

## Child Protection Policy

Policy Group	A	Education and Students
Title	A10	Child Protection
Trust sub-committee		Standards and Curriculum Committee
Last reviewed		July 2024
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Co-ordinated by		AET Safeguarding Lead Jennie Clarke



## 1 Child Protection Policy for Ridgeway Academy

### 1.1 Purpose of a Child Protection Policy

Ridgeway Academy is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its students and attempts to create an ethos in which students feel secure, safe and listened to. The purpose of this policy is to inform staff, parents, volunteers and governors about the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children and to enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

### 1.2 Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Protection Procedures

Ridgeway Academy follows the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff in Hertfordshire who work with children.

### 1.3 School Staff & Volunteers

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

1.3.1 All school staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children. They should be aware of the important role the school has in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse and trauma which may be indicative of abuse, harm and neglect and the appropriate referral process for their setting.

1.3.2 No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:
- 2.1.1 Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
  - 2.1.2 Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
  - 2.1.3 preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
  - 2.1.4 ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
  - 2.1.5 taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2.2 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18.

## 3 Principles

### **Ridgeway Academy will:**

- 3.1 Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are provided with a safe and secure space to talk, and are listened to when they have a worry or concern.
- 3.2 Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach when they are worried.
- 3.3 Include opportunities in the PSHE and ICT curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

## 4 Statutory Framework

- 4.1 In order take a child centered approach and to protect children from harm the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:
- 4.1.1 Department for Education '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)', 2023
  - 4.1.2 '[Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education](#)' issued April 2012
  - 4.1.3 Relevant sections of the [Children Act 2004](#)
  - 4.1.4 [Keeping Children safe in Education](#), 2024
  - 4.1.5 [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes](#): advice for education settings working with children and young people Dec 2024
  - 4.1.6 Department for Education '[Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)' (Sept 2023)
  - 4.1.7 Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
  - 4.1.8 [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
  - 4.1.9 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
  - 4.1.10 The [Children Act 1989](#) (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
  - 4.1.11 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
  - 4.1.12 [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
  - 4.1.13 Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
  - 4.1.14 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
  - 4.1.15 [The Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)
  - 4.1.16 [Voyeurism \(Offences\) Act 2019](#)
  - 4.1.17 [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- 4.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023) requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Protection Procedures](#)
- 4.3 Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been, or is at risk of, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, these are outlined in Appendix 1. The school also has procedures to cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse, these are outlined in section 10.
- 4.4 This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, supply staff and visitors working in or on behalf of Ridgeway Academy.

## 5 Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 The Ambition Education Trust Board

- 5.1.1 The Ambition Education Trust (AET) board has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in all Trust schools. The AET Board will nominate a designated safeguarding trustee. The AET Trust board delegates each Local Governing Body to implement these safeguarding measures in that school. The Governing Body will nominate a designated safeguarding governor.
- 5.1.2 The nominated trustee for safeguarding is Jeremy Loukes. The nominated governor for child protection is Liz Tillet.

### 5.2 The Governing Board:

- 5.2.1 The Governing Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in their establishment. There is a nominated governor for child protection and online safety who is appointed to take lead responsibility.
- 5.2.2 In particular the Governing Body must ensure:
  - 5.2.2.1 They facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding
  - 5.2.2.2 That all systems, processes and policies are operating with the best interests of the child at their heart
  - 5.2.2.3 There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and promote children's welfare
  - 5.2.2.4 There is an effective child protection policy in place, which is reviewed annually
  - 5.2.2.5 AET Safer Recruitment procedures are followed
  - 5.2.2.6 The appointment of a DSL who is a senior member of school leadership team
  - 5.2.2.7 All staff (and volunteers) undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring
  - 5.2.2.8 The safe management of allegations and low level concerns, including nominating member of the Governing Body (usually the Chair) to be responsible in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Headteacher
  - 5.2.2.9 Quality assurance processes are in place and any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay
  - 5.2.2.10 That children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online
  - 5.2.2.11 The school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly reviews their effectiveness.

### 5.3 The Headteacher:

- 5.3.1 The policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Board/Trustees are fully implemented, and followed by all staff
- 5.3.2 Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities
- 5.3.3 All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children and young people, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle blowing policies.

### 5.4 DSL and Deputy DSLs:

- 5.4.1 The governing body will ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school leadership team, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated

safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description (Appendix 4).

