Heatherside Infant School – Child Protection Policy
Procedure and Guidance

POLICY TYPE	COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE	APPROVED	REVIEW CYCLE	NEXT REVIEW
Safeguarding	FGB	Autumn 2026	Annual	Autumn 2027

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Other policies which sit alongside the Safeguarding Policy:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

Heatherside Infant School Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

*'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 centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.' KCSiE*

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.
We make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming environment, underpinned by a culture of openness in which both children and adults feel secure, able to talk and confident that they are being listened to.
We maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned.
The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure in our school, and to inform parents and guardians how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.
Specific guidance is available to staff within the procedure documents.

Definitions
Within this document:

Child protection is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to children who have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.

The term ***staff*** applies to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This also includes parents and governors.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. On the whole, this will apply to pupils of our school; however, the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role for example adoptive parents, step-parents, guardians and foster carers.

Abuse could mean neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse or exploitation, or any combination of these It also encompasses situations where children witness domestic abuse. Parents, carers and other people can harm children either by direct acts and / or failure to provide proper care. Explanations of these are given within the procedure document.

Aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children, and in so doing, ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school.
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children.

Principles and Values

- Children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so.
- All children have a right to be protected from harm.
- All staff have a key role in prevention of harm, and an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm- whether in the school or in the community whilst taking into account any contextual safeguarding.
- All staff will promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- We acknowledge that is essential that we work in partnership with other agencies that protect children and reduce risk. Therefore, we will engage in partnership working throughout the child protection process to safeguard children.
- Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact Children's Social Care or the police without notifying parents, if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.
- All adults working within the school should maintain professional curiosity if they are concerned about a child.

Leadership and Management

We have established clear lines of accountability, training and advice to support the process of child protection and individual staff within that process.

In this school, any individual can contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy (DDSL) if they have concerns about a child or young person and there are robust cover arrangements for periods when the DSL is unavailable due to illness, leave or other circumstances.
The **DSL** is the headteacher Leanne Bate and the **DDSLs** are Laura Norris, Sarah Stone, Alex Fergus-Smith and Phyl Glass. The nominated safeguarding governor can be found on the school website and they will take leadership responsibility for safeguarding. The Chair of Governors will receive reports of allegations against the headteacher and act on the behalf of the governing body.

As an employer we follow safer recruitment guidance as set out in KCSiE 2026 including informing shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.

Training

All staff in our school are expected to be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and must be able to respond appropriately. Training is provided as required annually - usually during the September INSET day - and also through the year as required. The weekly memo to staff always contains a safeguarding scenario, giving staff the opportunity to reflect on how to put their safeguarding training and knowledge into practice. The advised response to the previous week's scenario is also included in the memo. Staff are encouraged to speak with a DSL if they have a query about this scenario. Separate training is provided to all new staff (and volunteers and student teachers) by the headteacher.

The DSLs will, as a minimum, attend training at least every other year to enable them to fulfil their role as well as receive regular updates through Andrew Hall, NSPCC and through attendance at annual safeguarding conferences run by the local authority.

Annual training also includes scenarios that are relevant to our setting, giving staff the opportunity to discuss how to put their safeguarding training and knowledge into practice.

Any update in national or local guidance will be shared with all staff in briefings and then captured in the next whole school training. This policy will be updated during the year to reflect any changes brought about by new guidance.

Governor training is provided as required by KCSiE 2026.

Referral

Following any concerns raised, the DSL will assess the information and consider if significant harm has happened or there is a risk that it may happen. If the evidence suggests the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm has been reached, or if it is not clear if the threshold is met, the DSL will contact Children's Social Care and, if appropriate, the police. If the DSL or DDSL is not available, or there are immediate concerns, the staff member will refer directly to Children's Social Care and the police if appropriate. We will use the guidance from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to determine when to contact the police.

Generally, the DSL will inform the parents prior to making a referral. However, there are situations where this may not be possible or appropriate, particularly when informing parents may place the child at further risk.
***N.B**. The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for the teacher to report directly to the police. The DSL should also be made aware.*

DSLs should keep detailed, accurate, and secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made 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. This rationale should be recorded on CPOMs.

Confidentiality

- We maintain that all matters relating to child protection are to be treated as confidential and only shared as per the 'Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners' (DfE 2024) guidance.
- There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.
- Information will be shared with individuals within the school who 'need to know'.
- All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep a disclosure confidential.

As a school we will educate pupils to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it through:

- The content of the curriculum will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who need a social worker, looked after and post-looked after children, children requiring mental health support, as well as children who are victims of abuse, and children with SEND.

- A school ethos which helps children to feel safe and able to talk freely about their concerns, believing that they will be listened to and valued.
- Every child having access to a 'trusted adult' in the school.
- Children will be taught about how to keep themselves and others safe when on-line.
- Regular visits from the NSPCC, teaching the children about their 'Speak out. Stay safe' rule.

Dealing with concerns and allegations against staff

If a concern is raised about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff, this information will be recorded and passed to the headteacher Leanne Bate. The headteacher will make an assessment to determine if the matter is a 'low level concern' or an 'allegation'. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for all allegations and the relevant guidance will be followed. If the headteacher needs advice or guidance they will contact the LADO. If the allegation is against the headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO or Chair of Governors directly (Annex 3).

Dealing with children abusing children

If a concern is raised that a child under 18 is sexually abusing another child under 18, the 'Child on Child Abuse' guidance will be followed (Annex 4).

