

*'Where a love of learning grows'*



**Birch Wood  
School**



**Birch Wood  
Vale School**



**Birch Wood  
Autism Provision**

# **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**School Name:** Birch Wood School

**Policy owner:** Rosalind Hopkins

**Review Date:** September 2023

**Next Review Date:** September 2024

**Date Ratified by Chair of Governors:** 2004

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## **Named staff and contacts**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lauren Carroll

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:

- Rosalind Hopkins – Executive Head
- Tom Smith - Head of School (BWV)
- Tom Bradley-Hewell – Head of School (Grange Drive)
- Amy Dunstan - Deputy Head (Behaviour and Culture)
- Phil Leaney - Deputy Head (Quality of Education)
- Claire Wood – Senior Assistant Head.
- Michelle Walker – Assistant Head
- Hannah O’Mara – Assistant Head
- Joe Knowles – Assistant Head

**Channel Helpline:** 020 7340 7264

**Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC):** Tom Smith - Head of School (BWV)

**Designated Teacher for Children in Care:** Claire Wood- Senior Assistant Head

**Nominated Safeguarding Governor:** Kasia Glinka

**Safeguarding and LADO contacts:**

### **Leicestershire County Council LADO**

- **Allegations Line:** 0116 305 4141
- **LADO email for Referrals and New Enquiries:** [CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk](mailto:CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk)
- **Please note that the LADO service is available office hours only: Monday-Thursday, 8.30am-5.00 pm and Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm**
- Outside of office hours, please contact the Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty Team.
- Tel: 0116 305 0005

### **Rutland County Council LADO**

- **Telephone Number:** 01572 758 454
- **LADO email for Referrals and New Enquiries:** [LADO@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@rutland.gov.uk)
- <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/health-and-family/childrens-social-care/lado-local-authority-designated-officer/>

### **Leicester City Council LADO**

- Local Authority Designated Officer (based within the Safeguarding Unit)
- **Telephone Number:** 0116 454 2440
- **Email:** [Lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk)

**Safeguarding Development Officers:** Simon Genders 0116 305 7750  
Ann Prideaux 0116 305 7317

## **First Response Children's Duty (Tier 4 Same-day referrals)**

Telephone 0116 305 0005  
Email [childrensduty@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childrensduty@leics.gov.uk)  
Address First Response Children's Duty  
Room 100b  
County Hall  
Championship Way  
Glenfield  
LE3 8RF

### **All other referrals including Early Help (Children and Family Wellbeing) Service**

<http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport>

**Early Help queries and Consultation Line:** 0116 305 8727

## **Introduction**

Birch Wood School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive environment. We encourage children to talk about their worries and to report their concerns to us. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. Everything we do as an educational community is based upon our Mission Statement, Aims and Objectives. We are a school for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties including MLD, Autism, SLD and PMLD and as such we have a great degree of responsibility for the care and well-being of our pupils. The pupils belong to a group of people who are, potentially, some of the most vulnerable to abuse in all its forms, for a number of reasons. It is our duty therefore to make sure that child protection is an integrated part of the ethos and practices of our school.

## **Legislation and statutory guidance**

- This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.
- This policy is also based on the following legislation:
- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what ‘regulated activity’ is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools’ duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it’s proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there’s evidence that they’re being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the “2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations”) and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Throughout this policy we follow the locally agreed multi-agency procedures that have been put in place by the school’s 3 safeguarding partners, the police, clinical commissioning groups and the local authorities, who have a shared and equal duty to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>

There are four main elements to our Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy:

- **Prevention** (e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils, safer recruitment procedures, effective filtering and monitoring systems);
- **Protection** (by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns);
- **Support** (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been harmed abused);
- **Working with parents** (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken).

This policy applies to all staff, governors and visitors to the school. We recognise that child protection is the responsibility of all adults in school. We will ensure that all parents and other working partners are aware of our child protection policy by mentioning it in our school prospectus, displaying appropriate information in our reception and on the school website and by raising awareness at meetings with parents as appropriate.

