Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Updated for KCSIE September 2026

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1. Key Contacts

Post	Postholder	Contact details
Headteacher	Zoe Judge	Headteacher@fortismere.org.uk 0208 365 4400
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Kirsten Sullivan	ksullivan@fortismere.org.uk safeguarding@fortismere.org.uk 0208 365 4400
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Lynnette Brown	lbrown@fortismere.org.uk 0208 3654400
Chair of Governors **Link Governor for Safeguarding**	Mark Chapman	governors@fortismere.orrg.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)		LADO LADO@haringey.gov.uk 020 8489 2968/1186
Channel Helpline		020 7340 7264
Haringey Local Safeguarding Children Board		8th floor, River Park House, 225, High Road, London N22 8HQ https://haringeyscp.org.uk/ 020 8489 3145
Haringey Council's Children's Services Only use the out of hours number if you are calling outside of normal working hours. Your call will be logged and the operator will take brief details. An out of hours social worker will ring you back.		Child protection | Haringey Council **Child at risk of immediate harm:** Phone: 020 8489 4533 Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5pm; Friday: 8.45am to 4.45pm **NO immediate risk of harm to a child:** If you are a professional or volunteer working with a child or their family and there is no immediate risk of harm to the child, but the family would benefit from additional support, you should complete the online referral form via this link: Haringey Children's Services Portal **Out of office hours**, including weekends: **020 8489 0000** Do not use this number if a child needs immediate assistance from the Police or Ambulance Services. In these cases, call 999 **Child Protection Advisors:** 020 8489 2126
Making a MASH referral		During your phone call if you are a professional working with children you may be asked to complete a **MASH referral form** within 24 hours. This should be emailed securely to mashreferral@Haringey.gcsx.gov.uk

2. What to do if you have a welfare concern in Fortismere

Why are you concerned?

Something a child has said – e.g. allegation of harm
Child's appearance – may include unexplained marks as well as dress
Behaviour change
Witnessed concerning behaviour

Act immediately and record your concerns. If urgent, speak to a DSL first

If it is out of hours & DSL is NOT available make a direct referral to social services see key contacts

Follow the school procedures

Reassure the child
Clarify concerns if necessary (**TED: T**ell, **E**xplain, **D**escribe)
Use child's own words
Sign and date your records
Seek support for yourself if required from DSL, Kirsten Sullivan

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person or via MyConcern

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Consider if the child is at immediate risk of harm e.g. unsafe to go home
- Refer to other agencies as appropriate e.g. Internal or community services, early help open access, LADO, Police or Request for Support for integrated children's services
- If unsure then consult with Area Education Safeguarding Advisor or LA Social Worker at Haringey's Safeguarding Team.

If you are unhappy with the response

Staff:

Follow local escalation procedures
Follow Whistleblowing procedures

Students and Parents:

Follow the school complaints policy and procedures which are available on the school website

Record decision making and action taken in the student file on MyConcern

Monitor

Be clear about:

- What you are monitoring e.g. behaviour trends, appearance etc.
- How long you will monitor
- Where, how and to whom you will feedback and how you will record

Review and **request further support** (if necessary)

At all stages, the child's circumstances will be kept under review. The DSL/Staff will request further support if required to ensure the child's safety is paramount.

3. Introduction and Ethos

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect the safety, welfare and well-being of the pupils on roll at our school
- To set out the school's overarching principles, approaches and systems to child protection and safeguarding across all aspects of school life
- To ensure staff are aware of their statutory safeguarding duties and responsibilities
- To ensure staff are well-equipped and confident to recognise and report child protection concerns
- To promote an open and listening culture where everyone can voice concerns in the knowledge they will believe, helped and supported.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- **Promotion** - Making sure pupils, parents, staff and all adults that come into contact with children know the systems and the support in place to keep children safe and there is a culture of vigilance permeating across the school
- **Prevention** - Positive, supportive, vigilant, open and safe culture. Well taught curriculum that includes relationships and online safety, pastoral opportunities for children and safer recruitment procedures
- **Protection** - Following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns.
- **Support** - For all learners, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific interventions that are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
- **Working with parents and other agencies** - To ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

We recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents, families and learners) are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and have an essential role to play in making this community safe and secure.

Staff and other adults working with children at school are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

We believe that the best interests of children always come first. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.

We recognise the importance of safeguarding and the promotion of children's welfare at all times. Safeguarding is embedded in all the school's processes and procedures and at the heart of our school to provide an ethos and environment that will help children to be safe and feel safe. In our school children are respected and encouraged to talk openly. All our staff understand safe professional practice and adhere to our safeguarding policies.

We expect that if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act immediately. This includes out of hours when the DSL may not be available to speak to, in which case a direct referral should be made to social services – see contact details at the start of this policy.

This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026 (KCSIE) which requires individual schools and colleges to have an effective child protection policy.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including governors, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers and are consistent with those outlined within KCSIE 2026.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working together to safeguard children (republished March 2026)
- Allergy in schools (New guidance, July 2026)
- Behaviour in schools (updated June 2024)
  Children's social care national framework (updated July 2026)
- Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) (revised July 2026 effective from 1 September 2026)
- Data Protection guidance for schools (numerous guidance documents linked to Data Protection)
- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education (June 2025 updated August 2025)
- Inclusion bases in schools guidance (new guidance, June 2026)
- Information sharing for safeguarding practitioners (May 2024)
- Martyn's law for education settings - GOV.UK (October 2025)
- Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges (last updated June 2026)
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (July 2020)
- Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards - GOV.UK (September 2025)
- Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework (November 2025)
- *Ofsted School inspection toolkit and operating guide* (In place November 2025 updated June 2026)
- Online safety guidance for staff (new - replaces cyberbullying guidance, July 2026)
- Mobile phones in schools (June 2026 – new guidance, became statutory on 29 June 2026)
- Preventing bullying (updated July 2026)
- Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff (new guidance, published July 2026)
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges (published June 2021, updated April 2026)
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension (March 2024, last updated September 2025
- Protecting your setting's images from AI manipulation and abuse (published 2026 by UK Safer Internet Centre; guidance developed by UK Online Harms Early Warning Working Group members)
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (last updated December 2025, teaching from 1 September 2026)
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (Updated/revised December 2025, new title, came into force on 1 April 2026
- Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people (March 2024)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview) (March 2024)
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions (updated June 2026)
- Taking and using photos and videos, and using CCTV in school (published February 2023, updated July 2026)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014) (guidance revised April 2026)
- The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015
- The Prevent Duty Guidance (Last updated January 2024 and came into force on 1 January 2024)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (Published in 2015)
- Working together to improve attendance (last updated July 2026)

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements at Fortismere will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Other legislation this policy is based on:

Legislation	What it covers
School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009	Lists what must be recorded on the single central record The requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.
Children's Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment),	Provides the framework for the care and protection of children.
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2026/ Crime and Policing Act 2026	Creates a mandatory national register for children not in school Implements a strict statutory duty for all school staff to report child sexual abuse Establishes multi-agency child protection teams, Introduces restrictions on mobile phones and harmful online services Completely removes "supervision exemption" for volunteers. Establishes a standalone offense for Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) legally categorizing groomed or manipulated pupils as victims rather than criminals. Modernises online safety rules by requiring mandatory yearly filtering reviews Enables robust safeguarding responses to AI-generated "deepfake" intimate images, whether shared consensually or not
Data Protection act 2018, the UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (Data protection laws)	Place duties on schools to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep any information held safe and secure. Covers data access requests, review of filtering and monitoring systems and actions schools should take if a data breach occurs.
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (S5B(11))	Places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	Sets out when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	Defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

5. Human Rights, Equalities and Public Sector Equality Duty

Fortismere is aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), the Equality Act 2010 (including its Public Sector Equality Duty) and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Haringey.

The governing board and senior leaders recognise that, under the HRA, it is unlawful for schools and colleges to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The governing board and senior leaders recognise being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

The governing board and senior leaders will adhere to the Equality Act, will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

The governing board and senior leaders will pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The duty applies to all protected characteristics and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, the governing board

and senior leaders will give specific consideration to the equality implications of these such as, for example, the need to eliminate unlawful behaviours that relate to them such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry and racism.

Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need

6. Related safeguarding policies

This policy is one of an integrated suite of policies, reflecting the whole school approach to safeguarding. It should be read and actioned in conjunction with other related policies. (See Appendix 6 Related policies)

7. Definitions of safeguarding

In line with KCSIE 2026, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge;
- Protecting children from maltreatment, inside or outside the home including online;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is what we do to prevent children suffering or coming to harm.

Child protection refers to activities undertaken by the school to protect children suffering from harm or likely to suffer from harm. A child includes anyone under the age of 18.

The safeguarding partners that the school works with to safeguard its pupils as set out in KCSIE are: the local authority; the local clinical commissioning group; and the chief officer of Police for the area that falls under the local authority.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child that covers inflicting harm or failing to prevent the infliction of harm. Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs. Section 8 and Appendix 1 provides a more detailed explanation of the different types of abuse and signs and symptoms and specific safeguarding issues.

KCSIE 2026 notes the use of the following widely recognised and understood terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator(s)' and where appropriate 'perpetrator(s)'.

At Fortismere School we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. We also think carefully about the use of the term 'alleged perpetrator(s)' and where appropriate 'perpetrator(s)', especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. In managing any incident we are prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable and on a case-by-case basis.

At Fortismere we have adopted the KCSIE 2026 use of the term 'making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes', which refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under the age of 18. Images may be taken by the child themselves (sometimes referred to as 'self-generated imagery') or taken or created by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

8. Informing staff and others of the safeguarding policy

All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) will be provided with access to a copy of this policy. They will be asked to say they have read and understood its contents, are familiar with the school systems and will adhere to them.

Visitors to the school site will be given a leaflet detailing our safeguarding arrangements, which also covers fire safety, first aid and health & safety. Visitors will be asked to sign to say they have read, understood and will adhere to these arrangements.

Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy from the school website together with copies of other related policies. Additionally, these and other policies are available from the school office on request.

Pupils will be made aware of the school's systems in age-appropriate ways through displays around the school site, verbally and via the school website. The DSL will ensure pupils have understood and are aware that they can raise concerns at any time, they will be listened to, taken seriously and their wishes respected (where possible), given the necessary support and kept informed of actions being taken.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board takes responsibility for strategic leadership that is a 'whole school approach' for the school's safeguarding arrangements and that these will comply with their duties under legislation and have full regard to KCSIE 2026. This includes ensuring the school's policies, procedures and training are effective and always comply with the law.