- 5.4.2 Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for Child Protection, as set out above, remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead; this lead responsibility should not be delegated. All deputies should be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.4.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection in this school is: Sarah Merrigan, Assistant Headteacher - MerriganS@ridgeway.aetrust.uk
- 5.4.4 The Deputy DSLs are:  
Charlotte Wesson, DDSL - WessonC@ridgeway.aetrust.uk
- 5.4.5 The role and responsibilities of the DSL are set out in Appendix 4.

#### **5.5 The Premises/Site Manager:**

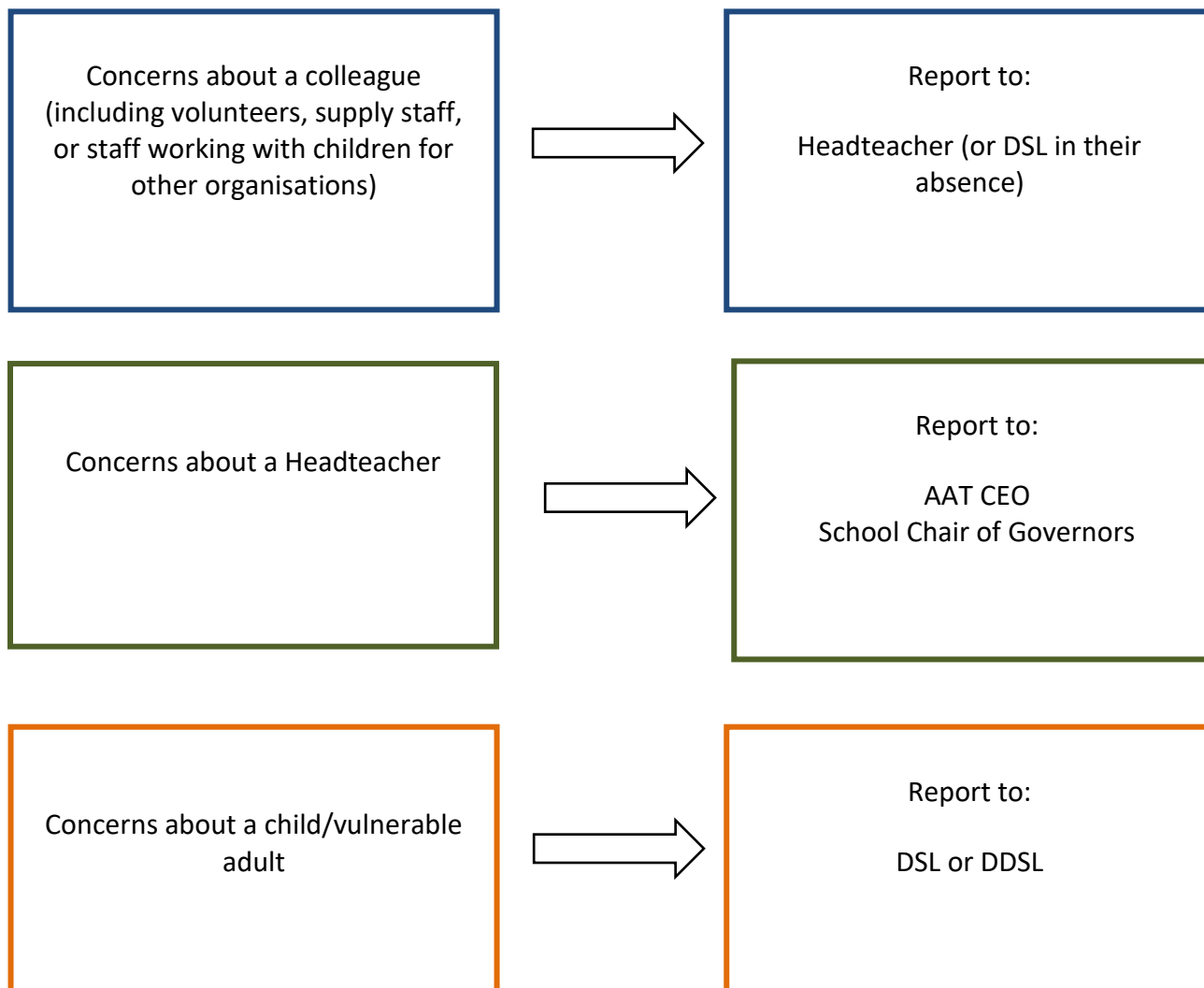
The Premises Manager is responsible for maintaining the safety and security of the site and ensuring safe access for pupils with disabilities.

