All staff are aware of systems within our academy/nursery which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- Safeguarding policy (and associated policies)
- Behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying)
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding response to children who are absent from education (particularly on repeat occasions and/or for a prolonged period); and
- Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and Keeping Children Safe in Education (as per Appendix 4 of this policy) is provided to staff at induction.

All our staff will receive appropriate 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. The training is regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All our staff will be aware of their local universal services and community-based early help and the targeted early help level of Family Help process and understand their role in it.

All our staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17(children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

All our staff know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children's social care. Staff never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

All our staff are able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

SECTION B - PRINCIPLES, PROCEDURES, PRACTICE AND PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

SAFER RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

BEST pays full regard to the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the academy/nursery who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including e.g. volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and, where appropriate, Barred List Check and Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the academy/nursery'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.

The SCR will be monitored and checked by the DSL/Principal and the Safeguarding Link Governor a minimum of once per term.

Staff and volunteers can join the DBS Update Service at the point that an application for a new DBS check is made, or within 30 calendar days of their certificate issue date

Appointing new staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity. We will keep a copy of this on the successful candidate's personnel file
- Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate
- 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)
- 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 retain a copy of this on the staff personnel file
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate and retain a copy in the staff personnel file
- 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, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- Ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.
- Complete a section 128 check for managers and members of the LCB.
- 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.

We will also carry out searches, including via an online search engine, as part of the due diligence checks – all short-listed candidates will be informed of this prior to undertaking the searches.

Regulated activity means a person who will, as part of their work or volunteering:

- be responsible, on a frequent basis in a school or college, for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children, providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children,
- or engage in intimate or personal care or healthcare or any overnight activity, even if this happens only once. Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work on more than 3 days in a 30 day period or once overnight between 2am and 6am, in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children

Full guidance can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-guidance-leaflets/regulated-activity-with-children#what-is-regulated-activity

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); and
- 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 academy/nursery has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.

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 when the academy/nursery is in session.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the academy/nursery.

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
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools or colleges (set out in paragraphs280-285). This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, academies/nurseries must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the EU, academies/nurseries should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

Governance

All members of the governance team will have an enhanced DBS check and a section 128 check. Governors deemed to be working in regulated activity will have an enhanced DBS check inclusive of a barred list check.

Adults who supervise children on work experience

When the school organises work experience placements they should ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. Schools will refer to KCSIE, paragraph 398-402, when deciding whether an adult requires a DBS check.

SAFE PRACTICE

Each academy/nursery will adopt the IRSC "Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings" (May 2020). The academy/nursery will ensure that all staff are aware of the Keeping Children Safe in Education document, which sets out the requirements for relationships with pupils and expectations of staff.

Safe working practice ensures that pupils are safe and that all staff:

- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Work in an open and transparent way
- Discuss and/or take advice from academy/nursery management over any incident which may give rise to concern
- Record any incidents or decisions made
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of all protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

All adults on school sites will wear a lanyard. The lanyards are categorised as follows:

- Green Lanyard – BEST employee, all safeguarding checks have been completed
- Yellow Lanyard – Contractor or visitor, all safeguarding checks have been completed and verified in school
- Red Lanyard – Visitor, no checks completed. Must be accompanied by someone in a Green Lanyard at all times

SEPARATING PUPILS FOR SAFEGUARDING REASONS

In certain, rare, circumstances we can temporarily forbid a pupil from attending the Academy for example, due to an allegation of harm by one pupil against another which might require physically separating a pupil from one or other pupils.

The DSL must take a lead role in this decision, consulting with other safeguarding agencies as required. It is essential to consider the broader public law principles of acting reasonably, rationally and in a procedurally fair manner.

The Local Committee of the Board must be informed.

Our behaviour policy contains full details of the process and procedure that we follow.

SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION FOR PUPILS

BEST academies/nurseries are committed to ensuring that pupils are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. Exactly how much information and the nature of the explanation should be age appropriate and determined by the individual setting. All pupils know that there are senior members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding and know who they are. Academy/nursery staff inform pupils who they can talk to, both in and out of the academy/nursery, they know their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. The academy/nursery recognises the importance of both mental and physical health of pupils.

Information is made available to pupils, such as Childline and NSPCC helplines, posters and website addresses.

Academy/nursery arrangements for consulting with and listening to pupils are through the pastoral system.

Ensuring pupils are aware of these arrangements, and the staff involved, is a major part of the Induction programme for the new intake. This is followed up in form/class time, assemblies, weekly newsletters, PSHE and daily notices.

Academy/nursery staff regularly audit the curriculum schemes of work to identify appropriate opportunities where pupil safety and analysis of risk can be highlighted.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We share a commitment with parents / carers to keep children safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted. Staff provide information in relation to safeguarding with parents / carers via parent mail, on the website and updates as necessary in the newsletter. Staff are committed to working with parents/carers positively, openly and honestly. Staff ensure that all parents / carers are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. The academy/nursery respects parents'/carers rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless permission has been given or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

The academy/nursery will share with parents / carers any concerns they have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We encourage parents/carers to discuss any concerns they may have with the relevant pastoral team member or class teacher.

Parents/carers are made aware of the academy/nursery's policy by individual academy/nursery prospectus and newsletters, and parents/carers are made aware that they can view this policy on request or on the website.

BEST academies/nurseries follow the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The academy/nursery will, in most circumstances, endeavour to discuss all concerns with parents about their children. However, there may be exceptional circumstances when the academy/nursery will discuss concerns with Children's Services and/or the Police without parental knowledge (in accordance with Child Protection procedures). The academy/nursery will, of course, always aim to maintain a positive relationship with all parents.

WEARABLES AND RECORDING DEVICES IN MEETINGS

No recording of any meetings with staff should take place without the express consent of all parties, this includes recording on any recordable devices, including AI note taking and summarising tools. We will make this clear to visitors on arrival as part of our safeguarding information.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHERS

We recognise that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies e.g. the LA, Children's Services, Police, Healthcare organisations, Childline, Children's Centres and Early Intervention Service. These relationships are continually nurtured and developed via a range of activities and dialogue.

Academies and nurseries, as relevant agencies, should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered, as part of the local arrangements. DSLs (and their deputies) will need to familiarise themselves with local threshold documents produced by the LSCB.

ACADEMY/NURSERY TRAINING AND STAFF INDUCTION

The DSL must undertake child protection training and training in inter–agency working, that is provided by PAN Bedfordshire LSCB and undertake refresher training at 2 yearly intervals. The Principal/Manager and all other academy/nursery staff, including non-teaching staff, undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection induction training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training annually. (The SCR holds all training dates and details). Staff are also committed to sign the BEST Staff Code of Conduct and will also sign to say they have read the following:

- BEST Anti-Bribery Policy (Updated June 2025)
- BEST Confidential Reporting (Whistle blowing) Policy (January 2024)
- BEST Data Protection (GDPR) & Privacy Notices Policy (September 2026)
- BEST Health & Safety Policy (May 2026)
- Behaviour Policy (assigned locally)
- Online Safety Policy (assigned locally)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) – see Appendix 4 for applicable sections
- Child on Child Abuse Policy (assigned locally)

SUPPORT, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Staff will be supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and team.

The DSL will be supported within SLT, by the nominated Governor for safeguarding and LA staff. Advice and support is always available from the Local Authority Designated Officer. Advice is available from Children's Services HUB (0300 300 8585) and the local Police Forces - see contacts list at the end of this policy.

RELATED ACADEMY/NURSERY PRACTICE AND POLICIES

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety and bullying, and a range of other issues, for example, arrangements for meeting the medical needs of children, providing first aid, academy/nursery security, drugs and substance misuse, GDPR etc. There may also be other contextualised safeguarding issues that are specific to the local area or population. These related policies can be found on our website.

HEALTH AND SAFETY – (For more information see full and detailed policy)

BEST's Health and Safety Policy, which can be found on the BEST website, reflects the consideration given to the protection of children both within the academy/nursery environment and when away from the academy/nursery when undertaking academy/nursery trips and visits.