The governing board will ensure the school's systems enable pupils to report what is happening to them.

The governing board will ensure the appointed DSL is a senior member of staff. The role of the DSL (and deputies) as set out in KCSIE Annex C will be made explicit in the postholder's job description.

The school has a nominated governor for safeguarding. The nominated governor will support the Designated Safeguarding Lead and have oversight in ensuring that the school has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies; that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed; and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.

All governors will undertake safeguarding training and additional training on specific issues, such as online safety and Prevent. This will be part of an ongoing and regular programme of training to build knowledge and understanding of safeguarding across all members of the governing board.

The governing board will take an active role in monitoring safeguarding arrangements and providing support to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with Part 2 KCSIE 2026. This will include visits to school, regular contact with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff working to protect children and reviewing information provided to them concerning pupils' welfare and safety, including for online safety. Governors will also seek the views of pupils and parents/carers as part of their monitoring arrangements to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

The governing board and leadership team recognises the significant level of responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead role. They will ensure the postholder (and any deputies) are given the additional time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively. They will also ensure there is adequate cover if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is absent.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that the suite of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection adopted by the school's governing board are understood and followed by all staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The school has appointed a member of the leadership team Kirsten Sullivan as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Additionally, the school has appointed Deputy DSLs (Lynnette Brown and Emily Brooks and Sadiya Islam) who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSLs absence.

The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.

The DSL will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the DSL. The DSL and any deputy DSLs training will be updated formally every two years, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods at regular intervals and at least annually.

The Headteacher will be kept informed of any significant issues by the DSL.

The DSL (and deputies) will be provided with sufficient time so they can provide appropriate support to staff and children regarding any new safeguarding and welfare concerns following Covid-19. This may include handling of referrals to integrated social care and working with other agencies where appropriate. Job descriptions that align to KCSIE 2026 Annex B are in place for the DSL and deputy DSLs.

The role of the DSL is to:

- Hold the overall responsibility for child protection
- Act as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- Be available during term time (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Understand the views of children and encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes
- Take the lead for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement.
- Maintain a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns
- Ensuring child protection files are up-to-date, records are clear and comprehensive and details of the concern, follow up, actions, decisions and outcome
- Ensuring information is shared as appropriate, including when a child transfers schools
- Coordinate safeguarding action for individual children
- When supporting children with a social worker, or looked after children, the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child (with the DSL liaising closely with the designated teacher)
- The DSL will ensure that when children leave the school (including in-year transfers) their child protection file, including a structured summary identifying current safeguarding concerns, relevant context and ongoing support, is transferred to the new school. If appropriate, the DSL will share information in advance of the child's arrival at their new school. The DSL will review any information about a child joining the school (including in year transfers) that is received from the previous school to ensure no information is missed which could impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.
- Liaise with other agencies and professionals in line with KCSIE 2026 and WTSC 2025
- Ensure that locally established procedures as put in place by the three safeguarding partners (Haringey LA), including referrals, are followed, as necessary.
- Represent, or ensure the school is appropriately represented, at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including Child Protection conferences)
- Manage and monitor the school role in any multi-agency plan for a child.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate DSL cover arrangements in response to any closures and out of hours and/or out of term activities.
- Work with all staff (for example: teachers, support staff, pastoral leaders, SENCo, mental health leads) on matters of safeguarding and welfare (including mental health and online/digital safety)
- Have lead responsibility for filtering and monitoring systems in school
- Raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection systems with staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensure all staff access appropriate safeguarding training, including in online safety and other relevant specific issues and regular updates in line with the recommendations within KCSIE 2026.
- Providing support to staff as required.

- Manage referrals of suspected abuse to the Channel programme, disclosure & barring service and where a crime has been committed to the Police.
- Support/liaise with the 'case manager' for child protection issues which concern a member of staff.
- Liaise with the Headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Follow the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.
- DSL availability
    - During term time the DSL (or a deputy) will always be available (during school/office hours) for staff in the school to discuss and respond to any safeguarding concerns. This will be in person; in very exceptional circumstances this may be by telephone or other such acceptable media.
    - The DSL will ensure that information can be shared across the safeguarding team. A confidential shared mailbox is in place to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted upon without delay. Details of the mailbox are also published on the school website so that anyone outside the school can raise safeguarding concerns.
    - The school will inform parents of the out of hours reporting arrangements and cover arrangements for out of hours and out of term activities.

Members of Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Be aware it can happen here and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Build trusted relationships with children and young people that facilitate communication.
- Actively promote welfare and safeguarding, including online safety, of pupils.
- Know what to do if a child tells them that he or she is being abused or neglected and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
- Understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.
- Be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online.
- To exercise professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
- Reassure a child that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; never give the child the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting **any** form of abuse and/or neglect; and never make a child feel ashamed for making a report.
- Be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.
- Understand the early help process and their role in it.
- Understand the school's safeguarding policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of the process of community-based Family Help assessments and be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Family Help which aims to provide support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- Be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of developing mental health issues.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality and the importance of recording and information sharing.

- Understand the wider definitions of chid-on-child abuse and be aware of specific issues such as cyberbullying, sexual violence, sexual harassment and exploitation as set out in KCSIE Part 1 (and Annex A).
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.
- Be aware of the school's child-on-child abuse policy, anti-bullying strategy and the role they play in preventing and responding to child-on-child abuse.
- Be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate, recognising that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. Also that such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, and willingness to seek help.
- Be aware of the school's online safety policy and expectations for use of online technologies both inside and out of school, including the safe use of generative AI
- Be aware of the risks posed to students and the ways to escalate concerns.

Children and Young People
Children and young people (learners) have a right to:

- Feel safe, be listened to, know their concerns will be taken seriously, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
- Contribute to the development of school safeguarding policies.
- Receive help from a trusted adult.
- Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Parents and Carers
Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Understand and adhere to the relevant school policies and procedures.
- Talk to their children about safeguarding issues and support the school in their safeguarding approaches.
- Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm including online and seek help and support from the school or other agencies.
- Speak to school staff if they have any concerns about the welfare, well-being and safety of their children.

10. Recognising Indicators of abuse and neglect

All staff at Fortismere are made aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect (see below), as identified by Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTSC) 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

All staff understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online. All staff, but especially the DSL (and deputies) must take account of the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur and consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families

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

Fortismere recognises that when assessing whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm there are four categories of abuse:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Neglect**

The school recognises that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

For further information see Appendix 1 and Appendix 6 for links to sources of advice and supporting information

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. A wider range of specific issues includes (but not limited to):

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Children and the court system
- Children with family members in prison
- Children absent education (CAE)
- Child missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Faith based abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
- Homelessness
- Honour based abuse (so called)
- Making & sharing nudes and semi-nudes (including those generated by AI)
- Mental health
- Modern slavery & the National Referral Mechanism
- Online safety (including awareness of the school's systems for filtering and monitoring)
- Child-on-child abuse (including cyberbullying, racial, prejudicial and discriminatory bullying)
- Preventing radicalisation and extremism
- Relationship abuse
- Serious Violence
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Upskirting

Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in KCSIE Annex A and Appendix 2 of this policy.

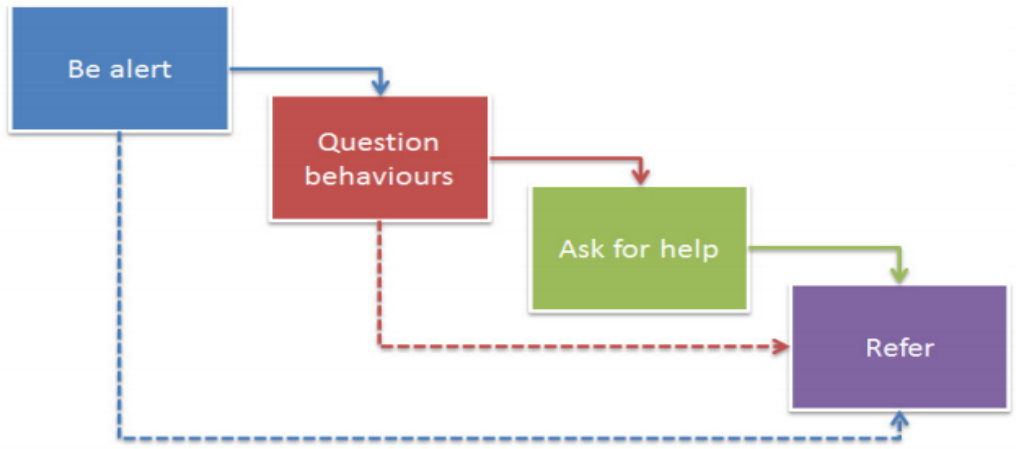
Members of staff are aware that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child.

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

All staff should be aware that 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 indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

It is important to recognise that indicators of abuse and neglect do not automatically mean a child is being abused; however all concerns should be taken seriously and explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.

All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow this approach if they are concerned about a child (taken from 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' DfE



Parental behaviours' may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside school and/or can occur between children offsite. Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

By understanding the indicators or abuse and neglect, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family.

In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL

11. Child protection procedures – taking action

Fortismere School adheres to the Haringey Safeguarding Children multi-agency partnership procedures (Haringey LA). The full Haringey LA procedures and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on their website: https://haringeyscp.org.uk/

Staff (volunteers, governors, contractors, agency and supply staff and visitors) must follow the school procedures set out in this and the following sections should they identity or have a worry about a child protection issue. The actions staff and other adults should take if there are any safeguarding concerns about a pupil are listed below. This will be covered in staff training, including new staff induction. Visitors will be provided with an information sheet on arrival, summarising the school systems and how they should pass on any child protection concerns. If anyone is unsure about reporting concerns, they must speak to the DSL and they can also refer to the DfE publication 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (March 2015).

All staff are made aware of the process for making requests for support referrals for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

Fortismere recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.

Action if a child is in immediate danger or suffering harm or likely to suffer harm

- As soon as a member of staff or adult working in the school becomes aware that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger they must let the DSL know immediately.
- The member of staff must make a record of what the child (ideally contemporaneously) is telling them/has told them and also record this on MyConcern as soon as possible after the alert to the

DSL. The handwritten record should be scanned and added to the electronic record (see details under making a record of a concern).