Legal context

Section 175 of the education act 2002; the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations
Children Act 2004 & 1989

Guidance
Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership protocols and guidance and their procedures
Working together to safeguard children 2026
FGM Act 2003 Mandatory Reporting Guidance (2016)
Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026)

Policy review

As a school, we review this policy at least annually in line with Department for Education (DfE), Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) requirements and other relevant statutory guidance.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff responsibilities

All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for children, and preventing concerns from escalating. To achieve this, they will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop skills they need to recognise, assess, and manage risk appropriately, and keep themselves safe.
- Attend training in order to be aware of, and be alert to, the signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of Heatherside Infant School, inside and outside the home and online**.**
- Maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” with regards to safeguarding.
- Be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. This could also be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Recognise that abuse, neglect, or other adverse childhood experiences, can have an impact on the mental health, behaviour and education of children.
- Recognise prejudice-based harm (racism, faith-based prejudice, and other discrimination) as harm in its own right which can significantly affect a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety.
- Report their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused to the DSL as soon as is practical that day and record on CPOMS. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a DDSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or DDSL is not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures (Annex 3) if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Follow the procedures set out by the HSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE.
- Support pupils in line with their child protection plan.
- Treat information with confidentiality but never promise to “keep a secret”.
- Notify the DSL or DDSL of any child on a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan who has an unexplained absence.
- Have an awareness of the process for community-based Family Help and the criteria for when a case should be referred to Family Help at targeted early help level and statutory services and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from this intervention (Annex 8).
- Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and provide early help.
- Ensure they know who the DSL and DDSL are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy, the Safeguarding Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct), child on child abuse procedures, the safeguarding response for children who go missing or are absent from education, and the role of the DSL.

Senior Leadership Team responsibilities:

- Contribute to inter-agency working in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 guidance.'
- Provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified.
- Ensure staff are alert to the various factors that can increase the need for early help (*para 18 KCSIE 2026*).
- Working with Children's Social Care, support their assessment and planning processes, including the school's attendance at conference and core group meetings.
- Carry out tasks delegated by the governing body such as training of staff, safer recruitment and maintaining a single central record.
- Provide support and advice on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and child protection, to all staff, regardless of their position within the school.
- Treat any information shared by staff or pupils with respect and follow agreed policies and procedures.
- Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE) and the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) procedures.
- Determine if a concern about a member of staff is a 'low level concern' or an allegation.[1]

DSL responsibilities *(to be read in conjunction with DSL role description in KCSiE - Annex B – Page 181).*

In this school the DSL is Leanne Bate.
The Deputy DSLs are Laura Norris, Sarah Stone, Alex Fergus-Smith & Phyl Glass.

In addition to the role of all staff and the senior management team, the DSL will:

- Refer cases to social care and the police, where appropriate, in a timely manner, avoiding any delay that could place the child at more risk.
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required.
- Assist the Governing Body in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities set out in legislation and statutory guidance.
- Attend appropriate training and demonstrate evidence of continuing professional development to carry out the role.
- Ensure every member of staff knows who the DSL and the Deputies are, understands their role, and knows how to contact them.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to be alert to the signs of abuse, to refer any concerns to the DSL, and report concerns about an adult to the headteacher.
- Ensure that those staff that need to know are aware of the children who have experienced or are experiencing abuse, in order to promote their educational outcomes and provide the appropriate support.
- Ensure whole school training occurs regularly, with at least annual updates, so that staff and volunteers can fulfil their responsibilities knowledgeably.

[1] See Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Part 4 section 1 paragraph 497 onwards

- Ensure any members of staff joining the school outside of the agreed training schedule receive induction training prior to the commencement of their duties.
- Keep records of child protection concerns securely and separate from the main pupil file, and use these records to support the assessment and likelihood of risk.
- Ensure that safeguarding records are transferred accordingly (separate from pupil files) and that child protection files are transferred within the first 5 school days of the start of a new term when a child transfers school, and within 5 school days for an in-year transfer.
- Consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school/college in advance of a pupil leaving particularly where the information would support an assessment of risk to others in the school as well as the individual pupil.
- Ensure that where a pupil transfers school and is on a Child Protection Plan or is a child looked after, their information is passed to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed. Consideration is given to a transition meeting prior to moving if the case is complex or on-going.
- Be aware of the training opportunities and briefings provided by HSCP to ensure staff are aware of the latest local guidance on safeguarding.
- Develop, implement, and review procedures within the school that enable the identification and reporting of all cases or suspected cases of abuse.
- Meet any other expectations set out for DSLs in KCSiE 2026.

Governing body responsibilities

- Ensure the school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures including a Child Protection Policy, a Staff Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct, a Behaviour Policy, and a response to children who go missing from education.
- Ensure HSCP is informed in line with local requirements about the discharge of duties via the annual safeguarding audit.
- Ensure recruitment, selection and induction follows safer recruitment practice, including all appropriate checks.
- Ensure allegations against staff are dealt with by the headteacher. Allegations against the headteacher are dealt with by the Chair of Governors.
- Ensure a member of the Senior Leadership Team is appointed as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has this recorded in their job description.
- Ensure staff have been trained appropriately and this is updated in line with guidance.
- Ensure any safeguarding deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied without delay.
- Identify a nominated governor for safeguarding.

Child Protection Procedures

Overview

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the school and will be covered in training to ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

The aim of our procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

The prime concern at all stages must be for the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

All staff are aware that very young children, those with disabilities, special educational needs, certain medical conditions, or with language deficits/English as an additional language may have more difficulty in communicating concerns or feelings. They may be more likely to communicate concerns with behaviours rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in children who have limited mobility. This includes pupils as well as other children visiting the site, such as younger siblings, which will include children (for example younger siblings) visiting the site in addition to.

If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

1. Make an initial record of the information electronically on CPOMS or on paper if access to a computer is not feasible (unless there is an immediate risk of harm to the child in which case they should speak to a DSL without delay).

2. Report it to the DSL immediately.

3. The DSL will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention. Urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSL is not immediately available.

4. Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence. Include everything that has happened, including details of:

    - Dates, times and locations of observations
    - Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved
    - Any injuries
    - Explanations given by the child / adult
    - What action was taken
    - The child's voice – including any actual words or phrases used by the child

    The records must be recorded on CPOMs. If this is not immediately possible, notes should be made, dated and signed and transferred to CPOMS when possible to do so.

