



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2026 - 2027

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

Date ratified:

Review:

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This policy should be read in conjunction with KCSIE 2026

[Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)

Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Karen Halford Yolandi Ratcliff	0114 250 7394 (see appendix D)
Deputy DSD	Georgia Lowe Fran Whittaker Steph Barker Nick Dove-Thomas Jacob Messer Rachel Boot	0114 250 7394 talbotwellbeingteam@talbot.sheffield.sch.uk post16wellbeingteam@talbot.sheffield.sch.uk (see appendix D)
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	All referrals via a form lado_referral_form_-_revised_april_26_v2.docx	0114 273 4855 (option 3) LADO@sheffield.gov.uk
Chair of Governors		(see appendix D)
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Our Commitment

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

Talbot School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

1.2 Child-Centred Approach

All safeguarding decisions will be made with the child's welfare as the paramount consideration.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Governors
- Employees
- Supply staff
- Volunteers
- Students on placement
- Contractors
- Visitors

2. Legislative Framework

Talbot School follows procedures and multi-agency arrangements established by Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership.

This policy is based on:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2024
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Prevent Duty Guidance

(Full references - Appendix A)

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

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. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

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.

4. Equality, Inclusion and Additional Vulnerabilities

Talbot School recognises that many students have complex SEND, communication needs, health needs and social vulnerabilities. Staff understand that safeguarding concerns may present differently in children with SEND, and that barriers to communication may make disclosure more difficult. Staff therefore maintain a culture of curiosity, vigilance and early intervention.

Talbot recognises that some students face additional safeguarding barriers.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- Students with SEND
- Students with communication and interaction needs
- Children Looked After
- Students with social workers
- Students experiencing mental health difficulties
- Young carers
- Students vulnerable to exploitation
- Students experiencing domestic abuse

As a specialist setting, staff recognise that changes in presentation, behaviour, communication or emotional wellbeing may indicate unmet safeguarding needs

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

Responsible for:

- Ensuring statutory compliance
- Monitoring safeguarding effectiveness
- Appointing a safeguarding governor
- Ensuring appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements
- Ensuring safer recruitment arrangements

5.2 Headteacher

Responsible for:

- Safeguarding culture
- Staff training
- Safer recruitment
- Managing allegations against staff
- Resources and staffing

5.3 Wellbeing Team

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Deputies are responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Identifying safeguarding concerns and making appropriate referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police and other agencies where necessary.
- Providing advice, guidance and support to staff regarding safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Maintaining detailed, accurate, secure and confidential safeguarding records, including decisions made and actions taken.
- Reviewing concerns promptly and determining appropriate next steps.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Attending, contributing to and coordinating child protection conferences, core groups and multi-agency meetings.
- Keeping the Headteacher informed of significant safeguarding concerns and developments.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, updates and briefing information.
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of local and national safeguarding guidance and procedures.
- Leading and overseeing online safety, including the annual review of filtering and monitoring systems.
- Reporting safeguarding activity, training updates and emerging issues to governors.
- Reviewing and updating the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy annually.
- Promoting a culture of vigilance, professional curiosity and early intervention across the school.

5.5 All Staff

All staff will:

- Read KCSIE Part 1
- Undertake safeguarding training
- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain professional curiosity
- Support a culture of vigilance

6. Early Help and Family Help

Talbot recognises the importance of early intervention.

Where concerns emerge, staff will work with:

- Families
- Health professionals
- Social care

- Sheffield Family Help services

The aim is to prevent escalation and improve outcomes for children.

7. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If a child is at immediate risk: Contact Children's Social Care and/or Police immediately.

Concerns must be reported verbally to the DSL/DSD immediately and then recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible.

Staff should never assume another person has reported a concern.

Mainsite:

If you are on the main school site then safeguarding concerns should be reported verbally face to face to the DSL or a DSD. If you are unable to locate them you **MUST** ask admin to help locate (admin will access support from other members of the Senior Leadership Team to locate the DSL or DSDs).

Post 16 Sites:

If you are at any one of our Post 16 sites, then Steph Barker is the Designated Safeguarding Deputy and as she moves between sites, if you have a concern, then you need to contact her by phone.

Tel 0114 2507394 Ext 2502.

