THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

Shaping Positive Futures

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The Consortium Academy Trust (TCAT)
An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee
Company Number 07665828

Status:	Live
Policy Owner (position)	Trust DSL
Statutory / Recommended	Statutory
Date Adopted	October 2018
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Linked Documents and Policies	**Legislation** • Children Act 1989 • Sexual Offences Act 2003 • Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by the Serious Crime Act 2015) • Children Act 2004 • Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 • Apprenticeships, Children and Learning Act 2009 • Equality Act 2010 • The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) • Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 • The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) • Data Protection Act 2018 • The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (Primary Phase) • Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 • Domestic Abuse Act 2021 • Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 **Statutory guidance.** • DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty' • DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' • DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006' • DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026' • HM Government (2020) 'multi-agency statutory guidance on

	female genital mutilation' • HM Government (2021) 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism'. • Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2023) 'Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage' **Non-statutory guidance.** • DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. • DfE (2017) 'Child sexual exploitation' • DfE (2024) 'Information sharing' • DfE (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' • DfE (2021) 'Teachers' Standards' • DfE (2024) 'Recruit teachers from overseas' • DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance' • DfE (2024) 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges' • Department of Health and Social Care (2024) 'Virginity testing and hymenoplasty: multi-agency guidance' **This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies/documents:** Children Absent from Education Policy Child on Child Abuse Policy Health and Safety Policy Behaviour Policy Alternative Provision Policy Anti-Bullying Policy E-Safety Policy Disciplinary Policy Safer Recruitment Policy/Procedure Staff Code of Conduct Whistleblowing Procedure Educational Visits Policy Equal Opportunities Policy Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy SEND Policy Low Level Concerns Policy Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy Safeguarding Report to Governors Suspension and Exclusion Policy Online Safety Policy Records Management Policy Looked After Children Policy Child Sexual Exploitation Policy Searching Screening and Confiscation Policy

**NB – This document can only be considered valid when viewed on The Consortium Academy Trust website. If the copy is printed or downloaded and saved elsewhere the Policy date should be cross referenced to ensure the current document is referenced*

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Advice and Contact List

Role / Agency	Name & Role	Contact Details
School Designated Safeguarding Lead		
Deputy DSL		
Designated Safeguarding Governor		
Chair of Governors		
Looked After Children Designated Teacher		
E-Safety Coordinator		
Trust DSL	David Waterson	01482 469838
Linked Trust Board Member	Sharon Milner	01482 469838
Safeguarding and Partnership Hub		
Children's Emergency Duty Team		
Early Help Locality Hub		
Local ER Children Safeguarding Team		
Safeguarding in Education Team Manager		
LADO		
Humberside Police	ER Protecting Vulnerable People Unit	01482 220809
Humberside Police	Hate Crime / incident reporting	101 https://www.reportingcrime.uk/HPhatecrime/
Local Authority Safeguarding Children Partnership		
Hull **North Yorks** **North Lincs** **North East Lincs**	Children's Social Care	01482 448879 EDT 01482 300304 01609 780780 EDT 01609 780780 01724 296500 EDT 01724 296500 01472 326292 EDT 01472 326292
Prevent Referral	Humberside Police ERY LA	101 / prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk prevent@eastriding.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Education Act 2002, sections 157 and 175, which were implemented in June 2004, as well as the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidelines issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2026.

Furthermore, this policy aligns with the Child Protection Procedures of the relevant Safeguarding Partnerships and follows DfE guidance. We will adhere to the Local Interagency Procedures established by both Hull Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP) and East Riding Safeguarding Children's Partnership (ERSCP).

Applicable to all adults working within or on behalf of the school or Trust, including supply staff and volunteers, this policy aims to ensure a safe environment for children and young people to learn in educational settings. Additionally, it strives to identify those who may be experiencing or at risk of significant harm and take appropriate action to ensure their safety both at home and within the educational setting.

2. COMMITMENT OF THE CONSORTIUM ACADEMY TRUST

At the Consortium Academy Trust, we prioritise the safety and well-being of all children. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as abuse can occur in any organisation.