5. In the absence of the DSL or their Deputy, be prepared to refer directly to Children's Social Care (and the police if appropriate), if there is the potential for immediate and significant harm.

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:

1. Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to Children's Social Care and the police if this is in keeping with the National Police Chiefs' Council "When to call the Police" guidance. The rationale for this decision should be recorded by the DSL.
2. Normally, the school should try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement before making a referral to Children's Social Care. However, in accordance with DfE guidance, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or compromise a police investigation. Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the DSL should clarify with Children's Social Care or the police whether the parents should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is particularly important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation. The child's views should also be taken into account when appropriate.
3. If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL (or Deputy) must contact Children's Social Care via the Inter-Agency Referral Form (IARF), making a clear statement of:

- the known facts
- any suspicions or allegations
- whether or not there has been any contact with the child's family.

If there is indication that the child is suffering significant harm, a call will also be made to Children's Reception Team (CRT) on 01329 225379.

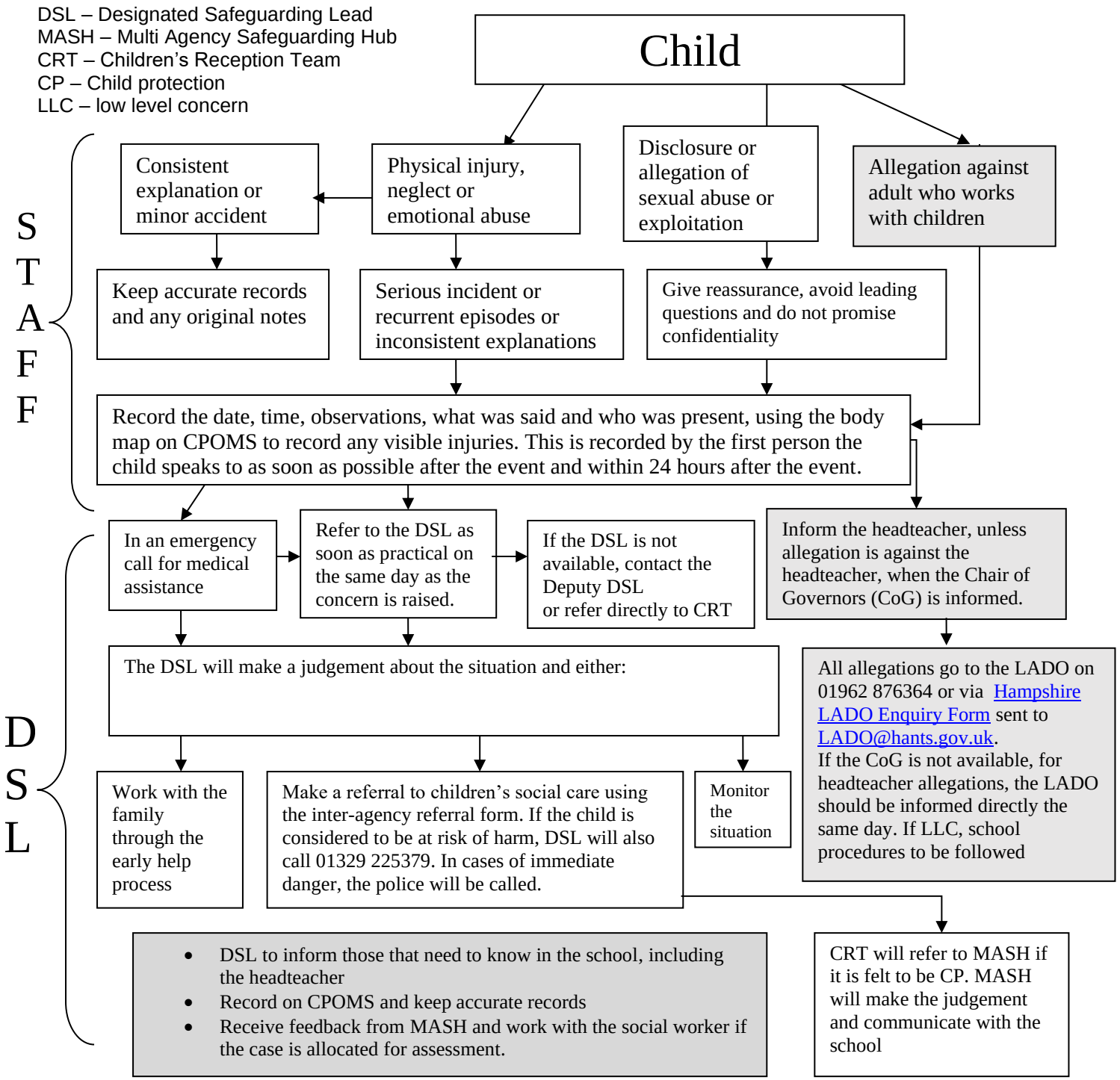
4. If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the police must be called. The DSL must then notify Children's Social Care of the occurrence and what action has been taken.

5. When a pupil needs urgent medical attention and there is suspicion of parental abuse causing the medical need, the DSL or their Deputy should take the child to the accident and emergency unit at the nearest hospital and inform Children's Social Care. Advice should be sought from Children's Social Care about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention.

6. If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL will either actively monitor the situation or consider the community-based or targeted early help process.

7. In cases of allegations against staff or low-level concerns, the HSCP procedure or the school's Low-Level Concerns (LLC) procedure will be followed.

Annex 1 - Flowchart for child protection procedures



***** *In the cases of known FGM, the teacher who was made aware will also make contact with the police*

Annex 2 - Dealing with disclosures

All staff should

A member of staff who is approached by a child should maintain a positive attitude and try to reassure them. They should not promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preferred communication method.

All staff should know who the DSL is and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. Ultimately, all staff have the right to make a referral to the police or social care directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, e.g. they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

Guiding principles, the seven R's

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said and take it seriously.
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable.

Reassure

- Reassure the pupil, but only so far as is honest and reliable.
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'Everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'.
- Do reassure e.g. you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'.