If you are not able to contact her then call the DSL or DSD's on the main site.

Tel 0114 2507394 Ext 2080 / 2081 / 2086 / 2087

8. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Staff will:

- Follow Information Sharing Guidance.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Record reasons for information-sharing decisions.

The welfare of the child will always take precedence.

9. Attendance and Children Missing Education

The school recognises that poor attendance, persistent absence and missing education may be indicators of safeguarding risk.

Attendance concerns will be monitored jointly by:

- Wellbeing Team

- Admin Team
- Assistant Headteachers

Attendance concerns will be reviewed regularly and referrals made to appropriate services where safeguarding concerns are identified.

[See Attendance Policy](#)

10. Online Safety

Online safety is a safeguarding issue.

Talbot will:

- Teach online safety through the curriculum.
- Maintain effective filtering systems.
- Maintain effective monitoring systems.
- Deliver staff cyber-security training.
- Respond quickly to online safeguarding concerns.

This includes risks relating to:

- Exploitation
- Extremism
- Harmful content
- Social media
- Artificial intelligence (AI)

The Governing Body ensures appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and reviewed annually. The DSL works alongside school leaders, governors and IT support providers to monitor effectiveness.

11. Child-on-Child Abuse

Talbot has a zero-tolerance approach to:

- Sexual violence
- Sexual harassment
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Online abuse
- Bullying
- Prejudice-based incidents

All allegations will be taken seriously, recorded and investigated appropriately.

12. Mental Health

All staff understand that mental health concerns may indicate a safeguarding need.

Where safeguarding and mental health concerns overlap:

- DSL involvement will be immediate.
- Appropriate support plans will be established.
- External agencies will be involved where necessary.

13. Safer Recruitment

Talbot will operate robust safer recruitment procedures.

This includes:

- Enhanced DBS checks
- Identity verification
- Employment history checks
- Qualification checks
- Online searches where appropriate
- Single Central Record maintenance

Detailed procedures are contained in Appendix B.

14. Allegations Against Staff and Low-Level Concerns

Talbot will:

- Manage allegations in accordance with KCSIE and Sheffield procedures.
- Encourage reporting of low-level concerns.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Work with the LADO where necessary.

Detailed procedures are contained in Appendix C, see also Appendix J and Appendix K.

15. Record Keeping

Talbot uses CPOMS to maintain safeguarding records.

Records will:

- Be factual and contemporaneous.

- Be stored securely.
- Be transferred securely when students move settings.
- Be retained in line with statutory requirements.

Where previous settings have not used CPOMS, there may be paper files that are shared with us. These are kept securely so we can reference when needed. We may also need to refer to historical IRIS records.

16. Training

All staff will receive:

- Induction safeguarding training
- Annual safeguarding updates
- KCSIE updates
- Online safety training
- Prevent training

DSLs will undertake advanced safeguarding training and maintain ongoing professional development.

17. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The DSL and Governing Body will monitor:

- Referrals
- Training compliance
- Attendance concerns
- CPOMS records
- Filtering and monitoring systems
- Safeguarding audits

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix A - Legislation

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), and the [Maintained schools governance guide](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local **safeguarding partners** (see section 3).

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 students
- [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 have completed safer recruitment training
- 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 age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their students with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting a specific group of students (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. 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 student outcomes. Some students may be more at risk of harm from issues such as: sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination

Appendix B – Safer Recruitment Procedures

The recruitment steps outlined below are based on Part 3 [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)

Pre-Employment Checks (Mandatory)

Leaders ensure that the following checks are **completed before any individual starts work**:

- Enhanced DBS (including barred list where applicable)
- Identity verification
- Right to work in the UK
- Qualifications (where relevant)
- Full employment history and explanation of gaps
- Minimum of two references, scrutinised and verified
- Prohibition from teaching check (where applicable)
- Section 128 check (where applicable)

These checks must be **evidenced, recorded, and quality assured**.

Conditional Employment

All offers of employment are:

- Conditional upon satisfactory checks
- Subject to verification of all information

Employment continues to be conditional on adherence to school policies and procedures

Agency and Supply Staff

Leaders ensure:

- **Written confirmation** is obtained from agencies that all checks are complete
- Identity is verified on arrival
- Agency staff are recorded on the SCR

The school retains **full responsibility for ensuring suitability**, and must not rely solely on agency assurances without scrutiny.