### **Extended school activities**

Where the Governing Body provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Governing Body will seek assurance in writing that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and protect children (inspecting these where needed) and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. Safeguarding requirements will be included in any lease or hire agreement as a condition of use; and any failure to comply will lead to termination of the agreement.

## **Safeguarding Commitment**

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When

managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

The school adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. Staff encourage children and parents to feel free to talk about any concerns and to see school as a safe place when there are difficulties. Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously and children are encouraged to seek help from members of staff.

Our school will:

Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;

- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE/Citizenship/Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse (including online and other contexts children are in), and to know to whom they can turn for help. Students have access to consistent support staff who are attached to their form classes and class groups. Students also have access to interventions as the need is identified, these are staff who have specialist training in various therapeutic approaches, counselling and social communication sessions. Identified students also have access to individual or small group sessions with our own commissioned SALT, OT and our Educational Psychologist. These approaches are built in to the fabric of our pastoral and therapeutic curriculum to provide opportunities for students to report concerns where they find it difficult to approach adults in school so as to remove barriers. Students are also able to communicate with staff via MS Teams chat.
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
- Operate safer recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out and recorded on the single central record for new staff and volunteers who will work with children, including identity, right to work, enhanced DBS criminal record and barred list (and overseas where needed), references, and prohibition from teaching or managing in schools (s.128). (See Keeping children safe in education part 3)

### **Safeguarding in the Curriculum**

Children are taught about safeguarding in school. The following areas are among those addressed in PSHE and Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and in the wider curriculum:

- Bullying (including Cyberbullying)
- Drugs, alcohol and substance abuse (including awareness of County Lines and the Criminal Exploitation of children where appropriate)
- Online Safety (including sexting)
- The danger of meeting up with strangers
- Fire and water safety
- Road safety
- Domestic Abuse
- Healthy Relationships / Consent

- (so-called) Honour Based Violence issues e.g. forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- (Sexual exploitation of children (CSE), including online
- Child criminal exploitation (including cybercrime)
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **General**

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Positive Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly tackling issues such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - Body confidence and self-esteem
  - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
  - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and how to access support
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they are always unacceptable

### **All staff**

All staff will:

- Read and understand part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#) and review this guidance at least annually
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents. This includes making parents aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBT+ to speak out and share their concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies the



positive behaviour policy, IT acceptable use policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education

- The early help assessment process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by other children
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher of the school will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are effectively implemented and followed by all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) as part of their induction and that they understand and follow the procedures outlined in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.

- This policy is communicated to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- They act as the "case manager" in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate
- Make decisions regarding all low-level concerns, collaborating with the DSL on this.
- Ensure the relevant staffing ratios are met within Early Years.
- Make sure every child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children;
- Allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff or adult working at school may pose a risk of harm to children or young people are notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer where the threshold is met.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285). Also see Birch Wood School Whistle Blowing Policy.
- All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns and that if all else fails to report these directly to Children's Social Care (Children and Family Specialist Services) or the Police.
- If there is a concern or complaint about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors must be contacted. The contact details for the Chair of Governors is located in the staff rooms at both Grange Drive Site and at

BWV. If there is a concern about the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors must be contacted in writing. Please address your letter c/o Clerk to the Governors at the school address or email [herlihys@birchwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:herlihys@birchwoodschool.co.uk)

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) will always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The responsibilities of the DSL are found in Annex C of “Keeping Children Safe in Education”. The DSL is a senior member of staff on the senior leadership team and the role is explicit in their job description. Responsibilities include: The DSL can be contacted out of school hours by email [DSL@birchwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:DSL@birchwoodschool.co.uk). When the DSL is absent, then the deputies will act as cover (see the list at the top of this policy). The DSL or one of the deputies will always be available and will be nominated for out of hours/out of term activities.