Each academy/nursery ensures the safety of its environment for pupils through:

- Controlling access to the site - a single entry/exit access point for visitors, which is supervised by reception staff
- Ensuring that the academy/nursery complies with health and safety requirements for all on-site activities
- Ensuring risk assessments are in place before allowing any trips, visits or work experience placements
- Vigilant monitoring to guard against intruders, antisocial behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse on site
- Curriculum activities and social areas compliant with health & safety requirements
- Work experience arrangements that include safeguarding information for employers and a requirement that they accept their child protection responsibilities
- Lanyards issued to visitors with prior appointments, after their identity has been checked
- Visitors being met at reception and escorted into the academy/nursery
- Signing-out arrangements for pupils with permission to leave the site
- Record of staff/visitors signing in/out
- Supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- The school will not allow children into toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. Separate toilets must be provided for boys and girls aged 8 and over, and separate changing rooms/showers for those aged 11 and over (at the start of the academic year). Schools may want to consider alternative toileting and changing facilities to support children who are questioning their gender. Any alternative arrangements should not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child, or of any other children

INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

When recording, holding, using and sharing information, the DSL will ensure that they:

- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with other schools on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, in particular the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

- Are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale of those decisions. This will include instances where referrals were and were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program.

BEST has regard to Information Sharing and follow the PAN Bedfordshire LSCB guidance and procedures. Personal information about children and families held by agencies should not normally be disclosed without the consent of the subject. The law permits, however, the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard the child or act in their best interests.

The academy/nursery is aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

This includes:

- Confidence in the processing conditions which allow us to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and is treated as 'special category personal data'
- Understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but 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
- For academies/nurseries, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met they must withhold providing the data in compliance with academy/nursery's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt academies/nurseries should seek independent legal advice.

Data protection laws **do not** prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Victims of stalking or harassment can request the erasure of their personal data under UK GDPR Article 17(1)(g) if it relates to a malicious, unfounded allegation

Other relevant BEST / academy / nursery policies / procedures which should be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- Anti-Racism Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Online safety including pupil acceptable use agreement
- Cyber Security Policy (BEST / PEL)
- Equality Policy – BEST (and Equality Statement for the setting)
- Supporting Students and Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Misuse of Drugs & Alcohol Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Attendance Policy

- Behaviour Management & Physical Intervention Policy
- Admissions Policy - BEST
- Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting Policy) - BEST
- Teaching & Learning Handbook
- Sex & Relationships Policy
- Screening, Searching & Confiscation Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy & Privacy Notices – BEST
- Child on Child Abuse Policy (formerly known as Peer on Peer Abuse Policy)
- Recruitment and Selection Policy (BEST)
- Supervision (DSL) Policy (BEST)

These policies can be found on either of the following links for BEST policies https://www.bestacademies.org.uk/page/?title=Governance&pid=7

and academy/nursery policies: https://www.langfordvillageacademy.org.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=47

PUPIL INFORMATION

In order to keep pupils safe and provide appropriate care for them, the academy/nursery will maintain accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the pupil normally lives
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- Emergency contact details (if different from above)
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the pupil from the academy/nursery (if different from above)
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the pupil (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc)
- If the pupil is or has been the subject of a Child Protection Plan/ statutory assessment
- Name and contact detail of GP
- Medical conditions
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the pupil

The academy/nursery will collate, store and agree access to this information. The Data Protection Policy informs stakeholders how and what data is shared. Parents/carers are then able to opt out of this system. The academy/nursery's Data Manager has control over access to information.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

This may include covering relevant issues for academies through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) which was made compulsory from September 2020, with statutory guidance here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

Academies and nurseries play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture where sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment are never tolerated. The academy/nursery will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of academy/nursery life. These will be underpinned by the academy/nursery's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole

curriculum. Such a programme should be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities). This program will tackle at an age-appropriate stages issues such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- The concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, sextortion, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

The following resources may also help:

- DfE advice for schools: teaching online safety in schools
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)30 guidance: Education for a connected- world
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme: Thinkuknow
- Public Health England: Rise Above.

Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) became compulsory from September 2021. Academies have flexibility to decide how they discharge their duties effectively within the first year of compulsory teaching and are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects.

MOBILE PHONES

The Academy will be a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils should not have access to phones during the school day, including lessons and breaktimes. See individual Academies mobile phone policies for more details.

SINGLE-SEX SPORT

Academies can separate children by biological sex for competitive sports where physical strength, stamina or physique would put one sex at a disadvantage

Where there are no safety concerns and a child makes a request relating to how they participate, we will consider the request in light of the advice on “considering requests for support with social transition”. This means that we would take into account all the relevant factors, including whether supporting social transition is overall in the best interests of the child, as well as considering the impact on other children and the aim of creating safe and fair environments for children to participate in PE.

SECTION C - IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT HARM

Teachers and other adults in our academies/nurseries are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or academy/nursery staff being alerted to concerns.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

All staff should be aware of the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support needed for siblings following incidents. There may be ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or academy/nursery staff.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Governing bodies should ensure their safeguarding policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and the SENCO or the named person with oversight for SEND.

We will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

Clinical incidents in school should be reviewed by the DSL and health professional to determine if a safeguarding duty is triggered

Further information can be found in the Department's:

- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25, and
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.

And from specialist organisations:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people

with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: Find your local IAS service (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

- Council for disabled children - Every Local area has an information, advice and support service, providing information, advice and support to disabled children and young people, and those with SEND, and their parents.

DEFINITIONS

CHILD - As in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

HARM - Means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, such as domestic abuse

DEVELOPMENT - Means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development

HEALTH - Includes physical and mental health

ILL-TREATMENT - Includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical

INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and modern slavery, and will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside the home, and online. Staff will also be aware that pupils can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse.

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

ABUSE is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they can see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse

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

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Improbable explanation for injuries
- Untreated injuries or lingering illness not attended to
- Disclosure of punishment which appears to be excessive
- Shrinking from physical contact

- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Fear of undressing
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression / bullying
- Running away from home
- Significant changes in behaviour with no apparent explanation
- Deterioration in work
- Unexplained pattern of absences which may serve to hide bruises or other physical injuries.

SEXUAL ABUSE involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, 13 including assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on body
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital regions
- Pregnancy, particularly in the case of young adolescents who are evasive concerning the identification of the father
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age shown in drawings, vocabulary, games etc
- Frequent public masturbation
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual behaviour
- Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- Withdrawal from friends.

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

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Continual self-deprecation
- Fear of new situations

- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Drug / solvent abuse
- 'Neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb- sucking etc
- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- Desperate attention seeking behaviour
- Eating problems, including over-eating and lack of appetite.

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

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at the academy/nursery
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Constant tiredness
- Weight loss.

POSSIBLE SIGNS IN OLDER CHILDREN

- Promiscuity, pros tuition, provocative sexual behaviour
- Self-injury, self-destructive behaviour, self-harm attempts
- Eating disorders
- Tiredness, lethargy, listlessness
- Over compliant behaviour
- Sleep disturbances
- Unexplained gifts of money
- Depression
- Changes in behaviour.

CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION

All academies/nurseries follow the guidance from the PAN Bedfordshire LSCB.

Knowing where pupils are during academy/nursery hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines. It is important that the academy's response to persistently absent pupils and unexplainable absences from education is supportive, that any potential abuse is identified and that the risk of the pupil becoming a child missing education in the future is reduced.

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

The academy/nursery will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not attending the academy/nursery. This means the academy/nursery expects to have at least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the academy/nursery as soon as possible if the numbers change. In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education the academy/nursery has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions)
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Procedures to inform the local authority when the academy plans to take pupils off-roll when they:

- Leave school to be home educated
- Move away from the academy's location
- Remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- Are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to the academy afterwards); or
- Are permanently excluded.

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

When a pupil leaves the academy/nursery, the academy/nursery will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date. Further information can be found in 'Children Missing in Education: statutory guidance for Local Authorities' -September 2016

Further information and support can be found in Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We expect that the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best interests at the heart of the decision. However, we know this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended, we must inform our LA of all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from the academy with view to educating at home, we will work together with parents and other agencies, where appropriate, to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible.

CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON

Children with family members in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE (INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE)

All our staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of the academy/nursery and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported

It is a safeguarding issue for both victim and alleged perpetrator, it is preventable and it may involve serious physical harm or threats involving weapons.

All our staff understand, that even if there are no reports in their academy/nursery it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child on child abuse, they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

All our staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We recognise that for some (but not all) forms of child-on-child abuse it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously

As with all abuse, all our staff have a zero tolerance to child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- 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,
- Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment – which may include misogyny/misandry. Part five of this guidance sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of this nature,
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI.
- 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
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence44), 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
- Initiation/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).