To ensure this commitment, our Trust will:
- Establish and maintain a secure environment where children feel comfortable to express themselves and are listened to.
- Inform children about the trusted adults in school whom they can approach if they have concerns or difficulties. We have well-established safeguarding procedures that are widely publicised.
- Integrate teaching and learning activities across the curriculum that equip children with skills and knowledge to stay safe from abuse. This includes fostering resilience and awareness of potential grooming techniques, extremist ideas, online dangers, and inappropriate behaviour.
- Address all forms of unpleasantness and harassment promptly at an appropriate level. This includes child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, hate incidents, online bullying, and abusive behaviour.
- Educate both children and staff about sexual violence and harassment to create a school environment where such behaviours are not tolerated.
- Foster effective working relationships with parents as well as colleagues from other agencies.
- Provide staff with clear guidance on when to make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when there are concerns of neglect or harm. Staff will also have access to additional advice and support for various safeguarding issues such as child exploitation or radicalisation.
- Follow safe recruitment procedures including thorough checks on new staff members or volunteers who will work closely with children.
- Ensure that staff understand their roles in responding appropriately to concerns they may encounter during their work. They must maintain professional conduct both within school premises and outside.

Furthermore:
• The Trust Board takes full responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding policies are in place across all schools within our Trust
• The Headteacher works closely with Local Governing Boards ensuring effective implementation of these policies
• All staff members receive regular training on safeguarding and child protection
• The Trust maintains partnerships with various agencies including the Local Authority, Social Care, Police, Health services, Childline, NSPCC, etc.
• The Trust complies with data protection regulations and shares information as necessary to ensure the safety of children.

Through collaboration and a proactive approach to safeguarding, we are dedicated to shaping positive futures for all our children.

3. PREVENTION

3.1 Safer Recruitment and Selection

The Trust fully adheres to Statutory Guidance KCSIE 2026 when it comes to recruitment procedures. This includes advertising positions appropriately, conducting thorough checks on candidates including online checks, relevant overseas checks and employment history verification. DBS checks are carried out for all staff members involved in regulated activities or having regular contact with children. The Single Central Record is maintained in accordance with statutory guidance.

The Headteacher and at least one Governor complete appropriate Safer Recruitment training every three years. All appointment panels include at least one member who has completed this training recently.

Staff members covered by the "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006" guidance understand their obligation to disclose relevant matters that might affect their suitability for working with children. The Headteacher seeks advice from the Trust HR service if such disclosures are made.

Written assurances regarding safeguarding procedures are obtained from organisations providing services or activities on behalf of the school.

For alternative provision placements or work experience placements organised by the school, appropriate checks are conducted to ensure that providers meet safeguarding requirements.

3.2 Safe Practice

All staff undergo Child Safeguarding training regularly throughout the year. Annual Safeguarding training is provided for both Staff and Governors as well as online Prevent and Online Safety Training every two years.

The Trust's Staff Code of Conduct outlines acceptable behaviour towards children while emphasising professionalism and transparency in working practices.

Safe working practices include:
- Taking personal responsibility for actions and avoiding any conduct that may give rise to suspicion.
- Working openly and transparently.
- Reporting incidents or decisions related to a child promptly.
- Applying consistent professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Understanding that breaches of the law or professional guidelines may result in disciplinary or legal action.

3.3 Partnerships with Others

The Trust recognises the importance of working closely with other agencies for effective safeguarding. This includes collaboration with the Local Authority, Social Care, Barnardo's, Police, Health services, Childline, NSPCC, Surestart, etc.

Sharing information regarding child welfare is essential for identifying and addressing all forms of abuse. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent this sharing if it is done in the interest of child safety.

3.4 School Training and Staff Induction

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at each school completes Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Lead Training provided by the Local Authority. Other staff members responsible for child protection also complete Advanced Child Protection and Safeguarding online training.

All staff members receive regular Child Safeguarding training to ensure they are equipped to identify concerns and respond appropriately. Prevent training is also provided along with specific guidance on sexual violence prevention. Staff will also undertake safeguarding training, including online safety training (which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring and the use of artificial intelligence, such as deepfakes).), during their induction – this will be regularly updated. The training schedule can be found on the following page.