- **Managing referrals** – the DSL will refer suspected cases, as appropriate to the relevant body; the local authority children’s social care, to the Channel programme, to the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or Police, and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- **Working with others** – to act as a source of support and advice, to act as a point of contact for the safeguarding partners, to liaise with the Headteacher about issues especially to do with ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations, to liaise with staff when deciding to make a referral to relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically, to liaise with the senior mental health lead, to promote supportive engagement with parents and carers, to take the lead in promoting educational outcomes for children in need and those with a social worker, to liaise with the Governing Body and the Local Authority on any deficiencies brought to the attention of the Governing Body and how these should be rectified without delay. The DSL will also take part in strategy and discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- **Information sharing and managing safeguarding files** – keeping files confidential, secure and up to date, in a separate file for each child, including a clear and comprehensive summary, detailing how the concern was followed up and resolved, with a note of actions, decisions and the outcome, sharing information as required to safeguard children and transferring records and other relevant information to the new school within 5 days or in advance if necessary.
- **Raising Awareness** – ensuring each member of staff and volunteer understands the child protection policy which is reviewed at least annually, making it available publicly, ensuring staff have access to relevant training and induction, promoting educational outcomes by sharing relevant information about vulnerable children
- **Training, knowledge and skills** – to undergo DSL training every two years (updating at least annually via bulletins etc.) and to attend Prevent awareness training, in order to understand assessment and referral processes, to contribute effectively to child protection conferences including the importance of sharing information, to understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children and how to respond to this, to be alert to children with specific needs e.g. SEND, those with health conditions and young carers, to understand the unique risks associated with online safety
- **Providing support to staff** – to help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, to provide support in the referral process if required and to help them to understand that safeguarding and educational outcomes are linked
- **Understanding the views of children** – encouraging a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in measures taken to protect them and understanding the difficulties children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances
- **Holding and sharing information** – sharing with safeguarding partners, other agencies and professionals and transferring records between schools and colleges in accordance with data protection legislation, keeping detailed, accurate and secure written records and understanding the purpose of this

## Governing Body

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, the Governing Body will ensure that a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development

- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- The school operates safer recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Furthermore, the Headteacher, nominated Governors and other staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.
- There are procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns (including lower lever concerns) and allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.
- There is a senior member of the school's leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (the "Designated Safeguarding Lead") and there is always cover for this role with appropriate arrangements for before/after school and out of term time activities. We have 9 senior leaders trained as DSL's.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes effective Local Authority training (in addition to basic child protection training) and this is refreshed every two years. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals (at least annually) via safeguarding e-briefings etc.
- The Headteacher, and all other staff and volunteers who work with children (including early years practitioners), undertake appropriate training which is regularly updated at least annually (and more comprehensively, every three years in compliance with the Safeguarding Children Partnership protocol); and new staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities (including this policy, Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (or Annex A if appropriate) the pupil Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy, the staff behaviour policy (Code of Conduct), the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and how to respond to children who go missing from education). The Local Authority Induction leaflet, "Safeguarding in Education Induction – Child Protection Information, Safer Working Practice" will be used as part of this induction and Annex B from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 is provided to all staff working directly with children.
- Deficiencies or weaknesses brought to the attention of the Governing Body will be rectified without delay.
- The Chair of Governors (or, in the absence of a Chair, the Vice Chair) deals with any safeguarding concerns or allegations of abuse made against the Headteacher, in liaison with the Local Authority Allegations Manager (LADO).
- Effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually including a behaviour Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers - 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who work with children in education settings May 2019'. Information is provided to the Local Authority (acting on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Partnership) through the Safeguarding Annual Return.
- There is an individual member of the Governing Body who will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the school, liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and provide information and compliance/monitoring reports to the Governing Body.
- The school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 including providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help for children who require this. This Early Help may be offered directly through school provision or via referral to an external support agency. Safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
- Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
- The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the IT filters and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns
- The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure
- That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised

### **Virtual school heads**

- Virtual school heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils with a social worker.
- They should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, SENCOs, social workers, mental health leads and others.