#### **5.6 All Staff and Volunteers, including commissioned services (such as external services and contracted staff):**

- 5.6.1 Fully comply with school's and Trust policies and procedures
- 5.6.2 Attend appropriate training
- 5.6.3 Inform the designated persons of any concerns
- 5.6.4 Read and sign that they have understood the Staff IT Acceptable Use Policy
- 5.6.5 Comply with Safer Recruitment processes and procedures

## 6 School Procedures

### 6.1 What to do if you have a concern:



Appendix 1 details Ridgeway Academy's procedures for handling safeguarding concerns or disclosures. The following paragraphs cover the areas of safeguarding at Ridgeway Academy.

### 6.2 Training and Induction

6.2.1 All Ridgeway Academy staff members, governing body members and volunteers 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 level of safeguarding training that is undertaken will be determined by their job role and responsibilities. The induction and training should be in line with Hertfordshire multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that safeguarding inductions and training are completed and updated. All Ridgeway Academy staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email), as required, and at least annually.

6.2.2 The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead (and any

deputies) should also undertake Prevent awareness training.

### **6.3 Safer Recruitment**

Ridgeway Academy will ensure that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. At least one of the persons who conducts an interview will have completed safer recruitment training. The processes that Ridgeway Academy will follow are set out in the AAT Safer Recruitment Policy / Atlas Safer Recruitment Policy.

### **6.4 Online Safety**

6.4.1 Ridgeway Academy 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 school approach to online safety which empowers us to protect and educate children, young people and our staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

6.4.2 Ridgeway Academy will ensure that 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.

6.4.3 Ridgeway Academy will ensure that they are doing all they reasonably can to limit children and young people's exposure to the risks from the school's IT system. As part of this, the Trust, the DSL and Ridgeway Academy's LGB will work together to ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly review their effectiveness. The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

6.4.4 In order to meet this duty, Ridgeway Academy will have due regard for the Department for Education filtering and monitoring standards and commit to:

- 6.4.4.1 identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- 6.4.4.2 review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- 6.4.4.3 block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- 6.4.4.4 have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

6.4.5 Further information can be found in the [AAT IT Acceptable Use & Online Safety \(Including Online Safety Acceptable Use Agreements\) Policy](#) / [Atlas Online Security Policy](#).

### **6.5 Safeguarding information for children and young people**

6.5.1 Ridgeway Academy is committed to ensuring that children and young people are understand when behaviour towards them is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. Exactly how much information and the nature of the explanation should be age appropriate. All children and young people know that there are senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and know who they are. School staff inform children and young people who they can talk to, both in and out of the school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

- 6.5.2 Information is made available to children and young people, such as Childline and NSPCC helplines, posters, NSPCC, Childline website addresses and the Safeguarding newsletter.
- 6.5.3 Ridgeway Academy is committed to consulting with and listening to children and young people and working collaboratively with parents.
- 6.5.4 The curriculum schemes of work are regularly audited to identify appropriate opportunities where children and young people's safety and analysis of risk can be highlighted.
- 6.6 **Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children**
- 6.6.1 Ridgeway Academy recognise that Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children are a particularly vulnerable group and will ensure that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to keep these children safe.
- 6.6.2 Ridgeway Academy will ensure there is an appointed designated teacher and should work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after. With the commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, children with a social worker, children in kinship care arrangements or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. The designated teacher will have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience.
- 6.6.3 The designated teacher will work with the Virtual School Head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of Looked after Children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan. The designated teacher will also work with the Virtual School Head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children, children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements.
- 6.6.4 The Designated Teacher will follow the [statutory guidance](#) on their role and responsibilities.
- 6.7 **Partnership with parents**
- 6.7.1 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 email, on the website and updates as necessary in the newsletter.
- 6.7.2 The school will share with Parents / Carers any concerns they have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.
- 6.7.3 We encourage Parents / Carers to discuss any concerns they may have with a relevant pastoral team member.
- 6.7.4 Parents/Carers are made aware that they can view this policy on request or on the website.
- 6.7.5 The school will, in most circumstances, endeavour to discuss all concerns with parents about their children. However, there may be exceptional circumstances when the school will discuss concerns with Children's Services and/or the Police without parental knowledge (in accordance with Child Protection procedures). The school will, of course, always aim to maintain a positive relationship with all parents.