- The DSL, along with the relevant Deputy DSLs will review the case and decide on the next steps. If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a request for support should be made immediately to Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and/or the police. Referrals will follow Haringey's referral procedures and the expectations set out in KCSIE and in Chapter 3 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026.
- If the DSL or deputy DSL is not available, for example out of school hours, then any staff member or other adults can make a referral. The contact numbers for the MASH team are listed on Page 2 of this policy. During this call you should seek the advice about notifying parents, remembering that in some situations this could be unsafe or cause the child more harm. During your phone call if you are a professional working with children you may be asked to complete a **MASH referral form** within 24 hours. This should be emailed securely to mashreferral@Haringey.gcsx.gov.uk. or the appropriate borough's referral address
- Any member of staff/adult making a **direct** referral to the MASH team must inform the DSL as soon as possible, verbally and provide a written record of the concerns and actions taken.

Action if a concern about a child is not in immediate danger or risk,

- Staff must be vigilant at all times. In doing this staff may well notice safeguarding concerns that do not place a child at immediate risk of harm. Staff must be mindful that no concern is too small not to share and that they are vital in helping the DSL to build a picture of the child's well-being, welfare, mental health and safety and take the necessary action. Examples of concerns could be a child looking unkempt, saying or making a comment that arouses your suspicions or a change in character/behaviour.
- Staff must follow school procedures and record the concern on MyConcern. The DSL will ensure that there is continuous monitoring of the MyConcern throughout the day so no concerns are missed and any necessary actions are taken. The member of staff should not hesitate in also discussing their concern with the DSL or deputy DSL. The school also uses a confidential email for sharing information, which is also routinely monitored, and can be used by staff outside of school hours or by parents/carers. The DSL will review this information, with any other safeguarding concerns they have on record, and take any necessary actions.

Guidance on receiving a disclosure from a child

Staff should follow this approach:

- Listen to what the child has to say. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing in telling you. Let them know they are being taken seriously and that nothing they say is or will cause a problem. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset. Do not in any circumstance promise to keep what they have told you a secret. Explain you will have to pass this information on and what will happen next.
- If possible, make a handwritten record as the child speaks. If this is not possible, make a handwritten record as soon as possible afterwards. Follow the school procedure to also make a report on My Concern
- Speak to a DSL or deputy DSL immediately if the child is in **immediate risk** or **has been harmed** as noted above.
- Under no circumstances should the staff member undertake any investigation into the concern.
- Any allegations about staff must be reported directly to the Headteacher, or in their absence, a deputy headteacher, unless the allegation is against the Headteacher in which case the chair of governors should be informed.

Action if a concern about a child has been identified

- The DSL may seek advice or guidance from their Area Education Safeguarding Advisor from the Education Safeguarding Service before deciding next steps. They may also seek advice or guidance from a social worker at the Haringey's Safeguarding Team service who are the first point of contact for Integrated Children's Services (ICS).

Making a record of a concern or disclosure

- Any child protection concerns should be entered into My Concern. If the concern is a direct disclosure from a child then this should be recorded in writing so there is a contemporaneous record of the disclosure, which can be used as evidence should a case go to court. The start, end time, location and date should be added to the report. A summary of the report should be made on My Concern and the DSL or deputy informed immediately. . Any photographic evidence and/or a copy of the contemporaneous handwritten notes should also be uploaded and attached to this record.

Family Help Assessments

- The school will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Staff are trained to be alert to the potential for early help, identify children that may benefit from early help and raise their concerns with the DSL.
- If the DSL views that an Family Help assessment is appropriate they or the deputy DSL will lead on liaising with other agencies and in setting up inter-agency assessment, as required. Staff may be required to contribute and/or provide support in the early help assessment. They will ensure the appropriate early help support is put in place to support the child.
- The DSL will keep all cases under constant review and consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. If, after the request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will take further actions. This may include a request for advice and support to Haringey's Safeguarding Team.

12. Notifying parents and carers of child protection concerns

Parents/carers will be informed of child protection concerns unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example, if to do so would put a child at risk of harm or would undermine a criminal investigation. Such discussions will be undertaken by the DSL or deputy DSL, although this may be delegated to another member of staff who is part of the safeguarding team, and maybe already working with the family.

The DSL will liaise with Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding hub, before making a decision not to inform parents/carers of a child protection concern. Where a decision is made not to inform parents immediately, the rationale for this decision, including any advice received from the MASH team, will be clearly recorded within the child's safeguarding records. Records will include the decision-making process, actions taken, and any subsequent review.

In the event of a request for support to the Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding hub being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought by the DSL in line with guidance provided by Haringey LA.

Parents/carers will normally be notified in the case of allegations of abuse made against other pupils, unless it is unsafe to do so. The same applies to the person(s) the allegation is made against if they are a child.

13. Community based Early Help Assessment & Statutory Children's Social Care Assessments

Community based Early Help assessment

In line with Working together to safeguard children (2026), Fortismere recognises the importance of early recognition and intervention in safeguarding children. The school understands that early identification and response to emerging concerns can improve a family's resilience and reduce the chance of a problem getting worse.

We recognise that safeguarding is a shared responsibility and that children and families may require different levels of help, support and protection at different times. The school will work in partnership with social care, the police and health services to ensure that children receive appropriate help at the earliest opportunity and that safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly. The school will adopt a child-centred approach, with the child's wishes, feelings, experiences, strengths, identity, culture and individual circumstances considered, alongside the views and circumstances of parents, carers and, when appropriate, the wider family network.

Staff receive training so they can recognise when a child or family may benefit from additional support and are familiar with the Haringey's safeguarding local arrangements for accessing community-based Early Help and to be alert to the potential for early help, identify children that may benefit from early help and raise their concerns with the DSL.

Community based Family Help assessment

We recognise that Family Help is a voluntary process, requiring the family's consent to receive support and services. However, consent will not be treated as a barrier where safeguarding concerns require a statutory response.

The school follows the guidance in paragraph 144 of Working Together to safeguard children (2026) in conducting effective Family Help assessments.

If the DSL views that a Family Help assessment is appropriate they or the deputy DSL will lead on liaising with other agencies and in setting up inter-agency assessment, as required. Staff may be required to contribute and/or provide support in the early help assessment. They will ensure the appropriate early help support is put in place to support the child.

The DSL will keep all Family Help cases under constant review and consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. If, after the request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will take further actions. This may include a request for advice and support to Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Children in Need

Where a child appears to meet the definition of a child in need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, the school will make a referral to Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), The DSL or deputy DSL may discuss this with the Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and ahead of making the formal referral.

The school will contribute relevant information to a Section 17 assessment and will work with the allocated lead practitioner and other agencies to identify the child's needs, agree appropriate support and put in place a child in need plan for voluntary family support.

The school recognises that such assessments are ongoing processes and any new information or changes in circumstances will be communicated to the lead practitioner and/or other relevant professionals. If needed, the school will work with allocated lead practitioners and other agencies in any reconsideration of the level of support or intervention to be reconsidered.

Statutory social care assessments

If a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm we will immediately make a referral to Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and (and if appropriate the police).

Referrals will follow the local referral process and the expectations set out in KCSIE and in Chapter 3 section 3 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026.

As part of the referral and children's social care assessment, we will provide as much information as possible so that all the available evidence is considered to enable a contextual approach to address such harm. We will fully participate in the multi-agency assessment, support working with the child/children and effective strategy discussion. This includes consideration of extrafamilial harm and contexts outside of home.

We will ensure we do all we can to support the (section 17 or Section 47) assessment and any child protection arrangements put in place to safeguard the child/children. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, follow Haringey's escalation procedures.

14. Confidentiality information sharing and record keeping

Confidentiality

All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep any information confidential, they also have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise confidentiality in situations which might compromise a child's safety or wellbeing.

The Headteacher or DSL (and DDSL and members of the safeguarding Team) will share information about a child on a 'need to know' basis to help maintain confidentiality.

Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping below and allegations of abuse against staff in the section below and in the school's policy.

Information Sharing

Fortismere recognises our duty to share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE and the DfE Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (May 2024). This is important because information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to educational outcomes.

The safety of the child is always paramount, any concerns about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of ensuring the welfare and safety of pupils.

Staff should never promise a student that they will not pass on child protection concerns to the relevant staff and agencies. However, the child should be reassured that:

- their disclosure will be taken seriously, and it is **not** creating a problem
- their disclosure will only be shared with relevant staff
- staff will be sensitive to their feelings and concerns
- their wishes will be heard
- they will be kept informed of actions and support.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. The school may legitimately share information without consent where: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; and, if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

Fortismere has an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure that our school is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements.

We understand our responsibility to share, hold and use information for safeguarding purposes. We recognise our duty to share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity. A statutory Information Sharing Duty, outlined in KCSIE 2026, came into force on 30 September 2026. We follow the DfE Guidance on Information Sharing (May 2024) and will also adhere to any guidance published by the DfE and/or Information Commissioners Office in relation to the Information Sharing Duty. We recognise that early information sharing is vital in the effective identification and tackling of all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to educational outcomes.

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL (or deputies).

Record keeping

Staff must record all safeguarding concerns and disclosures on the school's safeguarding recording system (/My Concern) as soon as practicable and without delay. Records should be factual, clear and accurate and, where a child has made a disclosure, should include the child's own words wherever

possible. Where staff make handwritten notes, these should be signed and dated and be added to the child's electronic safeguarding record as soon as practicable.

Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, the member of staff must speak to the DSL or DDSL immediately. Reporting an urgent concern takes priority over completing the written record; the record should then be completed as soon as practicable. Where injuries have been observed, a body map should be completed where appropriate.

Safeguarding records should include, where relevant:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, disclosure or incident;
- the child's account or words;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- details of actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome;
- the rationale for decisions, including whether a referral was made and, where a referral was not made, the reasons for this decision;
- details of relevant discussions with the child, parents/carers, DSL, other staff or relevant agencies; and
- details of any further action, monitoring or review required.

If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Safeguarding records are kept for individual children and are maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the school. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL (and DDSLs). Safeguarding records are shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis only.

Relevant records of telephone calls, face-to-face conversations, meetings, emails and other communications relating to safeguarding concerns should also be recorded on the safeguarding system to maintain a clear and, where appropriate, chronological record of the child's safeguarding history.