Respond

- Respond to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'Did he touch your private parts?' or 'Did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court. Use TED if asking questions to avoid leading – 'Tell me…', 'Explain…', 'Describe…'
- Do not ask the child why something has happened.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you need to talk. Reassure the pupil that it will be a senior member of staff in confidence.

Report

- Share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible.
- If you are not able to contact the DSL or the Deputy DSL, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the children's services social care department directly.

Record

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible.
- Give your original notes to the DSL who will scan and add them to CPOMS.
- Record the date, time, place, child's present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words.
- Complete a body map on CPOMS to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising or marks.
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'.

Remember

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available.
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues.
- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it.
- All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell somebody that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Review (led by DSL)

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened after the report being made. If they do not receive this information, they should be proactive in seeking it out.

If a staff member believes that their concerns have not been dealt with effectively or that the child remains at risk, they should initially ask the DSL to reconsider ensuring that the risks are understood. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, or the DSL rationale appears to miss the risk to the child, then the Whistleblowing procedures of the school should be followed. If the DSL is unhappy with the response from Children Social Care, they should consider following the HSCP escalation protocol.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and schools should have a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This might include reassurance that they have followed the procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the

allegations to be handled appropriately. For some staff, use of an employee-based counselling service may be appropriate.

Annex 3 - Allegations against adults who work with children

The Staff Code of Conduct Policy outlines our policy and procedure in relation to Low Level Concerns (LLC).

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) states that organisations should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Those policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a complaint, or a concern about the quality of care or practice.

Allegations, as defined by KCSiE, should be reported to the LADO. Complaints or concerns can be managed independently by the school under internal procedures.

Complaints could include:

- Breaches of the Code of Conduct
- Any breach of data protection or confidentiality
- Poor behaviour management
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Misadministration of medication

Concerns could include:

- Inappropriate use of language, shouting or swearing
- Discussing personal or sexual relationships with, or in the presence, of pupils
- Making (or encouraging others to make) unprofessional comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate children, or might be interpreted as such.

Low Level Concerns (LLCs) which do not reach the allegations harm threshold (or complaints criteria) should be dealt with under a school LLC procedure.

Further guidance on contacting the LADO can found at: Allegations against adults in the children's workforce | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council

Procedure for Allegations that meet the harm threshold.

This procedure should be used in all cases when it is alleged that an individual working in or behalf of the school/college in a paid or unpaid capacity (i.e. a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, trainee teacher, contractor, Governor, or another adult who works with children has either:

- **behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or**
- **possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or**
- **behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children; or**
- **behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.**

When considering allegations of suitability, (the fourth criteria above) the LADOs would consider the following situations:

- Parents of children who are placed on a CIN plan or are receiving Early Help;
- Arrests for offences against adults;

- Presentation to other professionals around mental health, domestic abuse and/or substance misuse;
- Extreme political or religious viewpoints which could be considered Hate Crime;
- Concerns about behaviour in their private lives which may impact on children.

In any of these situations the LADO criteria for intervention will be assessed against the likelihood and impact of transferable risk to children.

In line with our referral process:

- Staff will report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor supply staff or volunteer to the headteacher as soon as possible.

- If an allegation is made against the headteacher, the concerns need to be raised with the Chair of Governors as soon as possible. If the Chair of Governors is not available, then the LADO should be contacted directly.

- There may be situations when the headteacher or Chair of Governors will want to involve the police immediately, for example, if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.

- Once an allegation has been received by the headteacher or Chair of Governors, they will contact the LADO on 01962 876364 or via the Hampshire LADO Enquiry Form,sent to LADO@hants.gov.uk, as soon as possible and before carrying out any investigation into the allegation.

- Inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to.

In liaison with the LADO, the school will determine how to proceed and if necessary, the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care and/or the police.

When receiving information from outside agencies about school staff, the LADO will assess the potential for transferable riskand make a disclosure to the school where there is a likelihood of transferable risk to children and a pressing need.

If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the school to seek guidance from its personnel or HR provider, following the procedures set out in Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025) and the HSCP procedures.

Supply Staff trainee teachers and all contracted staff

While supply staff, trainee teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business are not employees of the school, it is still required that the school ensures allegations are dealt with properly and are reported to the LADO.

If the matter requires an internal investigation, this will be carried out by the school in liaison with an HR rep (acting as the employer) from the supply agency, business or teacher training provider.

Low Level Concerns (LLCs)

The LLC policy is part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The purpose of the policy is to encourage an open and transparent culture, which enables the school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour at an early stage. It should also empower staff to share LLCs with the DSL. LLCs will be managed independently by the school under internal procedures.

Examples of LLCs include, but is not limited to:-_

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- humiliating children;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
  or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

The LLC policy will:

- Ensure that staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- Empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the DSL
- Address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct this at an early stage.
- Provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Help identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system.

In line with the LLC policy:-

- All LLCs will be shared responsibly with the DSL, recorded in writing and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.
- All LLCs will be reviewed, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic, or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- If LLCs are found to be escalating and are reaching the harm threshold, a referral will be made to the LADO.

If there is any doubt about the level at which behaviour needs to be addressed, LADO advice will be taken.

Annex 4 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Child on child

Context

This policy is about how staff should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of school premises, and or online. All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of "It could happen here."

Schools not recognising, acknowledging, or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse, and /or downplaying some behaviours relating to abuse, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment, and, in a worst-case scenario, a culture that normalises abuse - leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age or sex. It can also occur when a group of children sexually assault or sexually harass a single child, or another group of children.

Children who are victims of HSB, sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This can adversely affect their educational attainment, as well as their emotional well-being. HSB, sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. It is also important to recognise that some perpetrators may themselves also be victims that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.

Reports of HSB, sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children and young people, including school staff, are supported and protected as appropriate.

Policy

We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and by other children.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and this will be dealt with under our child protection policy and in line with KCSiE (2026).