### **Records, Monitoring and Transfer**

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All staff are clear about the need to record and report concerns about a child or children within the school and have training using **CPOMS**. Records of concerns are written down or typed, signed and dated and passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy). The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed over to other agencies (in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR Principles)

- Records relating to actual or alleged abuse or neglect are stored apart from normal pupil or staff records on 'Child Protection Online Monitoring System' CPOMS. Normal records sometimes have markers to show that there is sensitive material stored elsewhere. This is to protect individuals from accidental access to sensitive material by those who do not need to know.
- Child protection records are stored securely on our CPOMS online system, with access confined to specific staff, eg the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and relevant deputies) and the Headteacher.
- Child protection records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints or concerns about any individuals and ensuring these are acted upon. A case file chronology, summarizing case activity and significant events in the child's life, helps to enable effective monitoring. Any actions taken are clearly indicated.
- When children transfer school their safeguarding records are also transferred within 5 days of them starting. Safeguarding Records can be securely transferred using CPOMS but where this is not possible, safeguarding records will be transferred separately from other records and best practice is to pass these directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving school or college with any necessary discussion or explanation and to obtain a signed and dated record of the transfer. Where a child needs specific ongoing support, relevant information will be transferred prior to the child arriving at their new school. In the event of a child moving out of area and a physical handover not being possible then the most secure method should be found to send the confidential records to a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and a photocopy kept until receipt is confirmed. Files requested by other agencies e.g. Police are copied.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality and data protection are closely linked with respect to safeguarding. Please refer to the data Protection Policy.

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
- There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children

The DSL should consider that:

- Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information

- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 14, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

## **Recognising abuse and taking action**

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue. Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL or deputy DSL”.

### **If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger**

- Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**
- Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

This link is to report child abuse to your local council: <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

### **If a child makes a disclosure to you**

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child’s own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police directly and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

None of this should stop you from having a ‘professional curiosity’ and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

### **If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM**

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”.

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4 of this policy.

**Any teacher** who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or

- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

**Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out or discovers that a pupil **aged 18 or over** appears to have been a victim of FGM should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

### **If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)**

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

#### **Early help assessment**

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Completion of the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) form will need to be completed

We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed. <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/multi-agency-referral-form-for-early-help-and-social-care-services-marf>

#### **Referral**

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

## **If you have concerns about extremism**

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

## **Support to pupils and staff**

Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and view their lives in a positive way and that this is likely to adversely impact their mental health and emotional well-being. Children may be vulnerable because, for instance, they have an allocated social worker, have a disability, are in care, a care-leaver or previously looked after, or are experiencing some form of neglect. It is therefore important that staff recognise that mental health concerns can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. 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. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. For such children school may be one of the few stable, secure and predictable components of their lives. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following this policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Our school seeks to remove any barriers that may exist in being able to recognise abuse or neglect in pupils with Special Educational Needs, disabilities, or physical health issues. These barriers 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 disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.



We will seek to provide such children with the necessary support to build their self-esteem and confidence, helping them to secure the very best educational outcomes they are able to achieve. The context in which safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours occur, whether in school or within or outside the home (including online), will be considered by staff, particularly the DSL and Deputy DSLs. Any associated threats or risks will be included in assessments and relevant information included in referrals to Children's Social Care. General indicators of abuse and neglect (from Part 1 of the statutory guidance) are also included in Appendix 7 of this policy and further information 17 about specific forms of abuse are contained within Appendix B of the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

As part of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, staff may hear information, either from the child/young person as part of a disclosure or from another adult, that will be upsetting. Where a member of staff is distressed as a result of dealing with a child protection concern, he/she should in the first instance speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about the support they require. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek to arrange the necessary support.

Support may include:

- Ad hoc supervision
- Formal supervision
- Referral to school counsellor
- Signposting to Education Support (08000562561) or Samaritans (116 123)

Whilst it is important that all staff receive regular training on specific safeguarding topics, it is acknowledged that staff delivering such training can never know the personal circumstances of all attendees and therefore there is always the danger that staff may find the content of such training triggering and or upsetting.

At the beginning of all safeguarding training, staff will be reminded to look after themselves by:

- Sitting with people they are comfortable with
- Stepping out if needed
- Talking to the DSL

## **Supporting parents/carers**

Whether abuse or harm is taking place inside or outside of the family home, or where a child is at risk of abuse or harm in school, parents and carers will be supported by school staff.