## 6.8 **Health and Safety**

- 6.8.1 AAT's Health and Safety Policy / Atlas Health and Safety Policy reflects the consideration given to the protection of children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.
- 6.8.2 Ridgeway Academy ensures the safety of its environment for children and young people through:
- 6.8.2.1 Controlling access to the site - a single entry/exit access point for visitors, which is supervised by reception staff
  - 6.8.2.2 Using a colour coded lanyard system for staff and visitors, so that safe adults can be easily identified
  - 6.8.2.3 Ensuring that the school complies with health and safety requirements for all on-site activities
  - 6.8.2.4 Ensuring risk assessments are in place before allowing any trips, visits or work experience placements
  - 6.8.2.5 Vigilant monitoring to guard against intruders, antisocial behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse on site
  - 6.8.2.6 Curriculum activities and social areas compliant with health & safety requirements.
  - 6.8.2.7 Work experience arrangements that include safeguarding information for employers and a requirement that they accept their child protection responsibilities
  - 6.8.2.8 Passes issued to visitors with prior appointments, after their identity has been checked
  - 6.8.2.9 Visitors being met at reception and escorted into the school
  - 6.8.2.10 Signing-out arrangements for children and young people with permission to leave the site
  - 6.8.2.11 Record of staff/visitors signing in/out
  - 6.8.2.12 Appropriate supervision of children and young people at break and lunchtimes, which takes into consideration any additional needs or risks a child or young person might have.

## 6.9 **Alternative Provision**

- 6.9.1 When Ridgeway Academy places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will do checks prior to the start of the placement to ensure that the provision is able to meet the pupil's needs. The suitability of the provision will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is able to meet the child needs and any significant safeguarding incidents or changes to the child or young person's circumstances will trigger a review of the provision's ability to meet need.
- 6.9.2 The Department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which Ridgeway Academy will have regard when they commission Alternative Provision:
- 6.9.2.1 Alternative provision - DfE Statutory Guidance
  - 6.9.2.2 Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school
- 6.9.3 In particular, Ridgeway Academy will ensure that;
- 6.9.3.1 All alternative provisions are Ofsted registered providers
  - 6.9.3.2 The school receives regular safeguarding and attendance updates
  - 6.9.3.3 They conduct weekly visits to the AP, and
  - 6.9.3.4 They receive confirmation of the AP's policies relating to child protection and that all staff have had the necessary training and checks prior to the pupil starting at the AP.

## 6.10 Use of school premises for non school activities

- 6.10.1 When Ridgeway Academy's facilities/premises are hired or rented out to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) the school will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.
- 6.10.2 The school will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll.
- 6.10.3 The school will also ensure that 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.
- 6.10.4 Ridgeway Academy will consult the guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in out-of-School Settings](#) to ensure that all providers using their facilities/premises have the correct safeguarding arrangements in place.
- 6.10.5 Schools 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 school will follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

## 6.11 Vulnerable Adults

There are likely to be young adults in our care (aged 18+). The school 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.

## 7 **When to be Concerned**

- 7.1 All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he or she:
  - 7.1.1 Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with accidental injury.
  - 7.1.2 Has unexplained injuries.
  - 7.1.3 Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
  - 7.1.4 Gives confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
  - 7.1.5 Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
  - 7.1.6 Is known or suspected to have been sexually active and that sexual behaviour is unusually explicit and /or inappropriate to his or her age/stage of development.
  - 7.1.7 Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
  - 7.1.8 Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
  - 7.1.9 Any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm.
- 7.2 Full details of types of abuse and their indicators can be found in appendix 2

## 8 Dealing with a Disclosure

- 8.1 If a child discloses that he or she has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, the member of staff / volunteer should:
- 8.1.1 Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
  - 8.1.2 Accept what is being said
  - 8.1.3 Allow the child to talk freely
  - 8.1.4 Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
  - 8.1.5 Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children Schools and Families
  - 8.1.6 Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
  - 8.1.7 Stress that it was the right thing to tell
  - 8.1.8 Listen, rather than ask direct questions
  - 8.1.9 Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
  - 8.1.10 Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
  - 8.1.11 Record all information in writing
  - 8.1.12 Pass information to the DSL without delay
- 8.2 **Support**  
Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a child protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff / volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him / herself and discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

## 9 Information

- 9.1 Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.
- 9.2 All staff in schools, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children's Services/NSPCC/the Police).
- 9.3 If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.
- 9.4 Ridgeway Academy has regard to Information Sharing and follows the Hertfordshire LSCP 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.
- 9.5 The school 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.
- 9.6 This includes:
- 9.6.1 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'
  - 9.6.2 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

9.6.3 For schools, not providing children and young people's personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met, for 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 school's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt the school will seek independent legal advice.