This policy is underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated, and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

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

Prevention:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- Providing training to staff.
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy, pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum such as the NSPCC 'Speak out stay safe' programme.
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

Responding to reports of HSB, sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children making a report of HSB, sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be supported.
- Understanding that our initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important and can encourage or undermine the confidence of victims of HSB, sexual violence and harassment to report or to come forward in the future.
- If the report includes an online element, staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (DfE 2022): Searching, Screening and Confiscation (publishing.service.gov.uk) guidance.
- Staff taking the report will inform the DSL or their Deputy DSL as soon as practicably possible, but at least within 24 hours.
- Staff taking a report will never promise confidentiality.
- Parents or carers will normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk).
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care (01329 225379).

Risk Assessment:

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL will carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment. The risk and needs assessment for a report of sexual violence should consider:

- The victim's safety and support needs
- The alleged perpetrator including their support needs and any disciplinary action.
- All other children at the school.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

Following a report of HSB or sexual harassment, the DSL will consider the need for a risk assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or specialist risk assessment, these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

Action: The DSL will consider:

- The wishes of the victim regarding how they want to proceed.
- The nature of the incident, including whether a crime has been committed and/or whether HSB was displayed.
- Ages of the children/young people involved.
- Developmental stages of the children/young people.
- Any power imbalance between the children/young people.
- Any previous incidents.
- On-going risks.
- Other related issues or wider context including links to child sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

Options: The DSL will manage the report with the following options:

- Manage internally.
- Refer to Early Help.
- Refer to Children's Social Care.
- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Social Care).

Ongoing Response:

- **All** concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic, or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.
- The DSL will keep the risk assessment under review.
- The DSL will manage each report on a case-by-case basis and will keep the risk assessment under review.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim during that investigation.
- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises and transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils and students).
- Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle of keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes, where possible, should be maintained and continued. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or

caution, and wishes of the victim, will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and other witnesses (children and adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis.
- When ongoing support is required by the victim, the victim should be asked whether they would find it helpful to have a designated, trusted adult to talk about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be made by the victim or victims (as far as reasonably possible), and this choice should be supported.
- The school will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in line with behaviour and discipline in the school.
- The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions, and may occur at the same time if necessary.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious reports

- If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help, may have been abused by someone else, or whether this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

- If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it, in line with their behaviour policy.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is linked to sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

These are equally not tolerated.

The principles from our Behaviour Policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

References: –
KCSiE (DfE 2026)

Annex 5 - Online Safety

As a school it is essential that we safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases, abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online; this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

A comprehensive approach to online safety empowers staff to protect and educate pupils, students, and colleagues in their use of technology and establishes the following mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. Information about our online safety procedures and teaching can be found in our RHE Policy, as well as in the Safeguarding Policy.

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, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

- **contact**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

- **conduct**: 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) including those generated using AI, and online bullying; and

- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If we feel pupils, students or staff are at risk, we will report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (https://apwg.org/).

We ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing our whole school approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures.

We understand the DfE expectation that schools implement a mobile phone policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phones during the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. We will refer to appropriate guidance to decide how best to achieve this within our school context (Creating a mobile phone-free environment: school case studies - GOV.UK, Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK)

Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on all school devices and school networks. These are regularly reviewed, at least once every academic year, and a record is kept of these checks. Staff training includes understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. In developing our policies and procedures, we will refer to the DfE guidance: Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and the department's Plan technology for your school - GOV.UK to carry out a self-assessment against the filtering and monitoring standards.

We recognise that AI in education affords both opportunities and challenges in schools. Schools can decide whether to permit AI use by age-appropriate pupils, limit AI access to approved tools, or adopt a mixed approach for trusted and untrusted staff. In developing our approach to AI, we will refer to DfE guidance Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK and Using AI in education settings: support materials - GOV.UK.

We understand that education settings are directly responsible for ensuring that appropriate security protection procedures are in place to safeguard their systems, staff, and learners, and that the effectiveness of these procedures is reviewed periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies.

We are aware that guidance on e-security is available from the National Education Network. In addition, schools should consider meeting the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK. and that broader guidance on cyber security including considerations for governors and trustees can be found at Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK.

We will consider how online safety, including the use of generative artificial intelligence, is appropriately reflected in all relevant policies, embedded across the curriculum, included in teacher training, and within the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead, as well as in discussions with parents.

We understand that technology, and the related risks and harms, evolves and changes rapidly, and we will carry out regular reviews of our approach to online safety to consider and reflect the risks to our pupils.

Annex 6 - Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing in a safeguarding context

Every school should have a whistleblowing procedure. Whistleblowing procedures protect staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties.

This does not replace the Whistleblowing Policy and should be read in conjunction with the school policy.

The Whistleblowing Policy is not intended for concerns that fall under statutory procedures (e.g., child protection or allegations against staff), as these should be reported under the relevant procedures. However, the
Whistleblowing Policy will apply where there is good reason to believe that the relevant procedure is not being followed, or will not be followed effectively.

Within our school, the headteacher (Leanne Bate) is the senior manager and responsible for all staff. If you are concerned that any member of staff within the school is not following safeguarding processes or behaving in a way that is placing children at risk, you should make the headteacher aware.

If your concern is about the headteacher, you should raise this with the Chair of Governors; the office have their contact details.

If you would prefer to raise your concerns outside the school environment, you can contact Children's Social Care by calling 0300 555 1384 (office hours) or 0300 555 1373 (outside of office hours),or the Local Authority Designated Officer on 01962 876364 or at LADO@hants.gov.uk.

Annex 7 - Briefing sheet for temporary and supply staff

For supply staff and those on short contracts

While working in our school, you have a duty of care towards the children and young people here. This means that at all times you should act in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare. In addition, if at any time you have a concern about a child or young person, particularly if you think they may be at risk of abuse or neglect, it is your responsibility to share that concern with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is the headteacher, or in their absence, one of the DDSLs.