Staff must recognise the escalatory nature of misogyny and identify these behaviours early to prevent serious sexual violence

All our staff are clear as to the academy/nursery's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All our staff will be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from the academy, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a

significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation

All our staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from the academy, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. Advice for school is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

All our staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer or child on child abuse). This is most likely to include but may not be limited to:

- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- 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).

HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPOITATION (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

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

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex
- Can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim
- Can still be abused even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- Can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and noncontact sexual activity
- Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- May occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media)

- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)

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, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

COUNTY LINES

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

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

If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Safeguarding Leads may contact the local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency number) to discuss concerns in confidence and help gain access to support and advice.

The local authority or police might suggest a referral to the 'Channel' programme. 'Channel' is a voluntary Government funded programme which aims to safeguard children and adults from being drawn into terrorist activity. 'Channel' can provide a support plan and specific interventions to protect people at risk, including mentoring support or an ideological or theological intervention. For more information about 'Channel' call 101 to discuss concerns.

For further information refer to Prevent Duty Guidance for England & Wales, dated 2023, published by HM Government.

PREVENTING RADICALISATION

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty").

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

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

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

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

RECOGNISING EXTREMISM

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures

- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside of the academy
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent)
- Secretive behaviour
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Verbalising anti-western or anti-British views
- Advocating violence towards others.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK. FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- Low level of integration into UK society
- Mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- Visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- Talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems
- Frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Prolonged or repeated absences from the academy, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- Confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure. Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

HONOUR BASED ABUSE (HBA) AND CULTURAL BELIEFS (INCLUDING WITCHCRAFT)

Honour based abuse can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others. So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) or 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA/HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Faith abuse, which includes practices relating to a belief in spirit possession and witchcraft is often a hidden crime which is under-reported but can have a significant impact on children. Child abuse linked to faith or belief is not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community. There is a variety of definitions associated with abuse linked to faith of belief. The National Action Plan includes the below when referring to Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB).

Belief in concepts of:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or muti murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.

(The National FGM Centre)

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is a safeguarding and child protection issue any child or young person who has been witness to or involved in incidents of domestic abuse will have suffered a degree of trauma, likely to be at risk of emotional damage and or physical injury. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

BEST academies work in conjunction with Police's Operation Encompass team to support those pupils who live in homes where domestic abuse has been reported. Staff monitor, record and pass on any concerns to the

relevant staff or agency. Allegations of domestic abuse or the risk of witnessing of such incidents will be referred to the Multi agency support hub as a referral to social care.

FORCED MARRIAGE

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Since February 2023, it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

This is a safeguarding and CP issue. The academy/nursery will ensure:

- All staff need to be aware of any signs that would indicate a pupil is concerned that they may be taken away
- There are close checks on requests for holidays abroad or requests for leave of absence
- There is close monitoring of attendance and reasons for absence. This may include EWO involvement. Concerns regarding the possibility of forced marriage will be referred to the Intake & Assessment Team.

Further information and guidance is linked in Appendix 3.

HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS (HSB)

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent. Behaviour that is problematic, abusive or violent is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. The umbrella term 'harmful sexual behaviour' (HSB) is widely used in child protection and applies to behaviour occurring online, face-to-face, or both**.** HSB should always be considered within a child protection context.

When assessing HSB, the ages and developmental stage of the children involved is critical. Sexual behaviour between children may be considered harmful if there is a significant age difference, typically more than two years' difference or if one is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child may also abuse an older child, especially if they hold power over them, e.g. due to a disability or physical size.

HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Early intervention in inappropriate behaviour such as misogyny can help prevent escalation to more serious abuse.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

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

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (academies should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos (including AI generated images and videos).

- Sexualised online bullying
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; sextortion; and up skirting.

In cases where child-on-child abuse has been found to have taken place, a relevant risk assessment will be carried out for both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). The risk assessment will be shared with the appropriate staff and reviewed regularly. It may be necessary to seek further guidance from Children's social care or other safeguarding partners.

The NSPCC runs a dedicated helpline (Report Abuse in Education) for people who have experienced sexual abuse in education. The number is 0800 136 663 and the email is help@nspcc.org.uk.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

It is important that staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. This can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

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

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

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

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Consent: Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity,

- the age of consent is 16, and
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

SHARING NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES

In cases where children share nudes and semi-nudes we follow guidance given in KCSIE 2026, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people 2024 and by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in 2017: 'Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people'. We will take a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual.

The criminalisation of "up-skirting" as discussed in KCSIE, defines 'up skirting' as a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders. This is not tolerated and will be reported to relevant agencies.

RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF HSB, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The academy/nursery will respond to all reports and concerns of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence, including those that have happened outside of the academy/nursery premises, and or online (what to look out for, and indicators of abuse are set out in Part one of this guidance).

HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. All staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

The academy/nursery will carefully consider any report of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the academy/nursery's initial response.

Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. We will support victims to be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the academy/nursery's duty and responsibilities to protect other children
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour
- The ages of the children involved
- The developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty

- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature).

Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

Any report of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim.

However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim, and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator(s) is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the academy establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The academy should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on the academy premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the academy, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

For other reports of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing academy premises and academy transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the academy will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

Options to manage the report

We will consider every report on a case-by-case basis.

All reports of sexual assault and rape will be reported to the police.

When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not us from taking immediate action to safeguard children, where required.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s)

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- The academy/nursery has a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, we need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, we will safeguard and support as appropriate and implement any sanctions
- We will consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them
- We will consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police

- If an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), we will inform the new educational institution of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file

The National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) provides support for professionals involved in work with, or related to, sexual offending.

HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

We understand the importance that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. We know that evidence shows girls, children with SEND, LGB and gender questioning children are at greater risk.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

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

MENTAL HEALTH

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise.

These could include:

- significant changes in behaviour,
- ongoing difficulty sleeping,
- withdrawing from social situations,
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, by identifying these and other potential warning signs, education staff can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention. Schools and colleges should ensure that any interventions they offer are evidenced as safe and effective and appropriate for the need and phase of education.

More information can be found in the Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance. Schools will develop links with their local Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) from CAMHS. Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See Every Mind Matters for links to all materials and lesson plans.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

ONLINE SAFETY – READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

Each academy/nursery ensures that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material and apply the appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks. We have an effective whole academy/nursery approach to online safety empowers us to protect and educate pupils, students, our staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: 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; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes,
- **Conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying,
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams

Local Governing Bodies should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The school will take steps to prepare pupils for changing and emerging technologies, e.g. generative AI and how to use them safely and appropriately with consideration given to pupils' age. Children will be specifically taught about the risks and benefits of AI as part of the e-safety curriculum.

The school will ensure its IT system includes appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to limit pupil's ability to access or create harmful or inappropriate content through generative AI.

The school will ensure that pupils are not accessing or creating harmful or inappropriate content, including through generative AI.

The school will take steps to ensure that personal and sensitive data is not entered into generative AI tools and that it is not identifiable.

The school will take steps to ensure that images shared on websites and social media do not place children at risk, including from AI image and video creation, often known as deepfakes.

BEST will provide guidance to schools on best and safest practices in use of generative AI and the school will make use of any further guidance and support that enables it to have a safe, secure and reliable foundation in place before using more powerful technology such as generative AI.

FILTERING AND MONITORING

Local Committees of the Board must ensure that they are doing all they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the risks from the school's IT system. As part of this, the trust and LCBs ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly review their effectiveness – see Local Committee of the Board roles and responsibilities section.

A review of the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems will be carried out at least once every academic year by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the school's designated safeguarding lead and IT support. They should include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations, and a record should be kept of these checks.

The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

In order to meet this duty, BEST settings have due regard for the Department for Education filtering and monitoring standards and commit to:

• identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems

• review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually

• block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning

• have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

See Appendix 3 for links to useful resources and additional guidance.

ONLINE HOAXES & CHALLENGES

A hoax is a deliberate lie designed to seem truthful. A challenge will generally involve the user recording themselves taking a challenge and then distributing it – the circulation of these challenges may dare or inspire others to try it. Many challenges can be potentially harmful or life threatening. In cases of online hoaxes or challenges, we follow the Harmful Online Challenges and Online Hoaxes non-statutory DfE guidance (published 12th February 2021).

The DSL should be involved with any suspected or reported cases of online hoaxes or challenges. Each case will be reviewed individually to assess the scale and nature of possible risk to children and young people. The DSL will assess the facts of the situation and whether it is a national risk or localised to the area or institution. The DSL can check the factual basis with reliable sources such as Professional Online Safety Helpline from the UK Safer Internet Centre. If it is a local risk, local advice will be sought such as the Local Authority or police as appropriate.