9.7 DPA and UK GDPR 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.

## **10 Record Keeping**

10.1 All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school. Information should be kept confidential and recorded on CPOMS without delay.

10.2 Records should include:

10.2.1 a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern

10.2.2 details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and

10.2.3 a note of any action taken, decisions reached, the rationale for decisions and the outcome.

10.2.4 If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy).

10.3 When the DSL or DDSL attends a CP / CIN (or equivalent) core group meeting or conference, brief minutes should be taken by them and stored on CPOMS to ensure there is a current picture of the situation. Formal minutes do not always arrive in a timely manner.

## **11 Allegations Involving School Staff/Volunteers**

11.1 If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff/volunteer, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and immediately inform the Headteacher.

11.2 All concerns, including low-level concerns (e.g. staff taking photographs of children on their mobile phone without prior agreement), the Headteacher should be immediately informed.

11.3 If any member of staff/volunteer has reason to suspect that another member of staff/volunteer may have abused a child at the school, or elsewhere, they must immediately inform the Headteacher. They should also make a record of the concerns including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident/alleged incident. If the concern is about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors and the AET CEO should be notified immediately.

11.4 The Headteacher will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to Children's Services in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

- 11.5 If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for further action through the HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures, the Headteacher must immediately make a referral to [Children's Social Care](#) on 0300 123 4043.
- 11.6 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.
- 11.7 The LADO will be contacted when it is alleged that anyone working in the school has:
- 11.7.1 behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
  - 11.7.2 possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
  - 11.7.3 behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
  - 11.7.4 behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- 11.8 The single number for a LADO consultation is **01992 555420**. [LADO.referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk) The duty LADO will pick this up and act when there is capacity to do so.
- 11.9 All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- 11.10 Where staff feel unable to raise an issue with the Senior Leadership Team or feel that safeguarding concerns are not being addressed [the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line](#) is available. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- 11.11 Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH
- 11.12 The AAT Whistleblowing Policy can also be found [here](#). The Atlas Whistleblowing Policy can also be found [here](#).
- 11.13 The AAT Managing Allegation and Low Level Concerns Policy can be found [here](#). The Atlas Managing Allegation and Low Level Concerns Policy can be found [here](#).

## 12 Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated by:

- 12.1 Half termly reports to the AET Trust Board
- 12.2 The designated Trustee for Safeguarding
- 12.3 Governing Board visits to the school
- 12.4 Senior Leadership 'drop ins' and discussions with children and staff
- 12.5 Pupil surveys and questionnaires
- 12.6 Scrutiny of Attendance data
- 12.7 Scrutiny of range of risk assessments
- 12.8 Scrutiny of Governing Board minutes
- 12.9 Logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents for the Senior Leaders, Governing Body and Trustees to monitor

12.10 Review of parental concerns and parent questionnaires

### **13 Linked Policies and Procedures**

- 13.1 Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as 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 safeguarding issues that are specific to the local area or population.
- 13.2 Alban Academies Trust related policies can be found [here](#)
- 13.3 Atlas Multi-Academy Trust related policies can be found [here](#)
- 13.4 Ambition Education Trust related policies can be found at [www.ambitioneducationtrust.org](http://www.ambitioneducationtrust.org)
- 13.5 School related policies can be found at <https://ridgeway.herts.sch.uk/>

## Appendix 1 – School Procedures

1. If any member of staff is concerned about a child, they must inform the Designated Senior Lead immediately. The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.
2. 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 the child going home, whenever this is possible. 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.
3. All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. 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 when they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
4. The Designated Senior Lead will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children’s services. If it is decided to make a referral to Children’s services this will be done with prior discussion with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm. Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concerns, or who has been identified as being the subject of a child protection plan (formerly referred to as the Child Protection Register) and a written record will be kept.
5. If a student who is/or has been the subject of a Child Protection Plan changes school, the Designated Senior Lead will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the Designated Senior Lead at the receiving school, in a secure manner, and separate from the child’s academic file.
6. 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.
7. It is not the responsibility of school 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 and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person) prior to any discussion with parents.