Relevant information held within other school records, such as attendance and punctuality, behaviour, first aid, medical information or records of support provided to the child, should be considered where it may contribute to understanding the child's safeguarding circumstances. Where relevant, this information should be cross-referenced or incorporated into the safeguarding record.

Sharing information between schools – child leaving the school

All child protection and safeguarding records will be transferred securely and in accordance with current data protection legislation and safeguarding guidance when a child moves to another school. The child protection file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, under confidential cover, and directly to the DSL at the receiving school. The school will request and retain confirmation that the file has been received securely.

In addition to transferring the child protection file, the DSL will consider whether any safeguarding information should be shared with the DSL at the receiving school before the child leaves. Where appropriate and lawful, relevant information will be shared securely to ensure continuity of safeguarding arrangements and support, particularly where there are ongoing concerns, support plans, referrals, or other information that the receiving school needs to be aware of to safeguard and support the child effectively.

Information will only be shared where there is a lawful basis for doing so and in accordance with the principles of data protection, confidentiality and information sharing. The DSL will ensure that only relevant and necessary information is shared and that safeguarding considerations take precedence where there is a risk of harm to the child.

Where a child protection or safeguarding file is extensive, the DSL will provide a structured safeguarding summary to accompany the file. The summary will highlight the key safeguarding concerns, significant events and chronology, actions taken, referrals and involvement of external agencies, current risks, protective factors, and any ongoing support or safeguarding arrangements. It will also identify any actions or follow-up required by the receiving school. The summary will be factual, concise and professionally recorded, and will not replace the full child protection file, which will be transferred securely to the receiving school.

Sharing information between schools – child joining the school

The DSL will confirm receipt of any child protection or safeguarding file from the child's previous school and ensure that it is stored securely and separately from the main pupil record, in accordance with current data protection legislation and safeguarding guidance.

The DSL will review the child protection file as soon as practicable and consider whether any information requires immediate action, including current safeguarding concerns, referrals, risk assessments, safety plans, support arrangements or involvement from external agencies. Where necessary, the DSL will liaise directly with the previous school's DSL and/or relevant agencies to ensure continuity of safeguarding support.

Where safeguarding concerns are known or identified before or during a child's admission, the DSL will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place from the child's first day at the school. Relevant staff will be informed on a need-to-know basis. Where appropriate, the DSL will also make direct contact with the previous school's DSL to discuss the concerns and ensure that a full and effective safeguarding handover takes place.

Where the child protection file is extensive, the DSL may request or agree a structured safeguarding summary from the previous school to support an effective handover. The summary should highlight key safeguarding concerns, significant events and chronology, actions taken, referrals and agency involvement, current risks, protective factors, ongoing support arrangements and any actions requiring follow-up. The summary will support, but will not replace, the full child protection file.

The DSL will maintain a clear record on MyConcern of the safeguarding information received, discussions with the previous school or relevant agencies, decisions made, actions taken and the outcome of the safeguarding handover.

15. Staff Induction, Awareness and Training

All members of staff have been provided with a copy of part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026) which covers safeguarding information for **all** staff.

- School leaders, including the DSL will read the entire KCSIE document.
- School leaders and all members of staff who work directly with children will also be expected to read Annex A within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- All members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood KCSIE Part One and Annex A. This record is held on the SCR.

All staff are expected to be aware of systems which support safeguarding. This will be explained to them as part of staff induction and updated on a regular basis to ensure they are fully aware of current practice. This includes:

- safeguarding and child protection policy, which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse
- behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/ or prolonged periods
- staff code of conduct – this should include low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

The school aims to keep the profile and importance of safeguarding high. All staff members (including agency and third-party staff) will receive appropriate child protection training to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues. Basic child protection taking will take place annually including online safety training which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations,

applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. In addition, a range of other specific safeguarding issues have been prioritised by leaders as most pertinent to the school. This includes training in Prevent, mental health, child-on-child abuse and domestic violence.

All staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

The DSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive child protection training including in online safety, behaviour management and the staff code of conduct to ensure they are aware of the school internal safeguarding processes as part of their induction.

All staff members (including volunteers, agency and third-party staff) will be made aware of the school expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the Staff Code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Staff will be encouraged to contribute to and shape school safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies

The DSL will provide regular reports to the governing board detailing safeguarding training undertaken by all staff and will maintain an up-to-date register of who has been trained.

Although the school has a nominated lead for the governing board (Mark Chapman), all members of the governing board will access appropriate safeguarding training which covers their specific strategic responsibilities on a regular basis.

16. Safer Working Practice

All members of staff are required to work within our clear guidelines on safer working practice as outlined in the school staff code of conduct.

Staff will be made aware of the school behaviour policy and any physical interventions or use of reasonable force will be in line with national guidance.

All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (such as email, mobile phones, texting, social networking) and the use of generative AI in their work. Staff will adhere to relevant school policies including staff code of conduct, Acceptable Use/online safety policies.

17. Staff Supervision and Support

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.

The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

The school will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that all staff:

- are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- are supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role.
- have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.

The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish via the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**.** Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.

18. Online safety

It is recognised by Fortismere that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of school. As a school we will empower, protect and educate the community in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate. The school sees technology and its use permeating all aspects of school. Our integrated approach to online safety is set out in:

- Online safety policy
- Mobile phone code of conduct
- Threaded through other policies, including policies for the curriculum, subject teaching, behaviour, child-on-child abuse and RSE/PSHE.
- The school identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk as set out in KCSIE:

  content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories,

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

  conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying,

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

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding within the school but will liaise as necessary with other members of staff.

Fortismere School uses a wide range of technology. This includes computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, generative AI, our learning platform, school network and email systems. All School owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.

Fortismere School recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile technology, including mobile phones and cameras. In accordance with KCSIE 2026 the school has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the community. Further information regarding the specific approaches relating to this can be found in our online safety policy, which can be found on the website.

Fortismere School will do all we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to online risks through our school IT systems and will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to meet the DfE standards for filtering and monitoring (March 2026). These are:

1. identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
2. review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
3. block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
4. have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs, which also covers use of generative artificial intelligence.

If learners or staff discover unsuitable sites or material, they are required to: turn off monitor/screen, use a screen cover widget, report the concern immediately to a member of staff, report the URL of the site to IT staff and the DSL

All users will be informed that use of our systems can be monitored, and that monitoring will be in line with data protection, human rights and privacy legislation.

Filtering breaches or concerns identified through our monitoring approaches will be recorded and reported to the DSL and IT staff, as appropriate.

Any access to material believed to be illegal will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies, such as the Internet Watch Foundation and the police.

When implementing appropriate filtering and monitoring, Fortismere will ensure that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

The school will have regard to guidance contained in Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and College

Governors and leaders will check regularly (termly) on the effectiveness of the filtering and monitoring systems .

Fortismere acknowledges that whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of school online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to online safety.

- Learners will use appropriate search tools, apps and online resources as identified following an informed risk assessment.
- Learners internet use will be supervised by staff according to their age and ability.
- Learners will be directed to use age-appropriate online resources and tools by staff.

Fortismere will ensure a comprehensive whole school curriculum response is in place to enable all learners to learn about and manage online risks effectively as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Fortismere School will build a partnership approach to online safety and will support parents/carers to become aware and alert by providing information through the school website, Newsletter, information sessions, ParentMail and specific events.

Fortismere will ensure that online safety training for all staff is integrated, aligned and considered as part of our overarching safeguarding approach.

The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with the child protection and behaviour policies. Internal sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.

Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.

19. Remote Learning

Fortismere will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements.

All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place using school provided or approved communication channels; for example, school provided email accounts and phone numbers and/or agreed systems Google Classroom, Microsoft 365 or equivalent. Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL.

Staff and learners will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our behaviour policy, staff code of conduct and acceptable use and online safety policies. When delivering remote learning, staff will follow school guidance for remote learning.

Staff and learners will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies.

Parents/carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access. Parents/carers will be informed who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online and who they contact in case they need help and/or support.

Parents/carers will be encouraged to ensure children are appropriately supervised online and that appropriate parental controls are implemented at home.

Whilst all children should be protected the governing body recognises that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others both online and offline. The list below is not exhaustive but highlights some of these groups:

20. Mobile phone policy

Our mobile phone policy is in place to ensure a mobile phone-free environment in line with the Statutory guidance on Mobile phones in schools. The policy states that pupils do not have access to

their internet enabled mobile phone throughout the school day. The policy is published on our school website so parents/carers, staff and pupils are fully aware of this..

21. Taking and using photos and videos

We recognise that images of pupils can pose safeguarding risks. For example, misuse or abuse of images or vulnerability to blackmail.

All images of pupils who can be identified count as personal data. We follow the same principles that apply to all personal information. We therefore seek the consent from parents/carers to take and use videos and photos at the point of admission to the school. Parents/carers may withdraw consent at any time.

All images are stored securely; this includes those used for administration purposes. Any photos taken on school cameras or devices must be transferred to a secure school server as soon as possible, in line with data protection rules. This does not apply to photos taken at school events by parents/carers and pupils for personal use.

We have procedures in place to deal with any incidents of image abuse, including support for the pupil, informing parents/carers, reporting to police and use of the 'report/remove' for under 18s to get the image removed from the internet. A link to this is on the school website.

22. Safeguarding requirements for school premises: toilets & changing rooms

Toilets

We provide separate toilets for boys and girls (apart from where individual toilets are in a room that can be locked from the inside, intended for use by one pupil at a time). We do not allow pupils into toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. This includes where we are responding to a request to support any degree of social transition for children who are questioning their gender. This is in line with KCSIE paragraphs 106 and 107.

Therefore, if a gender-questioning child does not want to use the toilet designated for their biological sex, we consider how we can provide an alternative toilet facility without compromising the provision of single-sex facilities. These alternative arrangements will be made so as not to compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child, or of any other children.

Changing Rooms and Showers

We provide suitable and sufficient changing accommodation and showers for our pupils. In line with KCSIE 2026 paragraph 113, we do not allow a child, aged 11 years or older at the start of the school year, to undress in front of a child of the opposite biological sex. If a gender-questioning child does not want to use the changing rooms and showers designated for their sex, we put in place alternative arrangements for changing or washing facilities without compromising the provision of single-sex facilities. We will ensure these alternative arrangements do not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child or of any other children. We will keep detailed records of these situations, ensure they are communicated appropriately, and review them regularly.