The school will:

- Ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
  - Undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers and seek necessary consent prior to involvement of Children & Family Services (Children's Social Care) or 18 another agency, unless to do so would place the child at risk of harm or compromise an investigation. Where reasonable to do so within the limits of their professional responsibilities and duties, school staff will provide parents and carers with information, advice and guidance to help them provide the best support for their child. All parents and carers will have equal access to any support available in school regardless of the nature of any harm or abuse. Support may include:
- Supportive phone calls
  - Home School Visits
  - Education and training
  - Signposting to services

## **Specific Safeguarding Issues:**

### **Children missing from education**

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

### **Child criminal exploitation**

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation

- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

### **Child-on-child abuse**

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the 2.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is 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 nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

## **Domestic abuse**

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others – for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Older children may also experience and/or be the perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. This can include sexual harassment.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This is the procedure where police forces are part of Operation Encompass

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Our school is part of **Operation Encompass**.

- Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales.
- Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.
- Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school about **all** police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day.
- Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputy/ies (DDSLs) have attended either an Operation Encompass briefing or completed the online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other school staff and Governors. All schools staff and Governors can undertake the online training.

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

## **So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

## **FGM**

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM. If a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM they should inform the DSL (or one of the deputies) immediately and they will then follow procedures.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating

- Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues

A girl:

- Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
- Having limited level of integration within UK society
- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fm@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk)

- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

## Preventing radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces
- **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 of terrorism 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.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.



## **Serious violence**

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation).

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

## **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in on the electronic register and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS number, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## **Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will contact parents/carers in the first instance. If the child is usually collected by transport, we will see if parents are able to collect their child and they will wait in school with a member of school staff until they arrive. If parents are unable to collect them, school's own people carrier (or a staff member's car if the correct insurance is in place) and school staff (driver and escort) will take them home. If for any reason a parent is unable to collect their child (due to an emergency) and they have no other means of arranging for someone else to collect their child, then school will again endeavour to support them and take their child home. The incident will be recorded on CPOMS.

## **Missing pupils**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing (absconding) from school, SLT will be immediately informed and staff will be despatched to follow the pupil (by foot or by car). Parents will be informed. Police will be informed if they have not been found within 20 minutes.

### **Birch Wood College**

Students at Birch Wood College, based in MV16, have the option to leave the site at lunch time. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with parents/carers, with the understanding that Birch Wood staff are not responsible for students whilst they are off-site. Students at the college have access cards for the site and are, therefore, able to exit the building. Should students abscond from the college, a five-minute protocol is in place, which dictates that staff will look for the student, call SLT at the school and will then call parents/carers if, after five minutes, that student has not returned.

### **Modern slavery and human trafficking**

Can take on many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Children may be trafficked into the UK from abroad or moved around the country. Staff need to be aware of indicators which include, but not limited to, neglect, isolation, poor living conditions, having few personal belongings and a lack of trust and reluctance to seek help. Staff will refer any concerns to the DSL without delay who will take action and also refer victims to the National Referral Mechanism ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

### **Private fostering arrangements**

Where a child under 16 (or 18 with a disability) is living with someone who is not their family or close relative for 28 days or more, staff inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead so that a referral to Children's Social Care for a safety check, can be made. (A close relative includes step-parent, grandparents, uncle, aunt, sibling).

Complaints or concerns raised by parents or pupils will be taken seriously and followed up in accordance with the school's complaints process.

## **Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies**

### **Complaints against staff**

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3) Whistle-blowing - please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy

### **Record-keeping**

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

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

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child on CPOMS – our electronic secure safeguarding reporting and recording system.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them. Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse will be retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or within
- **The first 5 days** of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

CPOMS was introduced in 2017. Paper records prior to this introduction are stored in a secure filing cabinet in the Bursar's office. Any Safeguarding paper-based information that arrives with new admissions to the school are read by the DSL/DDSLs and a brief summary uploaded to CPOMS. The paper file is then stored securely in the Safeguarding secure filing cabinet. The information is retained until the child leaves school and is then passed onto their next placement once they have started their course or started attending a new school.