Temporary, Casual, Zero-Hours Staff and Volunteers

Leaders ensure that:

- These staff undergo **the same level of vetting as permanent staff**

- There are **no informal or unmanaged starts**, even in emergency situations
- Previous familiarity with the school does not replace formal checks
- Volunteers are checked in accordance with statutory guidance

Temp-to-Perm Staff

Leaders ensure:

- Checks are **reviewed and re-verified** where appropriate
- References are obtained and scrutinised
- SCR reflects the individual's current employment status

Long-term or repeat engagement does not reduce the need for **robust recruitment scrutiny**.

See Safer Recruitment Policy

Appendix C – Managing Allegations and Low Level Concerns

Any allegation or disclosure involving a member of staff, a child's foster carer, supply teacher, external professional or a volunteer at Talbot School **must** be reported directly to the Head Teacher. If the Headteacher is not available, then those concerns can be reported to either of the Deputy Headteachers. If the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported directly to the Chair of the Governing Body.

This includes the sharing and reporting of any 'low level' concerns. The term low-level concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at KCSIE (2026).

A low-level concern is any concern no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt- that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and - does not meet the allegations of harm threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating students
- Not following Positive Handling Plans or Care Plans
- Speaking disrespectfully to other staff, particularly in front of students
- Sharing personal contact details with students or families
- Communicating with students through personal devices or accounts
- Inappropriate use of social media involving students
- Failure to follow agreed safeguarding procedures

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. Concerns should be reported to the headteacher (or Chair of Governors if it is about the headteacher).

We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

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

During the review process, the Headteacher may seek advice and guidance from the school's Human Resources provider and / or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where appropriate, in order to determine whether the concern remains a low-level concern or whether it meets the threshold for formal allegations procedures. Any advice received and actions taken will be recorded and retained securely

These will be kept by the Headteacher and should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Appendix D – Talbot Safeguarding Team Directory

How our Setting Safeguards Students

We understand that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and fully endorse the core principles of safeguarding:

- Protecting children from maltreatment (***A child is anyone under 18 years old***)
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

We are child-centered and we will always promote students' health, well-being, personal and emotional development.

We create a safe, inclusive learning culture where students:

- Are respected and protected from bullying and discrimination.
- Can talk and express views, be listened to and get feedback.
- Have their needs met and fulfil their potential?
- Know how to get help.
- Know when discussion is confidential.
- Learn about online-safety, bullying, healthy relationships, abuse, neglect, exploitation

We work in partnership with parents and carers by offering:

- Open, honest, and respectful relationships
- Comfort and privacy to talk and get advice.
- Involvement and inclusion at all stages of student's education and care
- Understanding of culture and diversity
- Clear explanations and use of professional interpreters
- Up-to-date emergency contact details
- Information about our complaints procedure
- Support and signposting to adult services if vulnerable

We promote early help and support by:

- Prompt identification and assessment of additional needs of all students and their family
- Putting ongoing support in place, with a clear planning and review cycle
- Sharing information appropriately with students, families and agencies
- Preventing concerns from escalating

We store and share information securely by:

- Following legislation and guidance
- Having appropriate IT filters and monitoring systems in place
- Explaining how, what, where and when information is shared.
- Maintaining detailed, accurate and secure written records of discussions, decisions and actions, and sharing appropriately

Our Safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Available publicly for students, families, staff
- Following National and SCSP guidance and arrangements (e.g. [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#))
- Include staff/pupil behaviour and relationships, and online communications.
- Updated annually

We have a coordinated approach to concerns:

- There is quick staff response to inform DSL/DSD about student concerns.
- There are timely referrals to Children's Social Care and Police where risk of significant harm exists.
- We work with all agencies to support students and families through multi-agency meetings e.g., child protection conferences, plans and actions

We have safe recruitment and management practices by ensuring that:

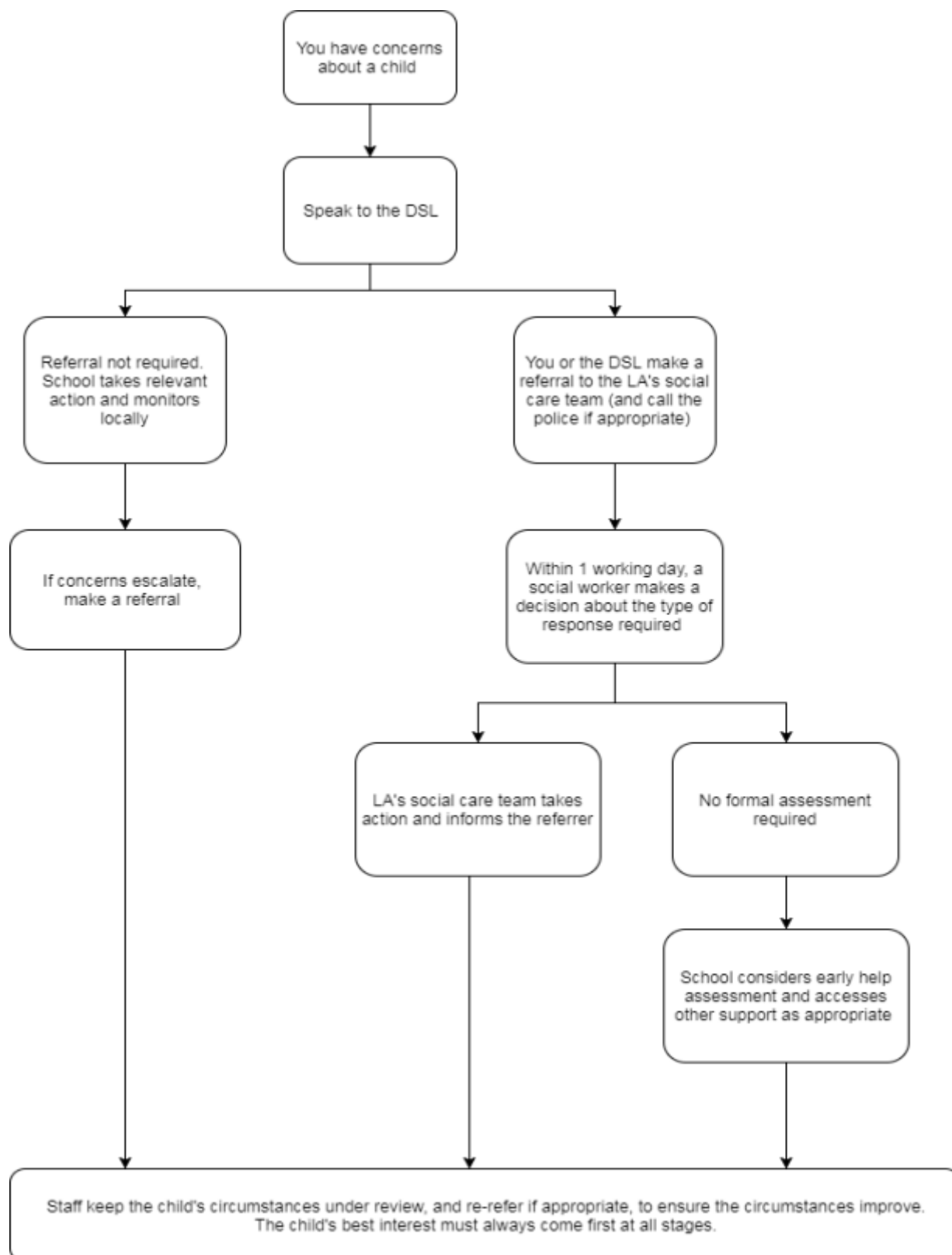
- Unsuitable people do not work with children.
- There is a positive, open culture and environment.
- Whistleblowing process for staff concerns about organisational practice are in place.
- All allegations of abuse by staff, carers or volunteers are reported using the correct procedures

Our trained volunteers, staff and leaders have:

- Clear safeguarding roles and responsibilities
- On-site safeguarding induction and refreshers
- High quality SCSP basic and advanced staff training
- Regular DSL/D staff safeguarding updates of skills and knowledge