This is not an exhaustive list, but you may have become concerned as a result of:

- Observing a physical injury, which you think may have been non-accidental
- Noticing something in the appearance of a child or young person which suggests they are not being sufficiently well cared for
- Observing behaviour that leads you to be concerned about a child or young person
- A child or young person telling you that they have been subjected to some form of abuse
- Witnessing adult behaviour that leads you to be concerned about their suitability to work with children or young people.

In any of the circumstances listed here, you must write down what you saw or heard, date and sign your account, and give it to the DSL as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours later. This may be the beginning of a legal process – it is important to understand that legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously undermined by any suggestion that the child has been led in any way.

If a child talks to you about abuse, you should follow these guidelines:

- Rather than directly questioning the child, just listen and be supportive.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events, but don't push the child to tell you more than they wish.
- Make it clear that you may need to pass on information to staff in other agencies who may be able to help – do not promise confidentiality. You are obliged to share any information relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Write an account of the conversation immediately, capturing it as close to verbatim as possible. Include the date and time , and mention anyone else who was present. Then sign it and give your record to the DSL, who will follow due process, including contacting Children's Social Care if appropriate.

The school has a policy on safeguarding children and young people which you can find, together with the local procedures to be followed by all staff, on SharePoint and on the school website.

If your concern involves the DSL or a member of the senior staff, contact the LADO on 01962 847364 or via Hampshire LADO Enquiry Form sent to LADO@hants.gov.uk.

Remember, if you have a concern, report it.

Annex 8 - What is child abuse?

The following definitions are taken from W*orking Together to Safeguard Children* HM Government (2026) and KCSIE 2026. In addition to these definitions, it should be understood that children can also be abused through criminal and sexual exploitation, coercive and controlling behaviour, teenage relationship abuse, honour-based violence, faith-based abuse, and online child sexual abuse and exploitation. To support the local context, all staff have access to the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) threshold chart. Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) threshold chart.

What is abuse and neglect?
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Abuse may take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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

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

Sexual abuse
Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing 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 penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as

can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and the school's policy and procedure for dealing with it.

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 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 caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

The HSCP neglect strategy is used to provide a more detailed summary of neglect and the local thresholds for referrals.

Indicators of abuse

Neglect

The nature of neglect
Neglect is a lack of parental care; however, poverty, lack of information, or inadequate services can be contributory factors.

Far more children are registered to the category of neglect on child protection plans than to the other categories. As with abuse, the number of children experiencing neglect is likely to be much higher than the numbers on the plans.

Neglect can include parents or carers failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision or stimulation
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

NSPCC research has highlighted the following examples of the neglect of children under 12:

- frequently going hungry
- frequently having to go to school in dirty clothes
- regularly having to look after themselves because of parents being away or having problems such as drug or alcohol misuse
- being abandoned or deserted
- living at home in dangerous physical conditions
- not being taken to the doctor when ill
- not receiving dental care.

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often perceived as less serious than other categories. However, it can be very damaging: children who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and may find it hard to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Neglect is often noticed at a stage when it does not pose an immediate risk to the child. However, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (*What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused* DfE 2015) would suggest that an appropriate intervention or conversation at this early stage can address concerns and prevent a child from continuing to suffer until the situation escalates to a point of significant harm or need.

Neglect is often linked to other forms of abuse, so any concerns school staff have should, at least, be discussed with the DSL.

Indicators of neglect
The following is a summary of some of the indicators that may suggest a child is being abused or is at risk of harm. It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is being abused. Each child should be seen in the context of their family and wider community and a proper assessment carried out by appropriate persons. What is important to keep in mind is that if you feel unsure or concerned, do something about it. Don't keep it to yourself. The HSCP neglect toolkit provides a more detailed list of indicators of neglect and is available to all staff

Physical indicators of neglect
- Constant hunger and stealing food
- Poor personal hygiene - unkempt, dirty or smelly
- Underweight
- Dress unsuitable for weather
- Poor state of clothing
- Illness or injury untreated.

Behavioural indicators of neglect
- Constant tiredness
- Frequent absence from school or lateness
- Missing medical appointments
- Isolated among peers
- Frequently unsupervised
- Stealing or scavenging, especially food
- Destructive tendencies.

Emotional abuse

The nature of emotional abuse
Most harm is produced in *low warmth, high criticism* homes, not from single incidents.
Emotional abuse is difficult to define, identify/recognise and/or prove.
Emotional abuse is chronic and cumulative and has a long-term impact.
All kinds of abuse and neglect have emotional effects, although emotional abuse can occur by itself.
Children can be harmed by witnessing someone harming another person – as in domestic violence.

It is sometimes possible to spot emotionally abusive behaviour from parents and carers towards their children by the way the adults are speaking to, or behaving towards,the children. An appropriate challenge or intervention could bring about positive change and prevent more intensive work being carried out later on.

Indicators of emotional abuse
Developmental issues

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Poor school performance
- Speech disorders, particularly sudden disorders or changes.

Behaviour

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Acting out
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late.

Social issues

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Insecure, clinging behaviour
- Poor social relationships.

Emotional responses

- Extreme fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations ("I deserve this")
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-disgust
- Low self-esteem
- Unusually fearful with adults
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

Physical abuse

The nature of physical abuse

Most children collect cuts and bruises quite routinely as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Clearly, it is not necessary to be concerned about most of these minor injuries. However, accidental injuries normally occur on the *bony prominences* – e.g., shins. Injuries on the soft areas of the body are more likely to be inflicted intentionally and should therefore make us more alert to other concerning factors that may be present.

A body map can assist in the clear recording and reporting of physical abuse on CPOMs. The body map should only be used to record observed injuries, and no child should be asked to remove clothing by a member of staff of the school.

Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern

- Multiple bruising or bruises and scratches (especially on the head and face)
- Clusters of bruises – e.g., fingertip bruising (caused by being grasped)
- Bruises around the neck and behind the ears – the most common abusive injuries are to the head
- Bruises on the back, chest, buttocks, or on the inside of the thighs
- Marks indicating injury by an instrument – e.g., linear bruising (stick), parallel bruising (belt), marks of a buckle
- Bite marks
- Deliberate burning may also be indicated by the pattern of an instrument or object – e.g., electric fire, cooker, cigarette
- Scalds with upward splash marks or *tide marks*
- Untreated injuries
- Recurrent injuries or burns
- Bald patches.

In the social context of the school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is generally light-hearted and detailed. So, most of all, concern should be increased when:

- the explanation given does not match the injury
- the explanation uses words or phrases that do not match the vocabulary of the child (adult words)
- no explanation is forthcoming
- the child (or the parent/carer) is secretive or evasive
- the injury is accompanied by allegations of abuse or assault.

You should be concerned if the child or young person:

- is reluctant to have parents/carers contacted
- runs away or shows fear of going home
- is aggressive towards themselves or others
- flinches when approached or touched
- is reluctant to undress to change clothing for sport
- wears long sleeves during hot weather
- is unnaturally compliant in the presence of parents/carers.
- has a fear of medical help or attention
- admits to a punishment that appears excessive.

Sexual abuse

The nature of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is often perpetrated by people who are known and trusted by the child – e.g., relatives, family friends, neighbours, babysitters, people working with the child in school, faith settings, clubs or activities. Children can also be subject to child sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation is seen as a separate category of sexual abuse. Indicators of CSE can be found further in the child protection policy.

Characteristics of child sexual abuse:

- it is often planned and systematic – people do not sexually abuse children by accident, though sexual abuse can be opportunistic
- grooming the child – people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent
- grooming the child's environment – abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives.

Most people who sexually abuse children are men, but some women sexually abuse too.

Indicators of sexual abuse

Physical observations

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain.

Behavioural observations

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour or affection inappropriate for age
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity Inexplicable decline in school performance
- Depression or other sudden apparent changes in personality as becoming insecure or clinging
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Overly-compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust or fear concerning significant adults
- Regressive behaviour,
- Onset of wetting, by day or night; nightmares
- Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Eating disorders or sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

Annex 9: What staff should look out for: support before statutory intervention

It is important for all school staff to have a clear understanding of the process for community-based Family Help assessments and that any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. In addition, it is important that staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

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

Reference:
KCSIE 2026

Annex 10 – Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected"

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Indicators that a child is living within a relationship with domestic abuse may include:

- being withdrawn
- suddenly behaving differently
- anxiety
- being clingy
- depression
- aggression
- problems sleeping
- eating disorders
- bed wetting
- soiling clothes
- excessive risk taking
- missing school
- changes in eating habits
- obsessive behaviour
- experiencing nightmares

- taking drugs
- use of alcohol
- self-harm
- thoughts about suicide

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is living with domestic abuse but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case.

If staff believe that a child is living with domestic abuse, this will be reported to the DSL for referral, to be considered by children's social care.

Annex 11 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual activity(a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or threat of violence.

'CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or nonpenetrative acts such as *masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.*

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim.

*Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.' (*KCSiE 2026, para. 42, p. 17-18)

As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. Children are manipulated, groomed and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing. We understand that it is not possible for a child to give informed consent to engage in exploitative activity, and they cannot give consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked.

CSE can: -

- Be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang and the victim may identify as being part of this group.
- Be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time
- Be opportunistic or complex organised abuse
- Affect both males and females – this is not gender specific.
- Be between males and females or between the same genders.
- Be perpetrated by someone much older than the victim, but children may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation. Where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.
- Include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

Indicators a child may be at risk of CSE include:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late.

- regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education.
- appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- associating with other young people involved in exploitation.
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becomes pregnant.
- mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing.
- drug and alcohol misuse.
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

CSE can happen to a child of any age, gender, ability or social status. Often the victim of CSE is not aware that they are being exploited and do not see themselves as a victim. We educate all staff in the signs and indicators of sexual exploitation. Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education. We use the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF) and associated guidance from the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to identify pupils who are at risk; the DSL will share this information as appropriate with children's social care.

We recognise that we may have information or intelligence that could be used to both protect children and prevent risk. Any relevant information that we have will be shared on the Community Partnership Information (CPI) Sharing Form which can be downloaded from https://www.safe4me.co.uk/portfolio/sharing-information/

Annex 12 - Child Criminal Exploitation (including county lines)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is defined as:- *'where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology'.* (Home Office – Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018 page 48)

The exploitation of children and young people for crime is not a new phenomenon as evidenced by Fagan's gang in Charles Dickens book, Oliver Twist. Children under the age of criminal responsibility, or young people who have increased vulnerability due to push: pull factors who are manipulated, coerced or forced into criminal activity provide opportunity for criminals to distance themselves from crime.

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

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, committing vehicle crime, threatening or committing serious violence to others, or transporting drugs or money through county lines.

'County lines' refers to a 'phone line through which drug deals can be made. An order is placed on the number and typically a young person will deliver the drugs to the specified address and collect the money for the deal. These lines are owned and managed by organised crime gangs, often from larger cities, who are expanding their markets into rural areas. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes. They are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into drug debts which need to be worked off.

Indicators that a child may be criminally exploited include: Increase in Missing episodes – particular key as children can be missing for days and drug run in other counties.

- Having unexplained amounts of money, new high-cost items and multiple mobile phones
- Increased social media and phone/text use, almost always secretly.
- Older males in particular seen to be hanging around and driving.
- Having injuries that are unexplained and being unwilling to have them looked at.

- Increase in aggression, violence and fighting.
- Carrying weapons – knives, baseball bats, hammers, acid
- Travel receipts that are unexplained
- Significant missing from education and disengaging from previous positive peer groups.
- Association with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Parent concerns and significant changes in behaviour that affect emotional wellbeing.