This is in line with KCSIE paragraphs 112 and 118

23. Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities or Health Issues

Fortismere acknowledges that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. These children may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse both offline and online and face additional barriers in recognising abuse and neglect. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs

- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- the need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.
- Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by safeguarding concerns, such as bullying and exploitation.
- Children with communication difficulties will be supported to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.
- All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability and be aware that children with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse. To address these additional challenges, our school will always consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities. Details of support and provision can be found in the school's SEND policy and annual report.
- The DSL (or deputy) will work closely with the SENCo Nofer Fari to share information and plan support and monitor as required.

24. Safeguarding Children with medical conditions

.Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK and Allergy safety in schools - GOV.UK.

• Medical needs will be managed alongside safeguarding responsibilities, recognising that a child's health, wellbeing and safety are closely connected. Not all incidents of managing a medical incident or care of a child's medical condition (including allergies) would warrant a safeguarding report on MyConcern. This would be needed if the incident or series of incidents highlighted that a child may be at increased risk of being abused, neglected or exploited by persons both inside or outside the family because of their medical condition. If such a report is logged, the DSL (or Deputy DSL) will then assess the next steps and if any further referrals are needed.

• Relevant medical information will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis, and individual healthcare plans or other appropriate arrangements will be put in place where required. Staff will follow agreed procedures for administering medication, responding to medical emergencies and seeking appropriate medical assistance.

25. Mental health and children requiring mental health support

All staff will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are made aware of how children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

The school has appointed a lead for mental health, who has been/is being trained to have the knowledge and skills to promote and lead on wellbeing and mental health across the school.

Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff are expected to be vigilant at all times and if they have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

The school is proactive in promoting the mental health and well-being of pupils. This includes links to the school's approach for preventing and tackling bullying.

The school has in place a range of ways to support children's mental health both within and beyond the school. This includes routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems and on-site mental health support (Place 2be)

The school also makes use of a range of resources produced by Public Health England to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. This includes its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing.

26. Children in need of a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

The school recognises that pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs and that children may need help due to abuse help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect these and all vulnerable pupils. The DSL will always consider the support of the social worker to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the child' safety, well-being, welfare and educational outcomes.

27. Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

Fortismere School will ensure that our staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after and previously looked-after children safe.

The DSL has details of a child's social worker and relevant virtual school heads. Appropriate staff are provided with relevant information about each looked after child's legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.

The school has appointed a designated teacher, Emily Brooks, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance on the role and responsibilities of the designated teacher

The designated teacher will have the relevant qualifications and experience and receive appropriate training to perform the role. The designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Work with Virtual School Heads (VSH) to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children in line with the statutory duties of the VSH set out in Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and in non-statutory guidance on Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension.

The DSL and designated lead for looked after children will work with the local authority to ensure suitable arrangements are in place for care leavers, including with the appointed Personal Adviser, and will liaise with them should any issues occur.

28. Young Carers

Fortismere will be alert to the needs of any pupils who are young carers, recognising their caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. We will work to identify our young carers as early as possible and ensure they receive support at the right time and by appropriate services.

29. Children who are absent from education

Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse, neglect and exploitation, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or student criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage

The school has in place robust systems for recording and monitoring daily attendance and punctuality of pupils. This includes 'first day' calls, follow up calls, letters home and home visits.

The school recognises the importance of keeping in touch with parents and carers to promote and ensure the welfare, well-being and safety of pupils. The school will hold more than one emergency number for each child to ensure that a parent/carer can be contacted urgently or for the DSL to check on the well-being of a pupil.

The school accepts the importance of its responsibility to pupils with unexplained and prolonged periods of absence keeping them safe and in reducing the risk of them becoming a child missing from education in the future. This includes pupils where problems are first emerging and also those already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), or where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

The school is aware of its duty to report any missing children to the local authority. Full details of these systems for monitoring and supporting children with poor attendance and how the school follows statutory advice in removing pupils from the school roll can be found in the school's attendance policy.

The school will have regard to the statutory guidance contained in Working Together to Improve School Attendance

30. Child-on-Child Abuse

All members of staff at Fortismere recognise that children can abuse their peers. This can happen both in and out of school and online. We believe that no form of abuse can be tolerated, including any discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents. All victims will be taken seriously, offered reassurance and appropriate support, regardless of when and/or where the abuse has taken place and assured that they are not creating a problem. Staff must be mindful that their response could impact on another child coming forward in future.

All staff should understand the following aspects of child-on-child abuse and be clear about the school's approach:

- that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).
- that racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour may have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety and should be considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate
- the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviour between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved.
- that children may not find it easy to tell staff and a reminder that children can show signs in ways they hope adults will notice and react.

In line with KCSIE 2026 the school recognises that child-on-child abuse is likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- physical assault and harm or the threat of harm with a weapon
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment which may include misogyny/misandry
- upskirting
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Paragraph 35 (KCSIE) fully details the types and forms of child-on-child abuse can take that staff should be aware of.

When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, school will follow the procedures set out in the school's child-on-child abuse policy. This follows the guidance outlined in KCSIE 2026 Part 5.

Separation of pupils for safeguarding purposes.

At Fortismere we view child-on-child abuse behaviour incidents through a safeguarding lens. In some circumstances following a child-on-child abuse incident it may be necessary to separate pupils for safeguarding purposes. In such cases we follow the DfE statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions.

The DSL must be actively involved in the management of any case that may lead to a pupil being sent home, this will include a consideration of any underlying vulnerabilities or Special Educational Needs.

The DSL will coordinate with external agencies, such as Children's Social Care, during the separation period. The school will arrange appropriate alternative education for the pupil from the very first day of any safeguarding separation to ensure they do not fall behind in their learning. A formal reintegration meeting must take place before the pupil returns. Consideration will also be given to any other pupils involved in the incident prior to the pupil returning to school.

31. Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

At Fortismere we do our best to fulfil our duty towards a child who is questioning their gender, as well as their peers, ensuring that any agreed course of action takes account of the impact on all of those affected.

The school will respond sensitively and on an individual basis to pupils who are questioning their gender, with the pupil's safety, wellbeing and best interests at the centre of decision-making. Decisions relating to social transition, including requests concerning names, pronouns or uniform, will be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the pupil's age, maturity, individual circumstances and best interests..

The school will consider any safeguarding concerns or vulnerabilities associated with a pupil questioning their gender and take appropriate action where concerns arise.

The school will consider relevant clinical or professional advice where available and appropriate, particularly where there are complex needs or safeguarding concerns.

Parents/carers will be involved in decision-making wherever possible and appropriate, recognising that safeguarding responsibilities require that the DSL and other relevant staff consider the circumstances and needs of each individual pupil.

The school will ensure that arrangements relating to single-sex facilities, changing rooms, sport and other school activities are consistent with safeguarding duties, the law and the requirements of KCSIE 2026, while ensuring that all pupils are treated with dignity and respect..

32. Gangs, County Lines, Serious violence, Crime and Exploitation

Fortismere recognises the impact of gangs, county lines, serious violence, crime and sexual exploitation. It is recognised that the initial response to child victims is important and that staff will take any allegation seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

All staff have been trained and recognise the need to be vigilant for the signs that may include, but not exclusively (see further information in Appendix 2):

- unexplained gifts/new possessions – these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs.
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

- change in friendships/relationships with others/groups
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- signs of assault/unexplained injuries.

33. Female genital mutilation (FGM)

All staff are made aware of the issues around FGM, so-called 'honour'-based abuse and forced marriage, as well as the signs and symptoms, the actions they must take and the MANDATORY duty to reporting any concerns to the Police.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher or member of staff, in the course of their work, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out (or maybe carried out) on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher/member of staff **must** report this to the police. See KCSIE 2026 Annex A for further details of this so-called 'honour'-based abuse and forced marriage.

34. Preventing radicalisation

At Fortismere we have a duty to prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorism and recognise that:

- there is no single route to radicalisation. However, there are some behavioural traits that could indicate that a learner is susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism.
- radicalisation is not a linear process. Learners may express a combination of behaviours at different times.

The DSL (and deputies) will:

- take any concerns about the potential radicalisation of a pupil seriously, and take the same approach as any safeguarding concern.
- consider an individual's behaviour in the context of wider influencing factors and vulnerabilities.
- in most cases, speak with the learner and their parents or carers (if under 18).
- consider contextual, vulnerability and protective factors to make a comprehensive assessment of risk and harm.
- keep a written record of all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.

The DSL or member of the safeguarding team will undertake additional Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff are also appropriately trained to equip them to identify and protect any pupils at risk of radicalisation.

The DSL (and deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent and Channel referral which is seen as part of the school's wider safeguarding obligations. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The member of staff assigned as the school's Prevent Lead will ensure a detailed Prevent risk assessment is undertaken and reviewed at least annually, based on the DfE advice contained in Prevent duty: risk assessment templates. This includes the risks posed by pupils' access to the internet and social media and the school's mitigating actions, such a monitoring and filtering internet use.

35. Restrictive Interventions including use of reasonable force

The school follows the DfE guidance Use of reasonable force in schools, which includes:

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use restrictive interventions, including the use of 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'restrictive intervention' is defined by the DfE as 'a means to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body, of a pupil.' The term 'reasonable force' is used in legislation which includes physical restrictive intervention. The term 'reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application will depend on the circumstances. The use of restrictive intervention may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

Detailed records are kept of all restrictive intervention incidents.

Fortismere has in place a policy for restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. This which enables and supports staff to make appropriate physical contact and use restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force to safeguard children. All staff are made aware of this policy and receive training appropriate to their role.

The school follows DfE guidance on restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in school and includes:

- Emphasis of the importance of minimising the use of restrictive interventions, through prevention and de-escalation
- Whole school measures include:
    - consideration of how the school and classroom environment supports all pupils to achieve and thrive
    - school expectations for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces
    - staff training in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
    - development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
    - recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning
- Individual approaches include:
    - working closely with parents to support individual pupils
    - strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of behaviour support plans
    - giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates.

The school recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities. Also to provide support and opportunities so that vulnerable pupils, such as those with SEND, mental health needs or medical conditions, can benefit, particularly when responding to risks or incidents.

36. Curriculum – Opportunities to teach safeguarding

We recognise that schools play an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe'; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned. This is a crucial part of preventative education.

Has put in place a whole school approach to helping pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. This aims to prepare pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.