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Karen Halford Office behind main reception 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2043) 	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Yolandi Ratcliff Office downstairs next to the Medical Room 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2080) 
Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Fran Whittaker Office downstairs next to the Medical Room 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2086) 	Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Georgia Lowe Office downstairs next to the Medical Room 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2081) 
Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Nick Dove-Thomas Office downstairs next to the Medical Room 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2087) 	Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Rachel Boot Office downstairs next to the Medical Room 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2081) 
Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Steph Barker Office Peaks College 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2502) 	Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Jacob Messer Office – New Bridge 0114 250 7394 (2211) 
Chair of Governors:	Special Educational Needs Coordinator: Karen Halford Office behind main reception 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2043) 
Safeguarding Governor:	Headteacher: Heather Partington Office behind main reception 0114 250 7394 (ext. 2040) 

Appendix E – Reporting Concerns Flowchart



Appendix F – Family Help and Sheffield Referral Pathways

[How to access help and support for your family | Sheffield City Council](#)

[Children and Families | Sheffield](#)

Appendix G – Specific Safeguarding Concerns

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.

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

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery, and further information is available in the [Modern Slavery statutory guidance](#). In accordance with this guidance, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

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. It may involve an 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 (CSE)

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. It may involve an 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.

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. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

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.

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

Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation 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.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the DSL or DSD. As appropriate, the DSL / DSD will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care.

Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers that requires a different approach (see below). FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school DSL / DSD and involve local authority children’s social care as appropriate.

The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over.

In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

Further information can be found in the [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - GOV.UK](#) and the [Female genital mutilation: resource pack - GOV.UK](#)

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/student 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 student 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.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

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 student is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the student about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the student 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 fmfu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

- Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
- Undermine, overturn or replace the UK’s system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points

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 becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. The DSL, or designated Prevent lead, will undertake in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies. They'll 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 from becoming involved with or supporting 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 students 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 radicalisation into terrorism. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in students' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and the [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a student 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 social media
- 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 student, 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.

The Prevent duty

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

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

The school DSL / DSD should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Channel

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

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

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#) and [Channel training from the Home Office](#).

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 (see above))

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 student being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

Children who are absent from education

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

[See Attendance Policy](#)

Appendix H - Child on Child Abuse and Sexual Violence

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 two.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are 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.

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.

Appendix I - On-line Safety and AI

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate students and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

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

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

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

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

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL / DSD and any parental engagement.

Guidance to support schools and colleges to understand safety considerations and legal responsibilities if they choose to use Generative AI (either teacher-facing or student-facing) can be found at [Generative artificial intelligence in education](#).

To complement this, the department, in partnership with the Chiltern Learning Trust and Chartered College of Teaching, have published [online resources](#) to help school and college staff to use AI safely and effectively. Module 3 provides important information on identifying and mitigating key risks associated with safeguarding, ethics, data protection, and intellectual property.

See also:

[Mobile Phone Policy](#)

[On-line Safety Policy](#)

Low Level Concern Form

This form can be used to share any concern with the Headteacher, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Schools' Code of Conduct [including inappropriate conduct outside of work] and/or in a way that on first glance does not appear to meet the allegation, 'harm' threshold.

A concise record is required, including brief context in which the low level concern arose, plus details which are chronological, precise and as accurate as possible, of any such concern and /or relevant incident[s]. [Continue on separate sheets as necessary]. The form should be signed, timed and dated.

Details of CONCERN:

Name of Staff member:

Department/Role:

Name of referrer:

Signed:

Time and Date:

Received by:

At [time]:

Date:

WAS THE STAFF MEMBER SPOKEN TO? [Good practice will require a response].

NO ☐ - Give a brief but valid reason/explanation for not;

YES ☐ - STAFF MEMBER'S RESPONSE TO CONCERN:

ACTION TAKEN:

Was advice/guidance sought from the LADO/Human Resources? Yes ☐ No ☐

ADVICE GIVEN:

Signed :

Dated :

This record form will be held securely, either digitally or in paper form, in one central file in accordance with the School's Code of Conduct and any associated guidance regarding the management of concerns and or allegations and in accordance with School's Data Management practices/policies.

Low Level Concern reporting will be treated as confidential as far as possible, however in certain circumstances it may be necessary to share and or disclose the information with third parties for relevant and necessary reasons. This includes where a reporter has indicated they wish to remain anonymous.

Appendix K – Low Level Concern Reporting Pathway