CHILD ABDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INCIDENTS

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a academy/nursery can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to an academy on their own) it is important we provide practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. As a academy/nursery we provide outdoor-safety lessons run by our teachers or by local police staff. Lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org

HOMELESSNESS

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases we will consider homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The department and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: here.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

There are many children who have additional needs or whose living arrangements may mean that they are more vulnerable to harm, for example children with special educational needs, disabled children, children in public care or privately fostered children. It is essential that the academy/nursery knows who shares parental responsibility for children and has effective relationships with partner agencies in relation to these children (for example, Virtual School for Children in Care).

We will ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge and guidance so that they are aware of the additional challenges faced by these children and the impact of their additional vulnerabilities. These can include: assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's disability without further exploration; no single point of contact for the academy/nursery as a child has a number of care-givers and involved professionals; assumptions that state approved care-givers are providing safe care for the child; communication needs of a child which can lead to over reliance on parental accounts and interpretations.

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse and/or neglect. Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

In particular, we ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. We also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of. authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The Designated. Safeguarding lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD – EXTRA DUTIES

In addition to their statutory duties, the role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.

SECTION 41 -STATUTORY CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS AND SERVICES

Concerns about a child's welfare should be referred to local authority children's social care. We will work closely with the local authority children's social care, and follow relevant advice and guidance accordingly.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, the academy/nursery will make a referral to children's social care and if appropriate the police is made immediately.

Referrals will follow the local referral process. We will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. Additional information is available here: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/11/children_and_young_people/112/child_protection_-_safeguarding_children_and_young_people

Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children. Examples of poor practice include:

- Failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- Poor record keeping
- Failing to listen to the views of the child
- Failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- Not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- Sharing information too slowly
- A lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

CHILDREN POTENTIALLY AT GREATER RISK OF HARM

Whilst all children should be protected, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors recognise (and reflect in their policies and procedures) that some groups of children, are potentially at greater risk of harm than others (both online and offline), such as children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans) or children who are absent from education.

Sometimes children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children 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.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, but all staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is pregnant or is a parent themselves
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Has a family member in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Is persistently absent from education
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.

We will not limit our support to pupils affected by the above and will be mindful of a variety of additional circumstances in which may benefit from additional support, for example, if they are:

- Bereaved
- Viewing problematic or inappropriate online content or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Have recently returned home to their family from care
- Missing education, or are persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education.

Staff will be mindful of all signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and use their professional curiosity to raise concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will take the lead where universal services and community-based early help and the targeted early help level of Family Help is appropriate. This includes liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. The local processes will be followed as required.

CHILDREN WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL (LGB)

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

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGB lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

LGB inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic bullying and abuse.

CHILDREN WHO ARE QUESTIONING THEIR GENDER

We recognise that there are children who attend our school who are questioning the way they feel about being a boy or a girl and recognise that these feelings may intensify into puberty. We will not initiate any action in this area, but will respond sensitively and with care where a child or parent has raised a request relating to social transition. We will take time to understand the thoughts and feelings of children who are questioning their gender and be professionally curious about the full range of their experiences. Social transition involves making changes in school that affirm a child's preferred gender identity, this might include changes such as a preferred name or a request to use specific pronouns.

The Academy is legally required to record a child's biological sex accurately wherever it is recorded.

We recognise that there are potential vulnerabilities for those who are questioning their gender, and will safeguard all children in their best interests.

We will not tolerate bullying of any kind, including that in relation to children who are questioning their gender and will take a strong stand in this case.

We are also conscious of the rights of children and staff in relation to their religion or belief.

Where a child or parent has raised a request relating to social transition the school will take a careful approach and always act in the best interests of the child and other children. This may mean that a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as the child's wishes.

Parents and carers will be actively involved and have the leading role in the lives of their children and we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority and treat their views with importance. We will work with parents to determine what is in their child's best interest, seeking support from the DSL and other professionals, for example, the SENCO or clinical advice where available. There is a recognition that older children will have greater agency, but parents' views must be considered.

Staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transitioning unless a decision has been made by the DSL and Pastoral leaders in consultation with parents. We recognise that this is an active intervention and will take a very careful approach

It is recognised that some children may be living in stealth (school friends and staff are unaware of the biological sex of the child) and that these children are particularly vulnerable and may require further support from pastoral staff.

In rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the DSL will be involved to determine the appropriate course of action.

Decisions will be made in line with advice and guidance in KCSIE (2026) and the decision-making process must be documented on the child's record on CPOMS. The DSL and other relevant members of staff may need to review any decisions made, taking into account any new factors that have become known, this should continue to involve the parent and the child. It is important to maintain flexibility and keep options open for children who have socially transitioned. There will be support available for those children who wish to de-transition, and we will work closely with parents and relevant professionals on this.

In cases where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings, but does not ask us to make changes to how they are treated, this can be recorded on CPOMS and support offered, but there is no need to share this information with parents, unless there is a related safeguarding risk.

We will still comply with obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and School Premises (England) Regulations (2012). We will not allow children into toilets, changing rooms designated for the opposite sex, with no exceptions. We can separate children by biological sex for competitive sports where physical strength or stamina would put one sex at a disadvantage. When discussing requests for social transition with children we will be clear that any changes will not allow access to toilets or changing rooms designated for the opposite sex and will not include allowing children to join PE classes designated for the opposite sex where there are safety reasons for single-sex PE.

For further guidance, refer to KCSIE (2026, paragraphs 245-275)

VULNERABLE ADULTS

There is a recognition in this policy that for those Academies with a Sixth Form, there are likely to be young adults in our care (aged 18+). The academy will ensure that there are staff who are trained in protecting vulnerable adults, and the details and procedures contained within this policy also apply to any vulnerable adults within our care.

PRIVATE FOSTERING

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

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Each academy/nursery has a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a pupil is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although the academy/nursery has a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the academy/nursery. However, it should be clear to the academy/nursery who has parental responsibility.

Academy/nursery staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the pupil involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The academy/nursery itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

On admission to the academy/nursery, the academy/nursery will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the pupil who is being registered.

YOUNG CARERS

We are alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services.

CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS

We recognise that children with medical conditions may be more vulnerable, particularly if they do not attend school well. A safeguarding referral would only be needed where an incident highlighted concern that the child or young person might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family unit because of their medical condition. This might occur where relevant information

about a child or young person's medical condition is not provided to a school, college or setting, or where they are repeatedly sent without essential medication, thereby putting the individual at risk. See our policy on Children with Medical Conditions for more information.

SECTION D - TAKING ACTION TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE SAFE AT EACH ACADEMY/NURSERY AND AT HOME

(see Flow Chart in Appendix 2)

Our staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, we act on them immediately. If staff have a concern, we follow our organisation's safeguarding policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). It is not the responsibility of academy/nursery staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. This may only be investigated by the Police, NSPCC or Social Care. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. All concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be recorded on CPOMS and discussed with the DSL or DDSL prior to any discussion with parents.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 places a statutory duty on all those in regulated activity, including those working in schools to report sexual abuse when they are made aware of it. This duty requires those taking part in regulated activity to make a report if they:

- are told about child sexual abuse, either by a child or an adult involved
- witness child sexual abuse in person
- see or hear it in the form of images, videos or audio recordings.

STAFF WILL IMMEDIATELY REPORT ON CPOMS

- Any 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
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- Any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. Worrying drawings or play)
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- Any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- Any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- Any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. Living in a household with children present).

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils, parents/carers or other members of the public. The academy/nursery recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity. Should pupils have communication difficulties the academy/nursery will ensure they are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate skills wherever possible.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the DSL and make a contemporaneous record on CPOMS as soon as possible following the disclosure.

TIMING OF REFERRALS

Academies have no legal right to stop the young person from going home at the end of the academy day, unless otherwise authorised by the relevant services, so it is vital that referrals are made as early as possible, especially if it is believed that the young person would not be safe in going home.

It is particularly important that any concerns about the Safeguarding and Protection of a child or young person is raised as soon as possible to ensure that matters can be dealt with prior to any academy/nursery holiday breaks. This is in order to safeguard the young person and ensure systems are in place, but also to ensure that relevant staff are available to attend any strategy meetings, conferences or to provide reports. Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated persons in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm
- Try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of academy/nursery staff
- Clarify the information if necessary
- Try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?' using the 6r's recognise, receive, reassure, respond, record, refer. Staff may also choose to use 'TED': Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child
- Explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
- Reassure and support the person as far as possible
- Explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told but the information does have to be passed onto relevant members of staff
- Explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate
- Share the information in writing as soon as possible even if there has been a verbal conversation using the CPOMs system.