The school's approach to teaching pupils about safeguarding, including online safety, is part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. The details of this are set out in detail in the policy/policies for Curriculum/RSE/PSHE/online safety. The school makes use of published guidance to develop and deliver this provision, including for RSE, PSHE, and teaching online safety.

Our curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making so that learners have a range of age-appropriate contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that of others.

The school recognises that one size does not fit all and takes a personalised and contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children, so they know how to assess risk and adopt safe practices.

The school has implemented the mandatory DfE Relationships Education/Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum. The school is embedding this into all aspects of the curriculum to ensure equality, age-appropriate and full experiences for all pupils. Further details are given in our SMSC, RSE and PSHE curriculum policies.

Our school systems support children to talk about their concerns and worries with confidence in the knowledge they will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

37. Alternative provision

Fortismere School sometimes places pupils in alternative provision either on a full or part time basis. The school recognises the additional vulnerabilities of these pupils and that the responsibility for their safeguarding remains with the school. The school has put in place checks to ensure the provider meets the needs of each pupil and there is regular communication on their welfare, well-being and safety. The school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil.

This also applies to children who cannot attend school for health reasons and will be considered on a case by case basis.

We expect the Alternative providers to confirm in writing that all the appropriate checks have been carried out on all staff and volunteers and to notify us of any changes.

38. Elective home education

If a parent/carer wishes to educate their child at home the school will provide advice and support to aid them in their decision making to help parents make the right decision in the best interests of their child. This will include discussion with parents (and other professionals), awareness of additional needs of child with SEND and/or social worker, transition support, and informing the LA (requirement to notify LA on removal from roll).

In line with KCSE 2026 paragraph 220, Fortismere recognises that elective home education may not be an overwhelmingly positive experience and can mean for some children that they are not in receipt of suitable education. Also, that a child is less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe

39. Private fostering and host families

Private fostering is defined as when someone who is not a parent or a 'close relative' (eg. great aunt, cousin, mum's friend or a neighbour) is looking after a child or young person under the age of 16 (under 18 if they are disabled) for 28 days or more in their own home. A relative is defined in the Children Act 1989 as a grandparent, uncle or aunt (whether by full-blood, half-blood or by marriage or civil partnership), sibling or step-parent. The school is aware of its duty to report to LA of any such arrangements the school learns about and will work with the Virtual School Head to promote the achievement and wellbeing of pupils in kinship care.

If the school makes arrangements for pupils to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related. For example, as part of a foreign exchange visit or sports tour. This is often described as ‘homestay’ arrangements. The school will follow the guidance set out in KCSIE2026 paragraphs 408-410.

40. Safer Recruitment

Fortismere is committed to ensure that we develop a safe culture and that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers, this includes agency staff, contractors and third party staff) who are safe to work with our learners and staff.

Fortismere will follow the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (Part Three ‘Safer Recruitment’) and from The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will obtain written notification from any agency, or third party organisation, that they have carried out the same checks as the school would otherwise perform on any individual who will be working at the school, including through online delivery. This includes an enhanced DBS check. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made by the agency, or third party organisation.

The governing board and leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes outlined within guidance.

The school maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) in line with statutory guidance.

The governing board will ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

Fortismere School is committed to supporting the statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006 in schools.

We expect all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, cautions, reprimands and warnings. Any staff member failing to make accurate declarations or misrepresenting themselves in any way will be subject to the school's disciplinary policy.

We will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and understand that their behaviour and practice must be in line with it.

The full safer recruitment policy is provided in a separate policy See Appendix 3 Safer Recruitment policy.

41. Volunteers

Fortismere recognises the valuable support volunteers can provide to the school community.

Volunteers must sign in and out on arrival and departure and wear the appropriate visitor/volunteer identification while on the school site. Volunteers are expected to follow the school's policies, procedures and safeguarding arrangements while on site.

Volunteers will be provided with appropriate information and guidance regarding site security, safeguarding, emergency procedures, confidentiality and the responsibilities of their role prior to commencing. This will be updated on a regular basis.

Regular or overnight volunteer

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 made changes to regulated activity, meaning that any person volunteering in a school in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight in any setting is now in regulated activity. This means the volunteer will require enhanced DBS check, which includes a children's barred list check.

Volunteers will not be permitted to commence until the school has received the volunteer's enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information.

We will work with the other settings to establish who should carry out the enhanced DBS check. We will encourage volunteers to join the Update Service. All checks will be recorded on the SCR.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity

An enhanced DBS check, which includes a children's barred list check, will be undertaken for all existing volunteers in regulated activity. All checks will be recorded on the SCR.

Volunteers not in regulated activity

Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

A written risk assessment and professional judgement will be used to assess if checks are required. The risk assessment should be recorded and consider:

- the nature of any work with children,

- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers,
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability, and
- where the role is not regulated activity, whether another level of DBS check might be appropriate.

42. Concerns and allegations against members of staff and adults in the school

The governing body will ensure that they have processes in place for continuous vigilance maintaining an environment that prevents and deters abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. The governing body will create a culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within and where it is appropriate outside of the workplace (including online) which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.

Fortismere recognises that it is possible for any member of staff or adult working on behalf of the school, including volunteers, trainees, governors, contractors, agency and third party staff (including supply teachers), visitors and contractors, to behave in a way that:

- indicates they have harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- means they have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may 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.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. The leadership team takes all concerns or allegations received seriously. If a member of staff, volunteer or other adult is concerned at the lack of response or feels their concerns will not be taken seriously then they should consider Whistleblowing - see section below.

Allegations should be referred immediately to the Co-Headteachers who will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.

In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Co-Headteachers, staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the chair of governors who will contact the LADO.

The school's procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance. In line with KCSIE 2026, we have policy and procedures in place (See Appendix 4) that cover:

- Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
- Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

Fortismere has a legal requirement to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where they remove an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults,
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults; or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

Referrals will be made as soon as possible, when an individual has been removed from regulated activity. This could include when an individual is suspended, redeployed into work in an activity that is not regulated, dismissed or resigned. The school will provide the DBS with full information.

When an allegation is made, an investigation will be carried out to gather evidence to establish if it has foundation, and the school will ensure they have sufficient information to meet the referral duty criteria in the DBS referral guidance.

The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or Schools Personnel Service.

Duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency

If the school or teacher's employer, including an agency, dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, consideration will be given to referring the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the Education Act 2002.

The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if s/he finds there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

43. Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice or other wrong-doing and be secure that such concerns will always be taken seriously by the leadership team. Wrong-doing covered by this 'public interest disclosure' includes:

- someone's health and safety is in danger;
- damage to the environment
- a criminal offence (eg fraud)
- not obeying the law;
- covering up wrong-doing
- misusing public funds
- actions that negatively affect the welfare of children

All members of staff are made aware of the school's Whistleblowing policy. It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

The DfE provides advice to staff who feel they need to raise concerns: Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools and Whistleblowing Whistleblowing for employees

Staff should raise concerns with

- Line Manger
- DSL or Headteacher
- Local Authority
- Union or Professional Association

Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

44. The use of premises by other organisations for non-school activities

Where services or activities are provided under the direct supervision/management of staff the school arrangements for child protection will apply.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the school premises, the Headteacher will:

- Seek written assurance that the organisation concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place with regard to safeguarding children and child protection, and that relevant safeguarding checks have been made in respect of staff and volunteers.
- Put in place arrangements for the organisation to liaise with the school on safeguarding matters
- Include safeguarding requirements in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement. If this assurance is not achieved, an application to use premises will be refused.
- We expect those who hire our premisses to have safeguarding arrangements in place that meet the requirements in the guidance: After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition - Safeguarding guidance for providers
- These arrangements apply regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll.

45. Site security and arrangements for visitors

All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light. Any individual who is not known or identifiable on site should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school as outlined within in paragraphs 375-380 of KCSIE 2026. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitor's badge whilst on site. Visitors will be provided with a leaflet outlining the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements. All visitors are expected to follow these school arrangements.

The Headteacher will use their professional judgement to decide on access arrangements and if a visitor should be supervised and/or escorted.

The school will give careful consideration to the suitability of any external organisations who may provide information, resources and speakers to pupils. The arrangements for the individuals providing these services on the school's premises may include an assessment of their education value, the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and whether relevant checks will be required (e.g. for multiple sessions).

The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.

The school will follow guidance contained in the DfE School and College Security guidance

47. Complaints

The school has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, learners and members of staff and visitors who wish to report concerns. The complaints policy is available from the school website.

Anything that constitutes a safeguarding related cause for concern or an allegation or against a member of staff, trainee, contractor or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific Procedures for Managing Allegations against Staff policy.

All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Allegations against Staff policy (See Appendix 4).

48. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local child protection concerns and/or any changes to our procedures. Staff will be informed of any changes made.

The DSL and deputy DSLs meet fortnightly to review all safeguarding cases and check on the actions taken and what further actions are needed. This includes pupils with early help and child protection plans.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher will provide regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the governing board. The governing board will not receive details of individual children's situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

The governing board understands its responsibilities and duties as set out in KCSIE 2026 to ensure the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including those for online safety.

In addition to the regular reports on safeguarding provided by the DSL, governors will take a proactive, varied approach to checking the school's safeguarding arrangements. This will include: meetings with the DSL, visits to school, ascertaining the views of staff, pupils and parents through discussions and/or surveys, use of an audit tool, asking all governors to ask a safeguarding question during meetings with leaders/staff on other aspects of school life (such as subject meetings or SENCo meeting), termly checks of the SCR, review of school data and use of an external consultant.

Appendix 1: Categories & Indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Recognition that patterns of concern, rather than single signs, are key to identifying abuse. No single indicator proves abuse. Staff should always listen, reassure the child, record concerns accurately using the child's own words where possible, and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Four key indicators are listed in KCSIE 2026 paragraph 30:

- **drug taking and/or alcohol misuse**
- **unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education**
- **serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation, and**
- **consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes**

For each of the four categories of abuse listed below, a summary of signs and indicators (listed in alphabetical order) that can indicate abuse are given to help guide staff and aid professional curiosity.