## **Recruitment and Selection of Staff**

The school's safer recruitment processes follow the Statutory Guidance: *Keeping children safe in education, Part Three: Safer recruitment*.

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings). Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

The school will provide all the relevant information in references for a member of staff about whom there have been concerns i.e about child protection / inappropriate conduct. Cases in which the conclusion of an allegation has been unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious will not be included in employer

references. A history of repeated safeguarding concerns or allegations which have all been found to be unsubstantiated, malicious etc. will also not be included in a reference.

The school has an open safeguarding ethos regularly addressing safeguarding responsibilities during staff meetings and fostering an ongoing culture of vigilance. All new staff and volunteers receive a safeguarding induction and are briefed on the code of conduct for adults working with children. The Leicestershire County Council induction leaflet is given to all staff and is the basis for the safeguarding induction.

In line with statutory requirements, every recruitment process for school staff will have at least one member (teacher/manager or governor) who has undertaken safer recruitment training either online or by attending the local authority one day Safer Recruitment training course.

Staff and volunteers who provide early years or later years childcare and any managers of such childcare are covered by the disqualification regulations of the Childcare Act 2006 and are required to declare relevant information: statutory guidance: Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (August 2018).

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose. The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years. In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments). They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

### **Other Relevant Policies**

The Governing Body's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond simply child protection. The duty is to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies. The list is not exhaustive but when undertaking development or planning of any kind the school will consider the implications for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- Positive behaviour for Learning Policy (includes Physical Interventions / Restraint (DfE Guidances "Use of Reasonable Force" and "Screening, searching and confiscation")
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Racist incidents
- Anti-Bullying (including Cyberbullying)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Educational Trips and visits
- Work experience and extended work placements
- First aid and the administration of medicines
- Health and Safety
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

- Site Security
- Equal Opportunities
- Toileting/Intimate care
- E-safety
- Extended school activities
- Safer Recruitment Policy

## Appendix 1:

### Types of Abuse

**Abuse**, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- 

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

## **Appendix 2:**

### **PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IN CASES OF POSSIBLE, ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED ABUSE, OR SERIOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD**

#### **General**

The Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures contain the inter-agency processes, protocols and expectations for safeguarding children. (Available on the website [www.lrsb.org.uk](http://www.lrsb.org.uk)). The Designated Safeguarding Lead is expected to be familiar with these, particularly the indicators of abuse and neglect and the referral processes.

1. It is important to act swiftly and avoid delays.
2. Any person may seek advice and guidance from the First Response Children's Duty Professionals Consultation Line, particularly if there is doubt about how to proceed. Any adult, whatever their role, can take action in their own right to ensure that an allegation or concern is investigated and can report to the investigating agencies.
3. A record, dated (including the day and time) and signed must be made as to what has been alleged, noticed and reported, and kept securely and confidentially.
4. In many cases of concern there will be an expectation that there have already been positive steps taken to work with the parents and relevant parties to help alleviate the concerns and effect an improvement for the child. This is appropriate where it is thought a child may be in need in some way, and require assessment to see whether additional support and services are required. An example might be where it is suspected a child may be the subject of neglect. In most cases the parents' knowledge and consent to the referral are expected, unless there is a reason for this not being in the child's best interest. However, there will be circumstances when informing the parent/carer of a referral might put the child at risk and/or undermine Police enquiries, and in individual cases, advice from Children's Social Care will need to be undertaken.

#### **B. Individual Staff/Volunteers/Other Adults – main procedural steps**

When a child makes a disclosure, or when concerns are received from other sources, do not investigate, ask leading questions, examine children, or promise confidentiality. Children making disclosures should be reassured and if possible at this stage should be informed what action will be taken next.

1. As soon as possible make a dated (including the day), timed and signed record of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done and report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school. This can be done in 'Child Protection Online Monitoring System' **CPOMS**, but please notify a DSL as soon as possible in person as you would normally if the matter is recorded in this way.