ACTION BY THE DSL OR DDSL IN THEIR ABSENCE

Following any information raising concern, the DSL will consider:

- Any urgent medical needs of the child, with advice from a qualified first aider
- Discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- Consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Children's services
- Making a report to the police
- The child's wishes.

Then decide:

- Wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
- Whether to make a child protection referral to social care (intake and assessment) because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately. Any serious concerns will be reported immediately to children's services via a written referral or via telephone prior to referral being completed

or

- Not to make a referral at this stage, an Early Help Assessment Form (EHA) may be more appropriate
- If further monitoring is necessary
- If it would be appropriate/beneficial to undertake an assessment (e.g. standard referral) and/or make a referral for other services.

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, and decisions not made (where appropriate), will be fully documented on CPOMS. All referrals to Children's Services will be made on their referral system.

ACTION FOLLOWING A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL

The DSL or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Make regular contact with Children's Services and wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion
- Provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference
- If the child or children are the subject of a Child Protection Plan, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Child Protection Conferences
- Where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings
- Where a child who is the subject of a child protection plan moves from the academy/nursery or goes missing, immediately inform the key worker in Children's Services.

We recognise that staff working in the academy/nursery who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. The academy/nursery will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the designated teacher and to seek further support as appropriate.

RECORDING AND MONITORING

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable via the CPOMS system and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All Child Protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file in the CPOMS system. These records will be transferred to any academy/nursery or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of DSL.' Original copies will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

Where children leave the academy/nursery, the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new setting 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 to allow the new setting to have support in place for when the child arrives. The DSL should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as DSLs and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND), are aware as required.

When a pupil transfers to a new school or college, the DSL or a deputy should share any information about a child indicating potential risk to self or others

SUPPORTING THE CHILD AND PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The academy/nursery recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, however, good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents.

Whilst academy staff may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, they will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling their duties to protect any child.

The academy/nursery will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child.

Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age & understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.

The academy/nursery will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The DSL will determine which members of staff "need to know" personal information and what they "need to know" for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

WHISTLEBLOWING

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

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

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

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

ALLEGATIONS REGARDING PERSON(S) WORKING IN OR ON BEHALF OF THE ACADEMY/NURSERY (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS) – INCLUDING LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

The academy/nursery has procedures for dealing with allegations against a member of staff, supply teachers, volunteers or contractors. These procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance and have regard to this guidance (BEST do not have a separate low level concerns policy).

Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the academy/nursery should be referred to the Principal/Nursery Manager (or DSL in their absence); any concerns about a Principal/Manager should be referred to the Trust's Director of Education who will inform the Chair of Governors of the concerns.

Where it is alleged that anyone working in an academy/nursery that provides education for children under 18 years of age (including all paid or unpaid staff, trainee teachers, supply teachers and volunteers) has:

- 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; and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children if they work regularly or closely with children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The academy/nursery will follow the procedures set out in the Trust's Managing Allegations of Abuse policy. This includes allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold.

When dealing with allegations, we will:

- Apply common sense and judgement
- Deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently; and
- Provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should still be shared using the low-levels concerns form in the Managing Allegations of Abuse policy.

Any repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in any reference.

Throughout the process of handling allegations and at the conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the LADO should review the circumstances of the case with the case manager to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the academy/nursery's procedures to help prevent similar events in the future. This should include issues arising from any decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified. Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The LADO and case manager should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

For all other cases, where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the case manager (and if they have been involved the LADO) should consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if improvements can be made.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Academies/nurseries should ensure that low-level concerns are shared confidentially in a way which is clear, easy to understand and implement. Whether all low-level concerns are shared initially with the DSL (or a nominated person (such as a values guardian/ safeguarding champion), or with the Principal/Manager is a matter for the setting to decide. If the former, then the DSL should inform the Principal/Manager of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern. The Principal/Manager should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in some settings, the Principal/Manager may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

The academy/nursery will ensure all staff understand the Trust's policy for managing allegations, including the contact details and what information the LADO will require when an allegation is made.

Governors

If an allegation is made against a governor, the academy/nursery will follow their own local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, we will follow the procedures to consider removing the person from office.

Allegations against a governor should be reported to the Chair of the LCB and Principal. The Principal will keep the BEST CEO and DoE appraised of the situation. If the allegation is against the Chair of the LCB, this should be reported to the BEST CEO and DoE.

Allegations against a trustee should be reported to the Chair of the Trust Board and BEST CEO. If the allegation is against the Chair of the Board, this should be reported to the BEST CEO and Vice Chair of the Board.

THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND REASONABLE FORCE IN SCHOOLS/NURSERIES

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force and restrictive interventions to safeguard children and young people.

Restrictive intervention is a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This is the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force is a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Departmental advice for schools is available:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6943dad6501cdd438f4cf5aa/Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf

USE OF PREMISES FOR NON-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The academy will ensure that when/if we hire out our academy/nursery facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

When services or activities are provided by the academy/nursery under the direct supervision or management of our academy/nursery this safeguarding policy applies.

Where an external body is providing community or extra-curricular activities The academy will seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements to lease with the academy on these matters where appropriate. The academy will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

DfE guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Out-Of-School Settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect providers to have in place.

Academies may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, the academy will follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

The academy will remain responsible for a pupil's safeguarding during their time at an alternative provider. When placing a pupil with an alternative provider, the school will obtain written confirmation that the provider has conducted all relevant safeguarding checks on staff i.e. Those checks that the academy would otherwise have performed on their own staff, and will satisfy itself that the placement is meeting the pupil's need. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the academy of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes) so that the academy can ensure that all appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

Those responsible for the commissioning of alternative provision will be aware that pupils in alternative provision will often have complex needs – they will be mindful of the additional risk of harm that these pupils may be vulnerable to.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement should be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

The Department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

Alternative provision - DfE Statutory Guidance

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH SAFEGUARDING

We will develop a curriculum to teach children how they can safeguard themselves. This will sit within a whole-school culture of safeguarding and will create a zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.

The curriculum will tackle issues such as:

- supporting children to develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships
- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise and report concerns about an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- the concepts of, and laws relating to – all forms of sexual harassment, and abuse, and how to access support,
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it, and
- understanding online harms such as sharing images, the prevalence of deepfakes, pornography and misogynistic influencers and when and where to seek help.

SECTION E - SAFEGUARDING DURING GOVERNMENT MANDATED PERIODS OF SCHOOL/NURSERY CLOSURE

During periods of academy/nursery closures, for example, during national emergencies or government mandated closures, The academy/nursery will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them.
We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners and refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings.

We will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Tracy Rowlands

In circumstances where a parent is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and we will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in this policy, this includes making a report via CPOMs (or equivalent reporting system if CPOMs is not used), which can be done remotely.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

The DSL and safeguarding team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children they should continue to follow this policy.

Referrals to the local authority will continue as outlined in this policy. All Child Protection, Child in Need and Team around a Child meetings will continue remotely. A member of the academy/nursery safeguarding team will attend. The DSL or DDSL will attend any strategy meetings arranged remotely.

Children and online safety away from the academy/nursery

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the BEST code of conduct.

The academy/nursery will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider if there are virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred
- Where a teacher has concerns about a specific group, it is good practice to record a live class so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- During 1:1 support sessions, the meeting is recorded and stored in the Google Drive.

Supporting children not in the academy/nursery as they are following clinical or public health advice

The academy/nursery is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people. Where the DSL has identified/considered a child to be in need who is not subject to a statutory assessment, but who would normally access pastoral support within the academy, robust communication and planning should be in place to ensure the young person is safe.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMs (or equivalent recording system if CPOMs is not used), as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The academy/nursery and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The academy/nursery recognises that academy/nursery is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Staff need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All pupils at risk and with Child Protection Plans are monitored by the DSL and relevant staff members regularly at academy/nursery based safeguarding meetings where appropriate.

The DSL meets the Principal/Manager every two weeks and more frequently where necessary to monitor individual cases.

The DSL provides the designated Governor with a briefing paper annually and discusses updated information more frequently where appropriate.

Regular 'blind' checks of a sample of staff will be carried out by the external SI partner and auditor to ensure correct practices are accurately understood.

All staff regularly receive updated Child Protection information and training.