**8. Response to a disclosure or concern by a DSL:**

8.1 Following any information raising concern, the senior designated persons will consider:

- 8.1.1 Any urgent medical needs of the child
- 8.1.2 Discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- 8.1.3 Consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Children's services
- 8.1.4 Making a report to the police
- 8.1.5 The child's wishes.

8.2. **Then decide:**

- 8.2.1 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
- 8.2.2 Whether to make a child protection referral to children's social care 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**

- 8.2.3 Not to make a referral at this stage, if school based support may be more appropriate
- 8.2.4 If further monitoring is necessary
- 8.2.5 If it would be appropriate/beneficial to make a referral for other services.
- 8.2.6 All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to Children's Services will be accompanied by a standard referral form (BIC 100).

**9. Actions following a Children's Services Referral:**

9.1. The designated safeguarding lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- 9.1.1 Make regular contact with Children's Services and wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion
- 9.1.2 Provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference
- 9.1.3 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
- 9.1.4 Where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings
- 9.1.5 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 Service



## Appendix 2 – Identifying Children who may be Suffering Harm

### 1. **Recognising signs of child abuse**

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

### 2. **Types of abuse** covered in this section are:

- a. Physical abuse
- b. Sexual abuse
- c. Emotional abuse
- d. Neglect
- e. Children missing from education and children absent from education
- f. Contextual Safeguarding: Harmful Sexual Behaviours and Extra-familial Harm
- g. Child Sexual Exploitation
- h. Child Criminal Exploitation
- i. County Lines
- j. Prevent
- k. Chanel
- l. Female Genital Mutilation
- m. Forced Marriage
- n. Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Cultural Beliefs (including witchcraft)
- o. Attitudes Towards Women
- p. Domestic Abuse
- q. Child on Child Abuse
- r. Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
- s. Mental Health
- t. Online Safety
- u. Homelessness
- v. Kinship Care
- w. Children with additional vulnerabilities

#### a. **Physical 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.

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Disguised compliance
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments

- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

### **Bruising**

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence, or an adequate explanation provided:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, handprints or a hairbrush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

### **Bite Marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child. A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

### **Burns and Scalds**

- It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:
- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Burns may be an indicator of torture potentially linked to gang involvement or affiliation

### **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement

### **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse. Or self-injurious behaviour which may be indicative of abuse and harm

## **b. Sexual Abuse**

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

in preparation for abuse. 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.

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about, and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

**Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:**

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

**Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:**

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed but the father may be known
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia, or clothing

**c. Emotional Abuse**

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 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.

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse. The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate, or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or due to poor caregiving may find forming relationships difficult due to trust issues
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family
- Hypervigilance
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – difficulty relating to others

#### **d. Neglect**

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

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsible with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

#### **e. Children Missing from Education and Children Absent from Education**

Ridgeway Academy follows the Hertfordshire Local Authority guidance on children and young people missing and absent from education. Knowing where pupils are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding.

Children having unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education 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 school's response to unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education includes identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. The school will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not attending the school. This means the school expects to have at least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change. In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 the school has:

- 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.
- If absence is due to prolonged and significant mental health concerns, medical evidence may be requested that states a child is not able to attend school. This should be regularly updated to ensure suitable provision/support can be requested.

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

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

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

When a pupil leaves the school, the school will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date. Schools should not remove a pupil from role until they have had confirmation that they have started their new setting. 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](#)' and the Trust's [Attendance Policy](#).

**f. Contextual Safeguarding: Harmful Sexual Behaviours and Extra-Familial Harm**

Harmful sexual behaviour involves one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults.

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It may also be referred to as sexually harmful behaviour or sexualised behaviour. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults, and is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as the people it is directed towards. It is widely accepted that HSB sits on a continuum – with behaviours ranging from healthy and developmentally appropriate, to problematic and harmful/abusive. It is therefore helpful to distinguish between problematic and harmful/abusive.

Extra-familial harm is defined as risks to the welfare of children that arise within the community or peer group, including sexual and criminal exploitation. A key element of extrafamilial harm is that in general, harm does not arise from the home environment; parents may not be aware that their child is at risk or may be struggling to protect their child and the family from harm against exploiters.