2. If the concern involves the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer, a visitor, a governor, a trainee or another young person or child, the Headteacher must be informed.
3. If the safeguarding concern or allegation is about the Headteacher, the information should normally be passed to the Chair of Governors or failing that, the Local Authority Allegations Manager (LADO).
4. If this has not already been done, inform the child (or other party who has raised the concern) what action you have taken.

### **C. Designated Safeguarding Lead – main procedural steps**

Begin a case file in CPOMS for each child involved which will hold a record of communications and actions to be stored securely (see Section on Records, Monitoring and Transfer). CPOMS will show a chronology of case activity.

- Where initial enquiries do not justify a referral to the investigating agencies, inform the initiating adult and monitor the situation. If in doubt, seek advice from the First Response Professionals Consultation line.
- Share information confidentially with those who need to know.
- Where there is a child protection concern requiring immediate, same day, intervention from Children's Social Care, the First Response Children's Duty should be contacted by phone (contact the Local Authority Children's Services where the child lives). Written confirmation should be made within 24 hours on the Multi Agency Referral Form to Children's Social Care. All other referrals should be made using the online form (see link <http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport>).
- If the concern is about children using **harmful sexual behaviour**, also refer to the separate guidance. "Guidance for schools working with children who display harmful sexual behaviour" (Leicestershire LA Guidance).
- If it appears that urgent medical attention is required arrange for the child to be taken to hospital (normally this means calling an ambulance) accompanied by a member of staff who must inform medical staff that non-accidental injury is suspected. Parents must be informed that the child has been taken to hospital.
- Exceptional circumstances: If it is feared that the child might be at immediate risk on leaving school, take advice from the First Response Professionals Consultation line (for instance about difficulties if the school day has ended, or on whether to contact the police). Remain with the child until the Social Worker takes responsibility. If in these circumstances a parent arrives to collect the child, the member of staff has no right to withhold the child, unless there are current legal restrictions in force (eg a restraining order). If there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, First Response Children's Duty should be updated and the Police should be contacted immediately.

## **Appendix 3:**

### **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF (INCLUDING HEADTEACHERS), SUPPLY TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS**

These procedures should be followed in all cases in which there is an allegation or suspicion that a person working with children has:

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

There is also a school “Low-level concerns policy” (see Appendix 3) which should be followed if the concern does not meet the allegations threshold above, or is not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO.

Relevant documents:

- DfE “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and schools” (part 4: Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors)

#### **1) Individual Staff/Volunteers/Other Adults who receive the allegation:**

1. Write and sign a dated and timed note of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done.
2. Report immediately to the Headteacher.
3. Pass on the written record.
4. If the allegation concerns or safeguarding concern is about the conduct of the Headteacher, report immediately to the Chair of Governors. Pass on the written record. (If there is difficulty reporting to the Chair of Governors, contact the Allegations Manager (LADO), Safeguarding and Performance Unit as soon as possible.)

#### **2) Headteacher (or Chair of Governors)**

If there is no written record, write and sign a dated and timed note of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done.