All adults working on a temporary or casual basis are required to read and sign for key policies before working with pupil(s).

Regular questionnaires regarding safeguarding issues and the perception of safety are issued to pupils, parents/carers and staff, the results analysed and data used to inform future planning and practice.

The Trust commission and annual safeguarding audit

The BEST Director for SEND and Safeguarding monitors the effectiveness of this policy in each academy/nursery

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Intimate Care Guidelines

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Raising a Concern Flow Chart

Appendix 3 - Signposting to Useful Contacts

Appendix 4 – KCSIE – who needs to read what?

Appendix 5 – Staff training requirements

Appendix 6 – CPOMs categories guide

Appendix 7 – Updates to BEST Safeguarding Policy Template

Author: BEST Director of Education, BEST Director of SEND and Safeguarding and DSLs

Date: September 2025

APPENDIX 1: Intimate Care Guidelines

Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding. All staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust. The pupil's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some pupils are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. It may also include invasive or non-invasive medical procedures. It also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

BEST staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so. This includes training in child protection, health and safety, and training in moving and handling, and are fully aware of best practice regarding infection control.

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care to discuss their needs and preferences, aiming for as much independence as possible. Where the child is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission should be sought before starting an intimate procedure.

Pupils who require regular assistance with intimate care have this noted on their care plan. Where a care plan is not in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs.

It is generally best practice for two people to undertake personal care of a young person, however, it is not always practical for two members of staff to assist with an intimate procedure and also this does not take account of the pupil's privacy. A member of staff will inform another adult when they are going to assist a child with intimate care.

It is best if there is a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing.

Wherever possible staff should care for a child of the same sex. However, the developmental age and stage needs to be considered.

Intimate care involves risks for pupils and adults as it may involve staff touching intimate areas on a pupil's body. It may be unrealistic to expect to eliminate these risks completely but best practice will be promoted and all adults will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times.

A written record will be kept in an agreed format every time a child requires assistance with intimate care, including date, times and any comments such as changes in the pupil's behaviour. It should be clear who was present. These records will be kept in the pupil's file and available to parents/carers on request.

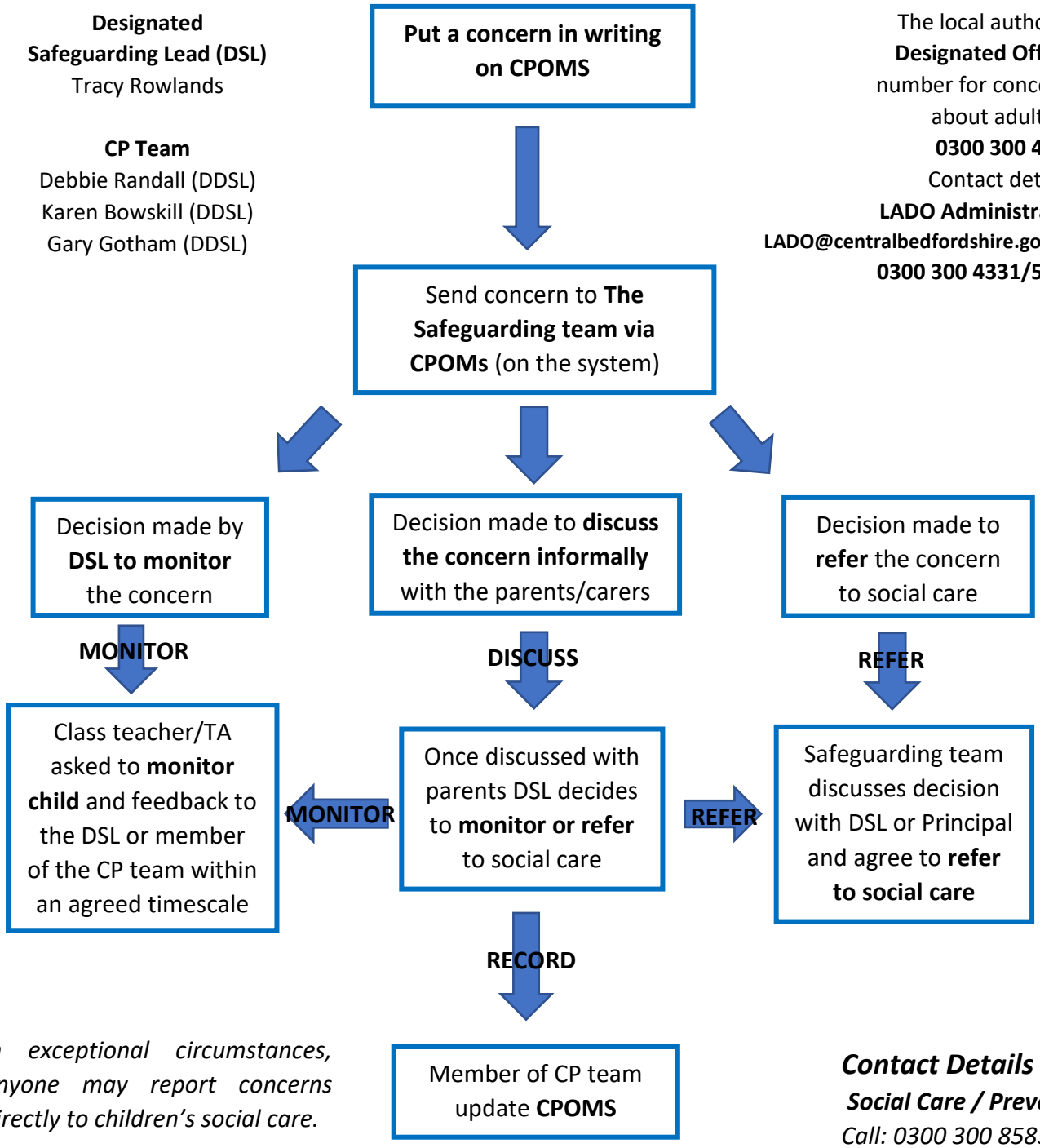
APPENDIX 2: FLOW CHART OF RESPONSE

FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Tracy Rowlands

CP Team
Debbie Randall (DDSL)
Karen Bowskill (DDSL)
Gary Gotham (DDSL)

The local authority **Designated Officer** number for concerns about adults is:
0300 300 4833
Contact details:
LADO Administrator
LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
0300 300 4331/5026



In exceptional circumstances, anyone may report concerns directly to children's social care.

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285

Contact Details
Social Care / Prevent
Call: 0300 300 8585
Out of hours:
0300 300 8123

APPENDIX 3: USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Local Authority Designated Officer (schools)

Central Bedfordshire:

0300 300 4833 – LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

http://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/children/child-protection/report-abuse.aspx

Bedford Borough:

01234 276 693 – Lado@bedford.gov.uk

https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/children-and-families/safeguarding-children-partnership/local-authority

Local Safeguarding Children Board

Central Bedfordshire :0300 300 6676 (Email: cbscb@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Bedford Borough: 01234 276346 (Email: LSCB@bedford.gov.uk)

PAN Bedfordshire https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/p/about-us/pan-bedfordshire

Access and inclusion

Central Bedfordshire: 0300 300 6291

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/525/elective_home_education

Intake and Assessment 0300 300 8585; http://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/children/child-protection/report-abuse.aspx

Bedford Borough: 01234 276 829 / 01234 276 809

E-mail: ist@bedford.gov.uk

www.bedford.gov.uk

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

www.ceop.gov.uk www.kidscape.org.uk www.childline.org.uk www.nspcc.org.uk https://saferinternet.org.uk/resource/thinkuknow-advice-from-ceop

www.childnet-int.org www.kidsmart.org.uk

County Lines and Criminal Exploitation Toolkit (https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit)

LGfL Undressed resource

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance

Every Mind Matters – materials and lesson plans

Filtering and Monitoring Standards

UK Safer Internet Centre: "appropriate" filtering and monitoring.

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advicecentre/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring

South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) - tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content)

Cyber Security Standards

Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings

Behaviour in Schools guidance

School Suspensions and exclusions statutory guidance

Forced marriage - The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (pages 75-80 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) - School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

Forced marriage resource pack

Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm – non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme, funded by the Department for Education and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice

Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting – DfE guidance

Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

National Crime Agency - Sextortion How to protect yourself

UK Safer Internet Centre - Sextortion

Prevent Duty

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years

DfE Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

NSPCC Safeguarding d/Deaf and disabled children and young people

Children and the court system guides:

Young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds

Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds

Charity dedicated to preventing child abuse: Lucy Faithful Foundation

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/p/training/safeguarding-bedfordshire-training

APPENDIX 4: KCSIE – WHO NEEDS TO READ WHAT?