However, sometimes parental neglect and lack of supervision may contribute to the young person's exposure to extra-familial harm. Children who experience difficulties or instability at home may be more likely to spend more time outside of home and hence be more vulnerable to extra-familial harm.

Extra-familial harm can take the form of:

- child sexual exploitation
- child criminal exploitation including drug dealing both locally and through
- county lines
- modern slavery and trafficking
- gang activity and youth violence
- radicalisation

**g. Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim may need or want, 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 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 from school or home and are subsequently found in areas away from their own
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

#### **h. Child Criminal Exploitation**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim may need or want, 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.

#### **i. 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.

#### **j. Prevent**

From 1 July 2015 specified authorities, including all schools as defined in the summary of this guidance, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies. Bodies to which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 (“the Prevent guidance”). Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent guidance are concerned specifically with schools (but also cover childcare).

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.

Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them.

- Schools should have clear procedures in place for protecting children susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism and at risk of becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing boards and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements consider the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships
- Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach pupils about online safety more generally.

The Department for Education has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

#### **k. Channel**

School staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals when they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual’s engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Section 36 of the CTSA 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must be chaired by the local authority and include the police for the relevant local authority area. Following a referral, the panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and, where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Section 38 of the CTSA 2015 requires partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in providing information about a referred individual. Schools which are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education are listed in the CTSA 2015 as partners required to cooperate with local Channel panel.

What to do if you are worried that someone is being radicalised:

- In an emergency, dial 999.
- Contact the Anti-Terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321
- Contact Crime Stoppers on 0900 555 111

You can also report concerns about extremism related to education settings in England, including allegations about institutions, staff and external people or organisations trying to influence settings:

- Email: counter.extremism@education.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0207 340 7264

## I. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms, and other indicators of FGM.

### What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is an example of Honour Based Violence

4 types of procedure:

- Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris
- Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora
- Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising, and scraping the genital area.

### Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Students may also speak about female relatives using some of these terms. This information should also be acted upon.

### Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is illegal in most countries including the UK.

### Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage



**Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:**

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour changes on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that schools act without delay when they have a concern about FGM.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. 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.

**m. 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 school 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.

**n. 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 or 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.

#### **o. Attitudes towards women**

An Incel (abbreviation of "involuntary celibate") is a member of an online subculture of people who define themselves as unable to get a romantic or sexual partner despite desiring one. Incel forums are often characterised by resentment and hatred, misogyny, misanthropy, self-pity and self-loathing, racism, a sense of entitlement to sex, and the endorsement of violence against women and sexually active people.

The main terms and reference points, such as the names "Chad" and "Stacy" as a shorthand for attractive, sexually successful people. Other terms to watch out for are "femoid" or "foid" – another derogatory term for women – and AWALT, an acronym for "all women are like that", a demeaning term used to generalise women.

#### **p. 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.

XXXX school work in conjunction with Hertfordshire's Operation Encompass team to support those pupils where domestic abuse has affected them. 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 Intake and Assessment Team under our Child Protection Procedures.

## q. Child on Child Abuse

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 school 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.

All our staff understand, that even if there are no reports in their school 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.

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)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;(this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes’ images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- 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).

All our staff are clear as to the school’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 school, 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 school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Advice for schools 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).

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child on child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

#### r. **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools**

##### **Context**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- 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.

##### **What is Sexual violence and sexual harassment?**

##### **Sexual violence**

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

- Rape
- Assault by Penetration
- Sexual Assault

##### **What is 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. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

##### **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 (schools 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; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
  - 'upskirting'

### **Upskirting**

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

### **Sexting**

Sexting is when people share a sexual message and/or a naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. It's also known as nude image sharing.

Children and young people may consent to sending a nude image of themselves. They can also be forced or coerced into sharing images by their peers or adults online. If a child or young person originally shares the image consensually, they have no control over how other people might use it.

If the image is shared around peer groups it may lead to bullying and isolation. Perpetrators of abuse may circulate a nude image more widely and use this to blackmail a child and/or groom them for further sexual abuse.

It's a criminal offence to create or share explicit images of a child, even if the person doing it is a child.

If a young person tells you they've been involved in sexting it's important to be understanding and non-judgmental.