We understand that children who are criminally exploited should have their vulnerabilities recognised by adults and professions and we will treat any child who may be criminally exploited as a victim. We understand that it is not possible for a child to give informed consent to engage in criminal or other exploitative activity, and they cannot give consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked.

In cases of suspected CCE, we will use the CERAF form and guidance in our referral to children's social care (New version of the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF) - Hampshire SCP). If a referral to the police is also required, as crimes have been committed on the school premises, these will also be made. Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education.

If there is information or intelligence about child criminal exploitation, we will report this to the police via the community partnership information form.
https://www.safe4me.co.uk/portfolio/sharing-information/

Serious Violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing an intent to do so) should be reported and actions taken, which may include any action needed to de-escalate peer conflict.
Schools play a key role in protecting children from violence, safeguarding victims, as well as those who may be at risk or, or involved in violence (who are victims themselves). All staff will be made aware of indicators, which may signal that pupils, or members of their families, are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime.

These indications can include but are not limited to;

- increased absence from school;
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- a significant decline in performance;
- signs of self-harm; significant change in wellbeing; signs of assault;
- unexplained injuries;
- unexplained gifts and/or new possessions; possession of weapons.

A fuller list of risk factors can be round in the Home Office's Home Office – Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018

Staff should be 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 school or having time in alternative provision, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Advice for staff can be found in in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement, Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK and the Youth Endowments Fund's Education, Children and Violence | Youth Endowment Fund

We have a duty to not only prevent the individual from engaging in criminal activity, but also to safeguard others who may be harmed by their actions. Early evidence-based support for those considered at risk, as well as in 'teachable moments' when issues emerge is vital. This includes access to trusted to adults, social and emotional skill support, and where available, targeted interventions such as mentoring or therapeutic support.

All staff will be made aware that violence can peak in the hours just before and just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school and can concentrate in particular places. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence and it is important that schools/colleges try to understand where these places are, with a view to working with partners to promote safety for children. Listening to children can also help build understanding of the local context and where and when they feel unsafe.

We will report concerns of serious violence to police and social care. If there is information or intelligence about potential serious violence, we will report this to the police via the community partnership information form. https://www.safe4me.co.uk/portfolio/sharing-information/

Annex 13 - Trafficked Children and modern slavery

Modern slavery encompasses exploitation including sexual exploitation, criminal financial exploitation human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Human trafficking is defined by the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** (UNHCR) in respect of children as a process that is a combination of:

- Movement (including within the UK)
- Control, through harm / threat of harm or fraud
- For the purpose of exploitation

Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim. There is significant evidence that children (both of UK and other citizenship) are being trafficked internally within the UK and this is regarded as a more common form of trafficking in the UK.

There are a number of indicators which suggest that a child may have been. trafficked into the UK, and may still be controlled by the traffickers or receiving. adults. These are as follows:

- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy.
- Has a history of going missing and unexplained moves?
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day.
- Works in various locations
- Has limited freedom of movement.
- Appears to be missing for periods.
- Is known to beg for money.
- Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good.
- Is one among a number of unrelated children found at one address.
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice.
- Is excessively afraid of being deported.

For those children who are internally trafficked within the UK indicators include:

- Physical symptoms (bruising indicating either physical or sexual assault)
- Prevalence of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy
- Reports from reliable sources suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation/the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation.
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- Being in the community in clothing unusual for a child i.e. inappropriate for age, or borrowing clothing from older people
- Relationship with a significantly older partner
- Accounts of social activities, expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding

- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation.
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for despite having not been at home.
- Having keys to premises other than those known about
- Low self- image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour including cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity.
- Truancy / disengagement with education
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links; and/or
- Possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming online relationships, particularly with adults.

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is being trafficked but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case.

When considering modern slavery, there is a perception that this is taking place overseas. The government estimates that tens of thousands of slaves are in the UK today.

Young people being forced to work in restaurants, nail bars, car washes and harvesting fruit, vegetables or other foods may have all been slaves ‘hiding in plain sight’ within the U.K and rescued from slavery. Other forms of slavery such as sex slaves or household slaves are more hidden but have also been rescued within the UK.

If staff believe that a child is being trafficked or is a slave, this will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead for referral to be considered to children’s social care.

Annex 14 – Grooming

Grooming

On-line grooming is the process by which one person with an inappropriate sexual interest in children will approach a child on-line, with the intention of developing a relationship with that child, to be able to meet them in person and intentionally cause harm.

The school will build awareness amongst children and parents about ensuring that the child:

- Only has friends on-line that they know in real life.
- Is aware that if they communicate with somebody that they have met online, they should tell a trusted adult.

That the school will support parents to:

- Recognise the signs of grooming.
- Have regular conversations with their children about on-line activity and how to stay safe on-line.

The school will raise awareness by:

- Providing information for parents as appropriate via the website and newsletter.
- Including awareness as part of their curriculum (staying safe online)
- Identifying with parents and children how they can be safeguarded against grooming.

In addition to being targeted for sexual motivations, some young people are also groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation. While the drivers and objectives are different, the actual process is broadly similar to radicalisation, with the exploitation of a person's vulnerability usually being the critical factor. Those who are targeted are often offered something ideological, such as an eternal spiritual reward, or sometimes something physical, such as an economic incentive, that will make them 'feel better' about themselves or their situation.

Anyone can be at risk. Age, social standing and education do not necessarily matter as much as we previously thought, and we have seen all kinds of people become radicalised, from young men and women with learning difficulties to adults in well-respected professions. What is clear is that the more susceptible the person, the easier it is to influence their way of thinking.

Signs of grooming can include:

- isolating themselves from family and friends.
- becoming secretive and not wanting to talk or discuss their views.
- closing computers down when others are around.
- refusing to say who they are talking to; using technology such as anonymous browsing to hide their activity; and
- sudden changes in mood, such as becoming angry or disrespectful.

Of course, none of these behaviours necessarily mean someone is being radicalised and, when displayed, could be a symptom of bullying or other emotional issues.