Group	Part(s)	Required/Recommended
All Adults (employed, contracted and volunteers)	**Part 1** Annex A	**Required** Recommended
Governors and Trustees	**All parts**	**Required**
Executives (including Principals/SLT/Managers)	**All parts**	**Required**
DSL/DDSLs (including safeguarding team)	**All parts**	**Required**
HR colleagues	**Part 1** Parts 3 & 4 Annex A	**Required** Recommended Recommended
IT colleagues	**Part 1** Part 2 Annex A	**Required** Recommended Recommended

- BEST Central Team will assign the **required** Parts stated above in September each year via SmartLog or Governor Hub as applicable dependent on group/role

- Settings are responsible for ensuring that new starters during the course of the year are assigned the appropriate **required** Parts

- Settings are responsible for ensuring that all staff are assigned the **recommended** Parts as deemed appropriate by the Principal or Nursery Manager.

APPENDIX 5: STAFF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Group	Course	Frequency	Provider/platform
New starters	Safeguarding & Prevent	Upon commencement of employment (or prior to)	SmartLog
Existing staff	Safeguarding & Prevent (Basic Awareness)	Annually (automatically reset via SmartLog each September)	SmartLog
Governors and Trustees	Essential Safeguarding for Governors and Trustees	Annually	BEST

DSLs will all be appropriate trained on a course that fulfils all of the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KSCIE). This is best done by completing the training provided by the Pan-Bedfordshire LSCB.

There are two courses in particular that need to be completed by DSLs who are new to role, or new to the local area:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Designated Safeguarding Leads: Roles and Responsibilities

For experienced DSLs who have completed this training, the following refresher course should be completed every two years:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads – Refresher

All details of training can be accessed here: https://safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/p/upcoming-training

APPENDIX 6 – CPOMS CATEGORIES GUIDE

Here is a quick guide to all the CPOMS categories and how you might use them

Reporting concerns:

The main parent categories will be in place in all schools and no more will be added. Schools can include or exclude sub-categories, but not add any new ones. Sub-categories do not have to be used when reporting but they might help to bring clarity to an incident report.

These are the main categories of abuse in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) as well as discrimination as defined in the Equality Act (2010)

Remember that you can select multiple categories for each incident and the safeguarding team can always change the category if you are not sure if you have got the right one.

Parent Category	Sub Category	Usage notes
Sexual: Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening	Child on Child sexual	Refer to Section 5 of KCSIE for more information
	Child Sexual Exploitation	See p149-150 in KCSIE
	Sexual Harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature
	Sexual Violence	Rape, Assault by penetration, Sexual assault, Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.
	Online	Include this if there is an online element as that may be a separate offence
Emotional: Persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development	Child on Child-on-child emotional	Alongside this, consider whether the incident could be bullying. Check your policy for details.
	Bereavement	Not abuse, but needs recording here
	Mental Health	Not abuse, but needs recording here
	Family-related	This could be a wide range, but could be helpful to log a pattern of behaviours at home.
Physical: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.	Child on Child physical	In or out of school
	Child on Adult physical	In or out of school.
	Weapons	

	Physical intervention	Make sure you follow your physical intervention policy and complete any other relevant paperwork
	Self-Harm	There also may be an emotional/MH element here.
	Honour Based Violence	Incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community
	Initiation Violence	a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element
	FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
Neglect: 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	Missing Child	Use this to record children who have runaway or otherwise gone missing. Not to be used for CMiE which is in the attendance section
	Forced/Arranged Marriage	Forcing a person into marriage, which is not the same as an arranged marriage.
Exploitation:	Child Criminal Exploitation	Where a child is being exploited for criminal gains
Discrimination: Under the Equality Act 2010	Age	
	Disability	a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities
	Gender	Either gender or gender identity, to include transphobic discrimination
	Sexuality	Homo/biphobic
	Religion	For discrimination against religion, faith, or no-religion.
	Race	All race and ethnicity
	Prevent/Radicalisation/Extremism	For all areas of extremist concerns
	Pregnancy	Not to report a pregnancy, but discrimination as a result of a pregnancy

Substance Use:	Alcohol	
	Drug	
	Smoking	
	Vaping	

Internal and External Monitoring:

Most of these categories will only be available to members of the safeguarding team, and are largely to do with record keeping and administration. Don't worry if you can't see them, they've probably been turned off for you.

Safeguarding teams, please make sure you add the parent categories at the very least, please do not add any categories to the list.

Parent Category	Sub Category	Usage notes
Multi Agency: Any comms or meetings with someone outside of school, other than parents/carers.	Filing/Admin	Use this to upload paper files from previous settings, or other general admin
	Professional Communication	For comms from other professionals such as social workers.
	Professional Meeting	Notes of meetings with professionals, or records of attendance.
	Legal	Comms from a legal representative
	Health	For comms from health
	Police (Op Encompass)	To record Op Encompass reports into school, and other comms from/with the police.
	Referral to 0-19 Support Team	Specific team referral
	MASH Referral – BIC 100	Social Care Referrals. Really important one to keep up to date.
	MA Submission (Intel)	Use this to complete the Multi Agency Submission form to give the police intelligence.
Communication with home:	Parent Meeting	Face to face or online
	Email/Letter	To log any written comms
	Home Visit	This is likely to be logged with an attendance concern
Case Supervision:	Complaints	Mostly use the parent category here.

Interventions: This is for both in-house provision as well as external agency interventions	Child and Young Person Check-In	For when a staff member has had a check-in/follow-up with a child.
	Child and Young Person Search	Please follow your policy here.
	External Intervention	To record sessions that children have with external agencies whilst in school (counselling, CAMHs, mentors etc.)
Behaviour: Schools are still likely to use Bromcom for behaviour records.	Bullying	Read your policy here, it is also likely to be child on child abuse of some form.
	Permanent exclusion	
	Suspension	
	Internal isolation or removal from lessons	
	Positive	To record any positive behaviours
Attendance:	Reduced Timetable	This will also be logged with the LA
	Off-Roll Notification (EHE)	Including EHE. Use this to keep a record of the EHE process and conversations with parents.
	Child Missing in Education	Also, complete a CmiE form with the LA. Add that here

Optional Categories:

Schools have full freedom on these as different schools record this information in different ways and CPOMS may not be what you do.

Medical:	Health Care Plan	
	Medication Administered	
SEND:	EHCP	
	SEN Support	

Care: will be flexibility here as some of this may be recorded elsewhere and not necessarily in CPOMS	Looked after child
	Child in Need
	Subject to a child protection plan
	When a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) lives with someone who is not a close relative, other than their parents, and not a registered carer for a period of 28 days or more. We have a legal duty to

	report this.
	CBC Building Resilience in Families panel
	All forms of universal services and community-based early help and the targeted early help level of Family Help, including assessments
	A formal strategy discussion meeting with social care
	To record when we have completed a school check for social care/

APPENDIX 7 – UPDATES TO BEST SAFEGUARDING POLICY TEMPLATE

SEPTEMBER 2026

Page in BEST policy	Section in BEST policy	Change
Throughout		Changes to improve clarity of language, consistency and modernising language. Removal of duplicated clauses. Updated dates of government guidance. Updated web links
Throughout		Changed outdated language of designated senior person for safeguarding and child protection to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Throughout		Reduced the "NAMED SETTING" to "We will"
Throughout		Reference to e-safety includes AI
6	Section A	Updated definition of safeguarding so that it is in line with KCSIE
6	Section A	New terminology, Early Help replaced with "Universal services and community-based early help and the targeted early help level of Family Help" (and throughout)
7-10	Section A	Update roles and responsibilities
10	Section A	Added need for robust cover in absence of DSL
13	Section B	Clarified that the SCR is to be check once per term as a minimum
13, 14	Section B	Updated definition of regulated activity
15	Section B	Guidance on adults supervising children on work experience
15,16	Section B	Added our lanyard system into policy
17	Section B	Added guidance on wearables and recording devices in meetings
18	Section B	Added information on single-sex spaces (toilets and changing rooms)
21	Section B	Added information on Mobile Phone free sites
21	Section B	Added statement on single-sex sports
22	Section C	Added about clinical incidents being reviewed by DSL
23	Section C	Added modern slavery to list of risks
23	Section C	Added to definition of abuse "parent or care giver abuse"
24	Section C	Updated definition of sexual abuse
24	Section C	Updated definition of emotional abuse
27	Section C	Added to the list of risk factors
32	Section C	Clarified the role of Operation Encompass
33-37	Section C	Significant restructure and additions in the section. Now contains information on Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB). Have reorganised this in line with KCSIE to show that HSBs exist along a continuum of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence. It now reads in that order and has been significantly enhanced with new information from KCSIE
33	Section C	New section on HSB
34	Section C	Added to the definition of the sexual violence: Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
36	Section C	Added that all reports of sexual assault must be reported to the police
37	Section C	Update Mental Health Section