Staff induction includes comprehensive information on safeguarding policies along with copies of relevant documents such as the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Trustee board members receive appropriate training to ensure effective oversight of safeguarding policies and procedures.

Mandatory Annual Training 2026-27

The below mandatory annual training is applicable for all colleagues. Please note, there may also be role specific training that is required to be refreshed annually which line managers will oversee and arrange separately.

The below training which is via the Virtual College will be added to all colleagues watchlists via the People Services Team prior to September. Operations Managers are responsible for monitoring completion of training, liaising with Headteachers and DSLs. The Headteacher may decide to bring forward training scheduled for the Spring and Summer Term.

Mandatory Annual Refresher Training for all colleagues					
When	**Training Title**	**Delivery Method**	**Provider / Led by**	**CPD Hours**	**Total CPD Hours**
September Training Day	Safeguarding Update	Face-to-Face	DSL	25 mins	2 hrs 10 mins
	Health and Safety Update	Face-to-Face	Facilities Team	15 mins	
September *Time will either be allocated on the training days or suitable time arranged by line managers – completion must be by end of September*	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding / Annual Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for DSLs	Online	Virtual College	90 mins	
	Policies to be read and understood: • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – Staff Section • Trust Safeguarding Policy • Trust Whistle-Blowing Policy • Trust Code of Conduct	Online	Virtual College	60 mins	
Spring Term	Certificate in Data Protection and GDPR	Online	Virtual College	25 mins	. 2 hrs 5 mins
	Annual Certificate in Cyber Security for Staff / Annual Certificate in Cyber Security for Leaders	Online	TBC	30 mins	
	Safeguarding Update / Mid-Year Low Threat Quiz	Face-to-Face	DSL	25 mins	
	Prevent Training	Online	Gov.uk	45 mins	
Summer Term	Online Sexual Harassment Training	Online	Virtual College	30 mins	30 mins

Mandatory Annual Refresher Training for 'harder to reach' colleagues (lunchtime supervisors, cleaners)					
When	**Training Title**	**Delivery Method**	**Provider / Led by**	**CPD Hours**	**Total CPD Hours**
Autumn Term	Safeguarding Update	Face-to-Face	DSL	25 mins	1 hr 40 mins
	Health and Safety Update	Face-to-Face	Facilities Team	15 mins	
	Policies to be read and understood: • Keeping Children Safe in Education – Staff Section • Trust Safeguarding Policy • Trust Whistle-Blowing Policy • Trust Code of Conduct	Online / Paper copies	Line Manager / Virtual College	1 hour	
Spring Term	Safeguarding Update	Face-to-face	DSL	25 mins	40 mins
	Health and Safety Update	Face-to-Face	Facilities Team	15 mins	
Summer Term	Safeguarding Update	Face-to-Face	DSL	25 mins	40 mins
	Health and Safety Update	Face-to-Face	Facilities Team	15 mins	

Mandatory Induction Training 2026-27

The below mandatory induction training is applicable for all new colleagues to the Trust. Please note, there will also be role specific training that is required which line managers will oversee and arrange separately.

All new colleagues will be set up on Virtual College by the People Services Team with the below courses added to each colleague's dashboard watchlist. Operations Managers will monitor completion and liaise with Headteachers and DSLs.

Mandatory Induction Training for New Starters							
When	**Training Title**	**Delivery Method**	**Provider / Led by**	**CPD Hours**	**Autumn Term**	**Spring Term**	**Summer Term**
Within first week	Policies to be read and understood: • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – Staff Section • Trust Safeguarding Policy • Trust Whistle-Blowing Policy • Trust Code of Conduct	Online	Virtual College	60 mins	✓	✓	✓
	Safeguarding Update, including CPOMs if applicable	Face-to-Face	DSL	25 mins	✓ *	✓	✓
	Health and Safety Update	Face-to-Face	Facilities Team	25 mins	✓ *	✓	✓
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding	Online	Virtual College	90 mins	✓	✓	✓
Within 2 weeks	Prevent Training	Online	Gov.uk	45 mins	X	✓	✓
	Annual Certificate in Cyber Security	Online	TBC	30 mins	X	✓	DSL to cover in Safeguarding briefing
	Sexual Harassment Training	Online	Virtual College	30 mins	X	X	✓

**If attended training day update then a further update is not required*

3.5 Support, Advice, and Guidance for Staff
Designated Safeguarding Leads provide ongoing support and guidance to staff members when necessary. The Headteacher also supports this role within the school community. Additional advice is available from local Social Work Teams and Police services when required.