Try to find out a bit more about what's happened, including who sent the image and who has seen it. Never view, share or save explicit images, videos or messages. This information should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

DSLs should follow the guidance set out in '[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people Dec 2020](#)'.

### **The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment**

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

## s. Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their Child Protection Policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Where children have suffered abuse, exploitation and/or neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and progress at school.

More information can be found in the [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) guidance. 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.

## t. Online Safety

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, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying
- Commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group.

## u. 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation>

## v. Kinship Care

Kinship Care refers to a type of care where a child who cannot be looked after by their birth parents is cared for by relatives or friends. The government in England has launched a Kinship Care Strategy to improve kinship carers' financial stability, education, training, and partnership with local authorities and other agencies. These arrangements can be known as either family and friends care or private fostering.

- Family and Friends Carers: If you're a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, or family friend looking after a child who can't be cared for by their birth parents, you're known as a family and friends carer. Sometimes these carers will be given Parental Responsibility for the children through a Child Arrangements or Special Guardianship Order.
- Private Fostering: You're a private foster carer if you're not a close relative and you're looking after a child who's under 16 (or under 18 if they're disabled) for more than 28 days in a row.

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

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offense.

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

Each school 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 school 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 school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

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

On admission to the school the school will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the pupil who is being registered.

## w. 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,
- children with a parent or carer in custody or children who are in receipt of pupil premium,
- children who have experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit,
- children who frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

It is essential that the schools know 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).

Ridgeway Academy 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 school 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.



### **Appendix 3 – Child Protection During Times of School Closure**

During periods of school closures, for example, during national emergencies or government mandated closures, the school 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.

Ridgeway Academy 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: Sarah Merrigan.

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 Ridgeway Academy 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 the school's Safeguarding 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 school safeguarding team will attend. The DSL or DDSL will attend any strategy meetings arranged remotely.

## Appendix 4 – Designated Safeguarding Lead Job Description

**Job title:** DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD  
**Accountable to:** HEADTEACHER

### 1. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- 1.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).
- 1.2 Designated Safeguarding Leads should be aware of the following job description. A note of this responsibility has been added to their job description via this document.

### 2 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)

- 2.1 The academy may appoint Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) to whom the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated.
- 2.2 All deputies and assistants will be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 2.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads should be aware of the following job description which they share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A note of this responsibility has been added to their job description via this document.
- 2.4 Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

### 3 Trust Safeguarding Arrangements

The DSL should be aware of and follow Ambition Education Trust safeguarding arrangements as set out in the AET Safeguarding Statement of Intent. The DSL should work with the Trust Safeguarding Lead and other DSLs within the AET to develop safeguarding practice within their own setting and across the Trust.

### 4 Governance

The DSL should provide regular reports to the Local Governing Body and Trustees, as requested. The DSL should liaise with their Safeguarding Governor to ensure the Local Governing Body is able to have strategic oversight of safeguarding.

### 5 Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or nursery hours) for staff in the setting to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The designated safeguarding lead should arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

### 6 Manage Referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse, exploitation and/or neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme

- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. [NPCC - When to call the police](#) should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

## 7 Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#).
- as required, liaise with the “case manager” (as per Part four of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school or nursery. This includes:
  - ensuring that the school or nursery knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
  - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes.

## 8 Information sharing and managing the Child Protection file

- 8.1 The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date.
- 8.2 Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.
- 8.3 Records should include:
  - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
  - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
  - a note of any action taken, decisions reached, including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children’s social care or the Prevent program etc.
  - and the outcome of any actions taken.

- 8.4 They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’](#) and DfE guidance [‘Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners’](#).
- 8.5 Where children leave the school or nursery (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new education 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.
- 8.6 In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new education setting in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the education setting.

## 9 Raising Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school’s child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- ensure the child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies and Trust Safeguarding Lead regarding this
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements, and
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and the leadership team

## 10 Training, Knowledge and Skills

The DSLs should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The DSLs should also undertake Prevent awareness training.

Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children’s social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children’s social care referral arrangements
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children’s behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand and support the school or nursery with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or nursery
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.
- an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

## 11 Providing Support to Staff

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes, and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.

## 12 Understanding the views of the Children

It is important that all children and young people feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school may put in place to protect them, and,
- understand the difficulties that children and young people may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

## 13 Holding and Sharing Information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of this document, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