38	Section C	Updates to the generative AI section. Schools should be taking steps to ensure that images on websites and social media do not put children at risk of harm
39	Section C	Added that schools must review effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems at least once per year
42	Section C	Added more examples of children who might benefit from support before statutory intervention, in line with KCSIE 2026
42	Section C	Changed LGBT to LGB in line with KCSIE 2026
43-44	Section C	Completely new section on Gender Questioning children. Written in line with KCSIE. Taking a cautiously compassionate and supportive approach with the child and parent/carer at the centre of decisions.
44	Section D	Added to section on Young Carers
44	Section D	New section on Children with Medical Conditions
46	Section D	Added new statutory responsibility under the Crime and Policing Act 2026
49	Section D	Clarified that concerns about Principals/Managers should be made to the Director of Education who will inform Chair of Governors
50	Section D	Add trainee teachers
51	Section D	Updated section on Alternative Provision
52	Section D	Added a new section "Opportunities to teach Safeguarding" Academies/Nurseries will develop this as part of their curriculum
54	Section D	Added that the Trust commission an external audit of safeguarding and that the Trust Director of SEN and Safeguarding monitors effectiveness of the policy in individual settings.

MARCH 2026

Page in BEST policy	**Section in BEST policy**	**Change**
Page 6	Section A – introduction	Addition of bullet point to safeguarding definition
Pages 46-47	The Use of Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force in Schools/Nurseries	Section updated to align with guidance

SEPTEMBER 2025

Page in BEST policy	**Section in BEST policy**	**Change**
Cover page	Titles	Dates updated
Throughout	Throughout	References to KCSIE updated to 2025
Page 7	Roles & Responsibilities	Moved from Section B to Section A page 7
Page 13	Safer Recruitment & Selection	Sentences adjusted to clarity that Principal/DSL should be monitoring the SCR half termly and the Safeguarding Link Governors a minimum of once a term
Page 36	Online Safety	Added cross reference to online safety policy

Page 36	Generative Artificial Intelligence	Paragraph added
Page 41	Private Fostering	Section moved from Section B to Section C (page 41)
Page 47	Alternative Provision	Updated following release of new KCSIE
Page 49	Children and online safety away from the academy/nursery	Inserted 'Google Drive' into final bullet point – all BEST settings use this
Page 51	Appendices	List updated
Page 54	Appendix 3 – Useful Contacts & Resources	Links updated
Page 57	Appendix 5 – Staffing Training Requirements	Appendix added
Page 58-62	Appendix 6 – CPOMs Categories	Appendix added
Page 67	Appendix 8 – Nursery cause for concern and chronology form	Appendix added

SEPTEMBER 2024

Page in BEST policy	**Section in BEST policy**	**Change**
Cover page	Titles	Addition of space for Director of SEND & Safeguarding
Throughout	-	Local Governing Body changed to Local Committee of the Board and LGB changed to LCB
Throughout	-	Variations of title for DSL changed to consistently read Designated Safeguarding Lead
Throughout	-	KSCIE references updated to reflect update
Throughout	-	Variations of policy title changed to 'safeguarding policy'
Throughout	-	References to CBC LSCB adjusted to PAN Bedfordshire LSCB as appropriate (to account for additional schools joining BEST)
Throughout	-	Central Beds references changed to Local Authority (to account for additional schools joining BEST)
Throughout	-	Head Teacher references changed to Principal
Throughout	-	Bic100 references changed to standard referral (to account for additional schools joining BEST)
5	Introduction & Legal Scope	Date references updated and guidance added
5	Introduction & Legal Scope	Definition of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children added
7	Introduction & Legal Scope	Under 'each academy/nursery will ensure that' - Bullet point 1, addition of 'and has a suitable job description' - Bullet point 9, removal of 'on an annual basis' for production of report - Bullet point 12, sentence adjusted for clarity
9	Safer Recruitment – Contractors	Addition of 'when the academy/nursery is in session' for supervision of contractors.
10	Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK	Under 'Governance', addition of word 'team' for clarity
10	Safe Practice	Bullet point 5, sentence adjusted to account for all protected characteristics

12	Academy/Nursery Training and Staff Induction	• 'Must' added to first sentence • Policy titles and references updated within bullet points
12	Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff	• Second para, governor title corrected • Space provided to insert Children's Services Hub number
13	Information Sharing and Confidentiality	Top bullet points added in line with KCSIE
14	Information Sharing and Confidentiality	Policy titles updated in bullet points (policy to be read in conjunction with this policy)
15	Pupil Information	Penultimate bullet point changed from 'life threatening medical conditions' to 'medical conditions'
16	The Trust	• Sentence starters adjusted for ease of readability • Bullet point 6, 'or deputy' and 'and should always be available during academy/nursery hours' added • Bullet point 7, removed 'including early years practitioners within settings on the academy/nursery site'
16	Local Committee of the Board	• Sentence starters adjusted for ease of readability • Bullet point 11, addition of reference to BEST recommended templates • Bullet point 12, removal of 'annually' and addition of 'and reports to the LCB at every meeting' • Bullet point 13, removal of reference to trustees • Bullet point 19, removal of final sentence
18	Principal/Manager	• Sentence starters adjusted for ease of readability • Addition of final bullet point
18	Designated Senior Person	• Added cross reference to Annex C of KSCIE • Bullet point 5, bullet point updated in line with KSCIE
19	Member of SLT with Responsibility for Strategic Development of IT	• Sentence starters adjusted for ease of readability
19	ICT Network Mangers	• Sentence starters adjusted for ease of readability • Bullet point 6, addition of 'during school hours' • Bullet point 7, removal of final sentence
20	Pupils (to an age appropriate level)	• Sentence starters adjusted for ease of readability
20	What Staff Need to Know	• Policy titles updated in bullet points • Second para wording updated to refer to Appendix 4 of this policy
21	Relationships and Sex Education	• Wording adjusted from 'zero tolerance' to 'are not tolerated' • Bullet point 6, reference added to 'sextortion' • Links added to list of resources
23	Section C – Identifying children and young people who may be suffering significant harm	• Section relating to Assess, Plan, Do and Review four part cycle removed

23	Definitions	• 'Child' – his/her changed to their
23	Indicators of Abuse & Neglect	• First para added in line with KCSIE • First line of second para removed – duplication • Definition of abuse – addition of 'see, hear or experience' – domestic abuse
26	Children Absent from Education	• Final sentence of second paragraph changed to reflect new KCSIE wording (unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education)
36	Sexual Harassment	• Reference added to AI generated images and videos • Reference added to sextortion (bullet point 7)
40	**Sections:** Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After **through to** Vulnerable Adults	• Sections moved up from later in the policy to pages 40-42 for clarity of reading
41	Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm	• Final three paras (and bullet points) added in line with KSCIE – Early Help • Bullet point added re considering multiple suspensions, exclusions and in AP – child in need of Early Help
47	Allegations – Governors	• Final two paras added for clarity of process if an allegation is made against a governor or trustee
50	Alternative Provision	• First sentence removed – duplication • First two paras added – in line with KSCIE
50	Section E – Safeguarding During Government Mandated Periods of School/Nursery Closure	• 'Government Mandated' added to title for clarity
51	Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff	• Volunteer subsection removed as duplicates para above
53	Monitoring & Evaluation	• Fifth para – updated to reflect regular blind checks of sample of staff by external SI partners and auditor • Para removed re residential trip briefing on CP procedure
54	Appendix 1 – Intimate Care Guidelines	• 'Nurseries to adapt section as appropriate' added • Eight para, 'gender' changed to 'sex' and reference added to developmental age and stage needing to be considered
56	Useful Contacts & Resources	• Title updated to include 'and Resources' • CBC and BBC phone numbers and links added • Links added to sextortion resources and Prevent Duty • Added links to SEND Code of Practice, Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions, Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people (NSPCC) and Children in Court System documents • Added link to Lucy Faithful Foundation (sexual abuse) • Training opportunities link updated