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

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

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts that is significantly out of character
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bite marks
- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Deep contact burns caused by cigarettes, lighters or heated objects
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
- Injuries for which inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations are given or a delay in seeking treatment.
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Reluctance to go home or fear of particular individuals
- Wearing clothing that covers the arms and legs when it is inappropriate for the weather

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

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

- Aggressive, disruptive or challenging behaviour.
- Compulsive stealing
- Delayed emotional, social or language development.
- Developmentally inappropriate behaviour (for example, excessive clinginess, regression or infantile behaviour).
- Difficulties forming or maintaining relationships with peers or trusted adults.
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Eating disorders or significant changes in eating habits.
- Excessive attention-seeking behaviour, such as need for approval and affection or poor behaviour
- Excessive withdrawal, anxiety, fearfulness or low self-esteem.
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints, such as headaches or stomach aches, where no medical cause is identified.
- Inappropriate parental expectations or pressure that causes significant distress.
- Low aspirations, feelings of worthlessness or expressing that they are "no good".
- Over reaction to mistakes
- Overly compliant, passive or eager-to-please behaviour or over reaction to mistakes
- Persistent sadness, low mood or lack of confidence.
- Poor attendance or disengagement from education.
- Reluctance to speak, appearing frightened of making mistakes, or showing an excessive fear of punishment and/or fear of parents being contacted
- Running away or repeatedly going missing from home or care.
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts.
- Sudden or significant changes in behaviour or personality.
- Unwillingness or inability to play

4. Sexual abuse:

Involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, such as acts of penetration, whether that is with part of a person's body or an object (e.g. Rape or assault by penetration), and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching over clothing. Sexual abuse may also include noncontact 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 as well as offline, 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. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it. There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and

there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

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Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

- Becoming unusually clingy or requiring constant reassurance.
- Concerns about online sexual abuse, including grooming, sexual coercion, or being pressured to create or share nudes or semi-nudes imagery or videos.
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or significant emotional distress.
- Fear of changing clothes for PE, swimming or other activities.
- Hints about, or disclosures of, secrets that cause the child distress or that they feel unable to share.
- Pain, bruising, bleeding, itching or discomfort in the genital or anal area.
- Recurrent urinary infections or unexplained genital complaints.
- Regression to earlier behaviours, such as thumb sucking, bedwetting or age-inappropriate dependence.
- Running away, repeatedly going missing from home or care, or unexplained absences from education.
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts.
- Sexualised behaviour, language or knowledge that is inappropriate for the child's age and stage of development.
- Sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy that is inconsistent with the child's age or circumstances.
- Sudden fear of, or reluctance to be alone with, a particular person or to visit a particular place.
- Sudden or significant changes in behaviour, mood, attendance or educational performance.
- Unexplained gifts, money, mobile phones or other possessions.

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

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

- Compulsive stealing, scavenging or hoarding food.
- Developmental delay that is not otherwise explained.
- Failure to attend medical or other health appointments.
- Frequent lateness, poor attendance or repeated unexplained absences from education.
- Frequently arriving at school without essential equipment, appropriate clothing or basic care.
- Inadequate, dirty or inappropriate clothing for the weather or season.
- Low self-esteem, anxiety, withdrawal or emotional distress.
- Noticeable poor growth, weight loss, being consistently underweight or faltering growth where appropriate.
- Persistent hunger, food hoarding or seeking food from others.
- Persistent tiredness, lethargy or falling asleep in school.
- Poor personal hygiene or consistently being unwashed.
- Poor relationships with peers or difficulties forming secure attachments.
- Poor supervision, being left alone inappropriately, or regularly caring for younger siblings beyond what is age appropriate.
- Running away, repeatedly going missing from home or care, or remaining out late without explanation.
- Self-soothing behaviours such as rocking, hair twisting or persistent thumb sucking beyond the expected developmental stage.
- Unmet medical, dental or mental health needs

Appendix 2: Specific safeguarding issues (KCSIE 2026 Annex A).

KCSIE 2026 Annex A: Further information

Annex A contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read this Annex.

As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. **They should follow sections 2 and 12 of this policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).**

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate, the police) is made immediately.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

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

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

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. All schools are required to teach about personal safety through the RSHE curriculum. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Whatever form it takes, exploitation and modern slavery is child abuse and relevant child protection procedures must be followed if modern slavery or trafficking is suspected, as per the Modern Slavery: statutory guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and non-statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland (accessible version) - GOV.UK

Some children will also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian. Independent child trafficking guardians provide advocacy for children and help to promote and support their recovery.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They 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.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity,

cognitive ability, having a physical or learning disability, or being neurodivergent, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions which could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation,
- associate with other children involved in exploitation,
    - suffer from changes in emotional well-being,
- misuse alcohol and other drugs,
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
    - regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
    - suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in the DfE guidance: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners.

County lines

As county lines is a form of criminal exploitation, a First Responder who identifies any potential victim of county lines exploitation should complete the relevant child protection and modern slavery referrals as detailed in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home,
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime),
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs,
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection,

- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house’ or ‘cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity,
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters, and
    - have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office Child exploitation disruption toolkit (accessible) - GOV.UK and The Children’s Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals | The Children's Society.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age-appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children who are absent from education

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

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 193,000 children in England and Wales have a parent in prison each year. They are at risk of poor outcomes as a result of poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The Prisoners’ Families Helpline offers free, confidential support and advice for families in England and Wales who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

School and college staff should be aware that children who have experienced parental imprisonment are more likely to be absent (or excluded) than their peers, to experience mental ill health and drug and alcohol misuse; they are also less likely to be in education, training or employment in later life. Staff should understand the need for tailored, trauma-informed and sensitive support that can help mitigate potential harm and help encourage stability.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either ‘cyber-enabled’ (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or ‘cyber dependent’ (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crime continues to represent one of the most significant and rapidly evolving threats within the United Kingdom’s (UK) crime landscape. Offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (CMA) have risen substantially.

Young people across the UK experiment with illegal online activity, often without understanding the legal or ethical implications. The impact of cybercrime extends well beyond immediate financial losses, with scope to cause disruption to national infrastructure.

Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded,
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide preventative police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced 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. Under the statutory definition, 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" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

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

Domestic abuse is one of the most prevalent forms of abuse, with Women's Aid estimating that 160,000 children are currently living in households where domestic abuse is taking place. This is likely to be an underestimate, however, with much abuse remaining hidden and not coming to the attention of services. 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 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.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures as set out in paragraphs 55-61 should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and relevant education settings operating in all police forces across England and Wales. In November 2025, a new statutory duty was placed on the police to notify a child's education setting, and where relevant, local authorities, if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This includes all children connected to a household where they have attended a domestic abuse incident; children who are physically present at the incident, children not physically present during the incident, and situations where a child might reside in another household temporarily or permanently. Operation Encompass reports that over 2,000 notifications are made to settings every day.

Educational settings are often the only consistent support available to some children, especially for those who live in isolated or rural communities. The aim of the duty is to support education settings to provide timely, informed support to children affected by domestic abuse, to ensure the school has up to date information about the child's circumstances and enable immediate support to be put in place according to the child's needs. This places no new responsibilities on education settings.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals and applies solely to domestic abuse incidents. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

Forces and educational settings should have an open communication process to determine where a safeguarding referral should be made in accordance with local thresholds. If an officer makes a referral alongside issuing an Operation Encompass notification, they should tell the child's education setting.

The duty applies to all children in education from reception (typically aged 4/5) up to the age of 17, and who are enrolled in registered primary and secondary schools, including independent schools, private schools, alternative provision settings (e.g., Pupil Referral Units), as well as further education colleges or 16 to 19 academies in England or Wales. Police forces must notify the local authority if the child is electively home educated or missing from education. Forces may also make notifications to other settings, for example early years settings or further education provision for young people with SEND, although these are not covered under the duty.

More information about the scheme can be found in the statutory guidance for police: Duty on police forces in England and Wales to notify education establishments of domestic abuse incidents: Operation Encompass. This guidance intends to recognise and respond to children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. It does not replace existing statutory guidance, including Keeping children safe in education and Working Together to Safeguard Children in England.

Additional resources for education settings, including Online National Key Adult Training: Operation Encompass can be found on the charity's website Home: Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass notifications

Operation Encompass involves the sharing of personal and sensitive information about children and families. It is vital that all participants comply with the data protection laws.

Police forces and educational settings are responsible for deciding how and where information about incidents and notifications are made. They must ensure it remains confidential, is held securely, and adheres to the requirements of the data protection laws.

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for leading on all safeguarding and child protection matters within an educational setting. They are likely to be the Key Adult for Operation Encompass notifications and are responsible for making safeguarding referrals to appropriate agencies, maintaining up-to-date safeguarding policies and training, overseeing record-keeping, and liaising with families where appropriate. DSLs may wish to use a central safeguarding inbox to ensure they have oversight over all Operation Encompass notifications.

The notification should include:

- the name, date of birth and protected characteristics (e.g., disability, race, religion etc.) of any child from that education setting who is related to any adult involved in the incident, whether the adult is the alleged perpetrator or non-abusive relative
- the relationship of the child to the victim and to the perpetrator,
- the police reference number,
- the location, time and date of the incident,
- if the child was present, and if so, where they were (notifications should be shared even if the child was not present at the particular incident),
- the voice of the child, such as what they are saying and how they are behaving, and
    - the context and the circumstances of the incident, including whether an arrest was made, whether the incident was attended in person or via Rapid Video Response, and where possible, information on previous domestic abuse incidents.

The notification should not include:

- information or reference to sexual offences disclosed at the domestic abuse incident. This must not be disclosed in the notification. Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, anonymity for victims of sexual offences must be preserved.

The Operation Encompass charity provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from education settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available from 8:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

Footnote 152 Section 20 of the Victim and Prisoners Act 2024 introduced a new provision into Part 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 under Section 49A. [Victims and Prisoners Act 2024]

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives
- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- Operation Encompass (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)
    - The Home Office publish guidance on Controlling or coercive behaviour which provides clear information on what constitutes controlling or coercive behaviour and how to identify the offence.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a

referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

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

Temporary accommodation notification duty

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act places a new duty on local housing authorities in England to notify educational institutions, health visiting services and general medical practices, when a child is placed in temporary accommodation. This notification should be made when consent has been given from the parent, those with parental responsibility or care of the child, or the child themselves in cases of 16–17-year-olds living independently from their parents.

The notification will enable school and college staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children at the earliest opportunity and support them to improve their outcomes. Whilst any discussion with the local housing authority should be progressed as appropriate, this notification does not, and should not, replace existing safeguarding and welfare duties nor a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Specific statutory guidance for local authorities on the temporary accommodation duty will be provided in due course.

Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

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 forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information and training for professionals on exploitation and modern slavery is available here - Modern slavery training: resource page - GOV.UK

The National Referral Mechanism is the system used within the UK to support potential victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of exploitation and modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in statutory guidance Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK.

Children who are referred into the NRM in England and Wales may also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG)1. ICTGs provide advocacy for children and help to promote and support their recovery.

Preventing radicalisation

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Footnote 153 As defined in the Government's Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.

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

Footnote 154 As defined in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000)

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern.

It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn into terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) Making a Prevent referral.

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

Footnote 155: Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)

Footnote 156 "Terrorism" for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act).

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments.

The school or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are first assessed by police and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. Whilst the referral is being assessed, should any further or new information come to light, this should also be passed to police. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse, incidents that may indicate concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours and/or details of those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office.

Additional support

The Department has published further advice for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.
    - Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

Educate Against Hate is a government website designed to support school and college teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their pupils from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation. These resources are regularly updated to ensure they remain relevant and practical. Resources have been developed working closely with education professionals and civil society groups to identify and produce high-quality materials that assist teachers in building pupils' critical thinking skills and resilience to extremist ideologies.

For advice specific to further education, Educate Against Hate hosts a suite of teaching packs and accompanying guidance to meet the specific needs of pupils and practitioners in further education and training settings. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings to comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

London Grid for Learning has also produced useful resources on Prevent (Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net).

Serious violence

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved in committing serious violence. These may include:

- increased absence from school or college,
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- a significant decline in educational performance,
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male,
- having been suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school,
- having experienced child maltreatment,
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery,
- having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence, and
- having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or 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. It is important

that schools and colleges try to understand where these places are, with a view to working with partners to promote safety for children. Listening to children and consulting with staff can help establish when and where they feel unsafe. Working with wider partners can also help build understanding of the local context beyond the school or college and help co-ordinate a collective safeguarding response around the school day.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) (the "what works" centre for preventing violence) has produced practical guidance for schools and colleges and an accompanying self-assessment tool to help introduce evidenced practice for preventing children becoming involved in violence.

Home Office funded Violence Reduction Units (VRU) operate in the 20 police force areas across England and Wales that have the highest volumes of serious violence, as measured by hospital admissions for injury with a sharp object. A list of these locations can be found here. As the strategic co-ordinators for local violence prevention, each VRU is mandated to include at least one local education representative within their Core Membership group, which is responsible for setting the direction for VRU activity. Schools and educational partners within these areas are encouraged to reach out to their local VRU, either directly or via their education Core Member, to better ingrain partnership working to tackle serious violence across local areas and ensure a joined-up approach to young people across the risk spectrum.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a new Serious Violence Duty (Statutory Guidance) on a range of specified authorities, such as the police, local government, youth offending teams, health and probation services, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. Educational authorities and prisons/youth custody authorities are under a separate duty to co-operate with core duty holders when asked, and there is a requirement for the partnership to consult with all such institutions in their area.

The Duty **does not** replace or duplicate existing safeguarding duties.

Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)

Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving honour often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers** th*at requires a different approach (see below).*

Footnote 157 Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers**, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information.

Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college's designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: FGM Fact Sheet.

Footnote 158 Section 5B(6) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 states teachers need not report a case to the police if they have reason to believe that another teacher has already reported the case.

Further information can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and the FGM resource pack particularly section 13.

Forced marriage

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

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (chapter 8 provides guidance on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage -GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

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

Additional advice and support

There is a wealth of information available to support schools and colleges. KCSIE pages 172 to 180 provide a long list of sites that provide useful starting points.

Appendix 3: Safer Recruitment policy

Recruitment and selection process

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Advertising - When advertising roles, we will make clear:

- Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account

Application forms - Our application forms will:

- Include a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
- Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders

Shortlisting - Our shortlisting process will involve at least two people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:
    - If they have a criminal history
    - Whether they are included on the barred list
    - Whether they are prohibited from teaching
    - Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
    - Any relevant overseas information
    - Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Applicants will be informed if this will take place.

Seeking references and checking employment history

We will obtain references before the interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references

- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the Co-Headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made

Pre-appointment vetting checks

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
  - For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants
  - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or

- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:
- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more
- We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:
- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:
- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children
- We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.
- We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.
- Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.
- We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

Volunteers

We will:
- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.
They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform. Providers are expected to notify the school of any staff changes.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Pupils staying with host families

Where the school makes arrangements for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

Appendix 4: Allegations against staff policy (including low-level concerns)

Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

The section is based on *Section 1: Concerns that may meet the harm threshold in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.
This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).
We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Headteacher, or the chair of governors where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.
Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location.

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's HR adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

- **Unfounded**: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care

If immediate suspension is considered necessary

- Agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected.
- Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day.
- The individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details

If it is decided that no further action is to be taken

- Record the decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

If it is decided that further action is needed

- Take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. Fortismere staff have access to the Education Assistance Programme; staff will be signposted to them for support.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this

applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice

- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)
- When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution - The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated - If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension - If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports - If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations - If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.
The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation

- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

The section is based on *Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.*
This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.
Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school

- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:
- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:
- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 36 of this policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:
- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's Code of conduct. The Headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:
- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a

concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

Appendix 5: Child-on-child abuse policy

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils. We maintain a ‘it could happen here’ approach to safeguarding

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse and that students with SEND may be at an increased risk. We recognise that child on child abuse can happen anywhere. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We are aware that some students may find it difficult to talk about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. All staff are trained to be vigilant around children and show concern for their welfare at all times.

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

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

Types of child-on-child abuse (listed in KCSIE 2026)

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents;
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nude images and or videos including those generated by AI;
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtaining sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Definitions

Sexual violence - For the purpose of this policy, when referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE- sexual assault covers a wide range of behaviours so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genetalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault).
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence is: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity,and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE-this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party)

Sexual harassment - is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur both offline and online, in/out of school. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:
- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes. Schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim.
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence), and
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
    - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence*. UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people* provides detailed advice for schools and colleges.
    - Sharing of unwanted explicit content
    - Sexualised online bullying
    - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
    - Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and
    - Coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

Harmful sexual behaviour - Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB).

When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future

Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

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

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

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

Initial response to any allegation will follow steps laid out in KCSIE 2026. These will be on a case-by-case basis following appropriate guidance as laid out in *KCSIE Part 5 :Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.*

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We will always seek to reassure victims that they are taken seriously, regardless of time taken to come forward and that abuse can have occurred online or outside school, not creating a problem, reassured not to feel ashamed or that they will be criminalised. We will explain to the student that we are unable to promise confidentiality and that we will need to seek advice and guidance to provide appropriate support.

We will keep appropriate records of disclosure using our referral system (My Concern). We will be mindful that records need to be timely, in the victim's words and will only record the facts as presented to us. We are aware that our record keeping could be used as part of a future statutory assessment. and/ or part of a criminal investigation.

The DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and should be involved in the decision making on the initial response by the school. Important considerations will include:

- Wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's or college's duty and responsibilities to protect other children
- Nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed
- Ages and developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is/are the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, confident and well known social standing? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?

- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature)
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children
- The importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff, and other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

Immediate consideration will always be given to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) (and any other children involved). We will then follow the process outlined in KCSIE 2026 in terms of how to respond to the report (page 111 on)

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:
- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment

We will ensure staff are trained to understand:
- How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
- That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of **"it could happen here**"
- That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
- children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to, a friend may make a report or a member of staff may overhear a conversation
- That a child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns

- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly.

We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or LA children's social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

Appendix 6: Related policies

- Anti-bullying policy
- Attendance policy
- Behaviour policy
- Data protection policy
- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy
- Relationship and sex education policy
- Mobile phone code of conduct
- Special educational needs and disability policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Whistleblowing policy

Copies of school policies can be downloaded from the website. Staff policies can be accessed in the shared network area. Anyone can request a copy of any policy be contacting the School Office at office@fortismere.org.uk

Appendix 7: Sources of support and advice

Links to sources of further advice and support for school staff, volunteers, governors and parents/carers. Additional links can be found throughout KCSIE 2026

Support for staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline
- DfE: Whistleblowing for employees - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- DfE: The online tool Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Council directs to the relevant local children's social care contact number:
- NSPCC: Safeguarding children and child protection | NSPCC Learning
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – DfE advice

Support for Learners

- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org

- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org

Support for adults
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk
- MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org

Support for Learning Disabilities
- SENDIASS: https://www.kids.org.uk/sendiass-home
- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Personal, social and health education and Relationships and sex education
- DfE: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- DfE: Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- DfE: Engaging parents with relationships education policy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- PSHE Association: Home | www.pshe-association.org.uk

Domestic Abuse
- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phoneline: https://respectphoneline.org.uk

Honour Based Abuse and FGM
- Forced Marriage Unit: www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- FGM Factsheet: link here
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information: link here

Contextual Safeguarding, child-on-child abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation:
- Contextual Safeguarding Network: https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk
- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- Rape Crisis: https://rapecrisis.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights:
- Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm

Mental Health
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- Moodspark: https://moodspark.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

- PHSE resources and lesson plans: Mental wellbeing | Overview | PHE School Zone
- DfE: Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Online Safety
- CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: https://reportharmfulcontent.com
- Parents Info: www.parentinfo.org
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC: Social media and online safety | NSPCC Learning
- Get safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Stop it Now!: www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) '*Education for a Connected World Framework*'
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)

Radicalisation and hate
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk
- Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting

Appendix 8: Job description of DSL & DDSLs (KCSIE Annex B)

The designated safeguarding lead will have ultimate lead responsibility for the role as set out below, with any deputies also adhering to these responsibilities both when working alongside the designated safeguarding lead and when deputising for them in their absence.

Manage referrals
The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care,
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme,
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

Working with others
The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff,
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners,
- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019,
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member,
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college and senior mental health leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically,
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health,
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances, and
- work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.159 This includes: o ensuring that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
- supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date.
Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Safeguarding records should be clear, factual, and distinguish between observed concerns, professional opinion, and historic information.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern,
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Raising awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

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

Training, knowledge and skills

- The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should also undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated safeguarding leads (and any deputies) with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:
  - understand the assessment process for providing family help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements160,
  - have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so,
  - understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children,
  - understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes,
  - are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers161,
  - understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners,

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

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

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

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

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

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

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners,
- understand relevant data protection laws, and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, 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.