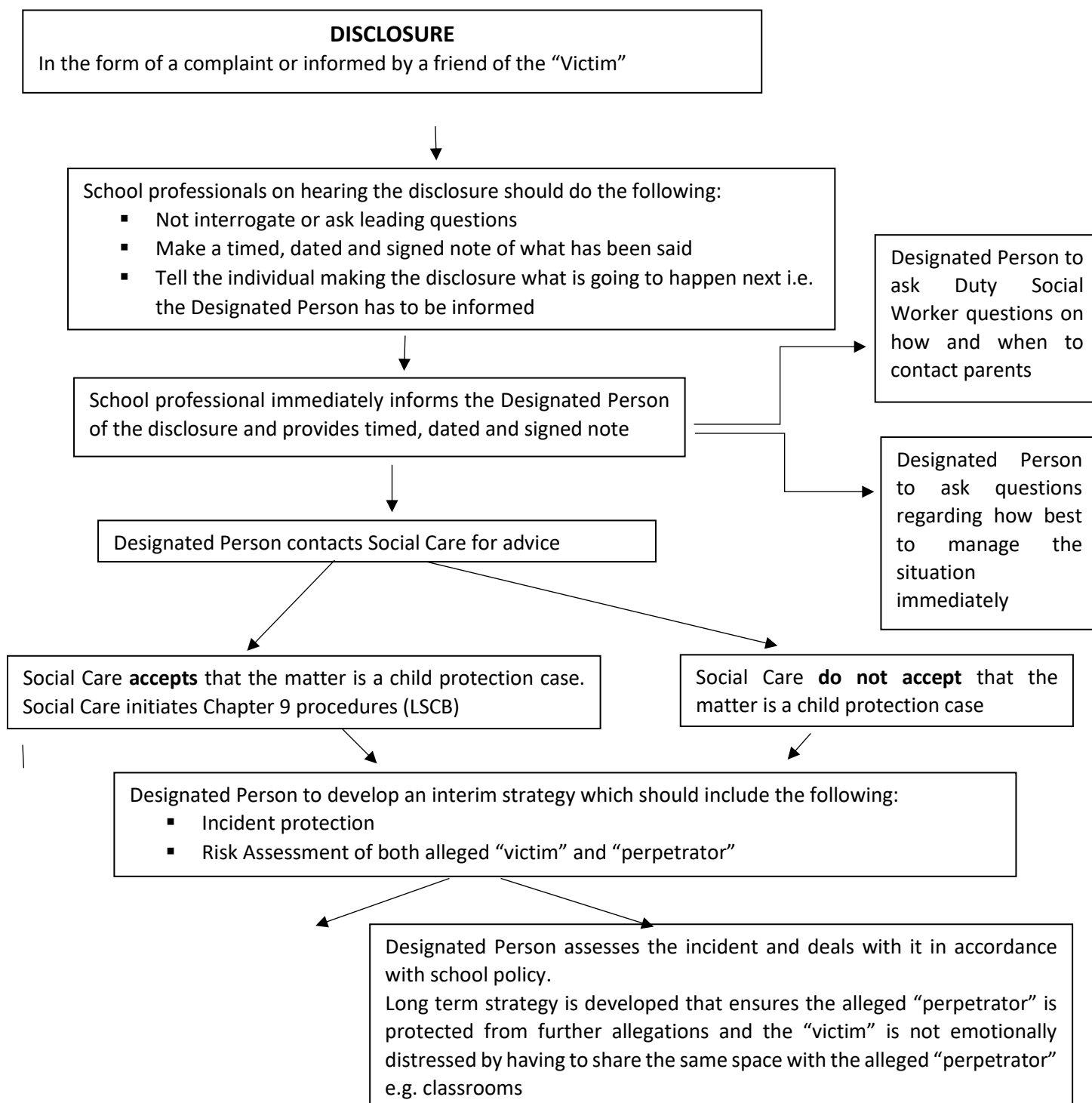
1. Before taking further action notify and seek advice from the Allegations Manager, (LADO) Safeguarding and Performance Unit on the same day.
2. You may be asked to clarify details or the circumstances of the allegation, but this must not amount to an investigation at this stage.
3. Report to First Response Children’s Duty if the Allegations Manager (LADO) so advises or if circumstances require a referral concerning a child.
4. Ongoing involvement in cases:
5. Liaison with the Allegations Manager (LADO)



6. Co-operation with the investigating agency's enquiries as appropriate (including working closely with the employment agency in the case of supply teachers).
7. Consideration of employment issues and possible disciplinary action where the investigating agencies take no further action.
8. Possible referral to the DBS or The Teaching Regulation Agency, depending on the outcome.

#### Appendix 4:

**Flowchart setting out the procedure to be followed where a disclosure has been made or there is suspicion about a child or young person using sexually harmful behaviour**



Designated Person to await  
invitation from Social Care to

**During the course of the investigation if it is found that abuse of a sexual nature has taken place, contact should be made immediately with Social Care**