

**Child Protection**

Date reviewed: Autumn 2023

Date of next review: Autumn 2024

Child Protection is part of Safeguarding and is about protecting children who may be at risk of harm or are being harmed.

1. **TYPES OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES STAFF MAY COME ACROSS:**
   1. Abuse
   2. Physical abuse
   3. Emotional abuse
   4. Sexual abuse
   5. Neglect
   6. Child on Child Abuse - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
   7. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
   8. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
   9. Female genital mutilation
   10. Mental Health
   11. Serious Violence
   12. County Lines
   13. Domestic abuse (Operation Encompass including the National Domestic Abuse Helpline)
   14. Child abduction and community safety incidents
   15. Children missing from education
   16. Children with family members in prison
   17. Cybercrime
   18. Homelessness
   19. Mental health
   20. Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
   21. Radicalisation
   22. Extremism (The Prevent duty, Channel)
   23. Honour based Abuse including Forced Marriage and FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

**Signs to look out for**:

* + Changes in behaviour / attitude / work
  + Signs of neglect – poor personal hygiene and clothing
  + Marks on body – bruises, cuts, burns
  + Being very withdrawn
  + Inappropriate sexual behaviour / language
  + Extreme anger
  + Real upset at thought of teacher contact with home
  + Food fads – overeating / undereating
  + Constant tiredness
  + Radicalisation – change in appearance / clothing. Pupil expressing extremist views.

1. **HOW TO RESPOND IF A CHILD TELLS YOU ABOUT SOMETHING WHICH MIGHT BE A CHILD PROTECTION ISSUE:** 
   * Stay calm.
   * Do not communicate shock, anger, or embarrassment.
   * Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you.
   * Never enter a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people to do this. State who this will be and why. You must not promise confidentiality.
   * Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
   * Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
   * Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use T.E.D questions i.e. tell me.... explain to me.... describe to me...
   * Listen and remember - Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
   * Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
   * Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
   * Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty, or bad.
   * It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
   * At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
   * As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child’s own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB: It is not staff’s role to seek or investigate disclosures. The role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to be available to talk. Staff must not deal with any disclosures by themselves. They must report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead urgently. The Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead must report clear indications or disclosure of abuse to children’s social care without delay. Children making a disclosure may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Listening to and supporting a child/young person who has been abused can be traumatic for the adults involved. Support for you will be available from your Line Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

1. **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF, VISITOR, GOVERNOR, OR TRUSTEE:** 
   * Be non-judgemental, calm, and sympathetic
   * Do not interrogate – let the child talk and then refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
   * Do not promise secrecy, but do promise you will only tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead
   * Do not speculate about what might happen next
   * Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
   * If a child is in immediate danger, always dial 999.

1. **NEW - CHANGES IN KCSIE 2023:** 
   * **Paragraph 14:** All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – see para 141 for further information) at induction. The training is regularly updated by the weekly bulletin.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

* + **Paragraph 103:** The designated safeguarding lead take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety, understanding the filtering, and monitoring systems and processes in place). This is explicit in the DSL’s role description.

* + **Paragraph 124:** The Trustees ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – see para 141 for further information) at induction. The training is regularly updated.

* + **Paragraph 138:** Online safety policy - Online safety and the school’s approach to it are reflected in this child protection policy which, amongst other things, includes appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks. The school considers the 4Cs (Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce) to provide the basis of an effective online policy.
  + **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:** 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.

The school has a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology. We recognise that access means that some children, whilst at school can sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensual (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. We carefully consider how this is managed on the premises and effectively dealt with. We have a no phones policy.

* + **Paragraph 142:** The filtering and monitoring systems are managed by the IT provider who is aware of the risks IT and is informed by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

* + **Paragraph 144:** We recognise our responsible for ensuring that we have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place. Staff and learners help review the effectiveness periodically so that we keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. We are exploring meeting the Cyber security standards for schools.

* + **Paragraph 167:** The guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools should expect these providers to have in place. The trustees therefore 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.

Safeguarding applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll. The trustees ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

* + **Paragraph 175:** Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. The school’s response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children’s social care and need a social worker and where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

**Annex B – other changes to KCSiE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) 2023:**

* 1. **Children absent from education and children missing education:** All staff are aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called ‘honour’-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

* 1. **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 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. School staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

In addition, 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.

* 1. **Child exploitation references to multi-agency practice principles:** Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm – non-statutory guidance for local areas, has been developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme.

1. **WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN NEXT:** 
   1. managing any support for the child internally via the school’s own pastoral support processes.
   2. undertaking an early help assessment,or
   3. making a referral to statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.
   * If there is a low level of need, the child will be given peer mentoring / adult mentoring / intervention with teachers /regular support meetings to ensure that problems are sorted out.
   * If there are clearly problems with the child / the family which are not abuse but to do with e.g. housing, anxiety, depression, bereavement, there will be a referral to an outside agency, such as CAF, CAMHS, Bereavement services, Youth Offending Team, CCS.
   * If there is even a suspicion that a child is at risk (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) then the child will be referred to other appropriate agencies, e.g. Prevent Team Channel, Social Care.
2. **CHILDREN SUFFERING OR LIKELY TO SUFFER SIGNIFICANT HARM:**

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect.

1. **WHAT WILL THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DO?**

Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the referrer and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required.

This will include determining whether:

* the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
* any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
* the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) provides details of the assessment process
* there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) provides details of the assessment process, and
* further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.

The referrer (usually the DSL) should follow up if this information is not forthcoming. If, after a referral, the child’s situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child’s situation improves.

**H. RECORD KEEPING:**

**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 stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should include:

− a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern

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

− a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

**ALL REFERRALS MUST BE DONE IN WRITING.**

**PLEASE CONTACT THE DSL REGARDING ANY SAFEGUARDING MATTERS.**