3.6 Safe Online Practices
Staff members receive online safety training during their induction period at the school which covers various aspects including safe use of technology resources, responsible online behaviour, and protection against potential harm from online content. The DSL takes the lead role in overseeing and managing online safety.

The school recognises the evolving nature of online risk, including:
- AI-generated content and manipulated images
- Harmful influencer content
- Exposure to misogynistic or extremist ideologies

The school will ensure that appropriate filtering systems are in place on school devices and school networks to prevent children accessing inappropriate material, in accordance with the school's Cyber-security Policy. The school will, however, ensure that the use of filtering and monitoring systems does not cause "over blocking", which may lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught online. The school will also ensure that it meets the filtering and monitoring standards published by the DfE.

Staff will be aware of the filtering and monitoring systems in place and will know how to escalate concerns where they are identified. Staff will be made aware of their expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems during their induction.

Further information regarding the school's approach to online safety can be found in the Online Safety Policy.

The curriculum incorporates lessons on safeguarding issues including online safety.

3.7 Related Policies
Safeguarding extends beyond child protection to include various aspects such as health and safety, bullying prevention, provision of medical needs, first aid, school security, substance misuse, etc. Other related policies include Health and Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, E-Safety Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Recruitment Policy/Procedure, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Procedure, Educational Visits Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy, SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Alternative Provision Policy and Restrictive Physical Intervention policy.

3.8 Student Information / Record Keeping and Transferring / Retaining Records
Keeping timely, detailed, accurate, and accessible records is crucial to effectively protect children. Throughout this process, we will adhere to the Information Sharing guidance and GDPR (2018).

All staff members are aware of the importance of promptly recording and reporting any concerns regarding a child or children within our school to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, the staff member will consult with the DSL before completing CPOMS. Reporting urgent concerns should always take priority. If staff members are unsure about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL while following the principle "IF IN DOUBT, SHARE".

The DSL is responsible for maintaining these records and determining when they should be shared or transferred to other agencies or schools in consultation with the Headteacher or appropriate Senior Manager. Child protection records will be kept confidentially and securely stored separately from all other records related to the child. Only authorised individuals such as DSLs, Headteachers, and relevant Senior or Pastoral Staff have access to these files.

If necessary and appropriate under current information sharing guidance and GDPR (2018), this information may be shared with other agencies or used as evidence by them. Only verified factual information is recorded as such. Any information reported by external individuals is clearly indicated.

Parents can request access to their child's file through a Data Subject Access Request. In case such a request is made, schools will seek legal or safeguarding advice from the Trust to ensure that only relevant information is disclosed based on circumstances while redacting any third-party information.

On a case-by-case basis, the DSL will decide what information needs to be shared within school with whom and when. Confidentiality is essential; however, effective support can only be provided if staff working with children are aware of concerns or at least that individual children are being monitored.

Child Protection records undergo regular reviews using the RASHEN (Review, Attendance, School, Home, Emotional need and Next steps) system to determine if any action, advice, or updating is required.

All child protection records will be transferred to the child's subsequent school in accordance with data protection legislation. These files will be sent confidentially and separately from the main file within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of a new term. The new DSL will receive these files securely, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

Records are sent electronically through CPOMS. If there are any paper records, they should ideally be handed separately marked as 'Private & Confidential for the attention of the DSL' when transferring to another school. If sending by post, records should (1) be sealed in an envelope and marked as above and (2) sealed in an addressed envelope before sending by recorded delivery.

In addition to transferring the child protection file, the DSL may also consider sharing relevant information with the DSL at a new school or college prior to a child leaving. This information would enable continuity of support at their new educational setting.

If our school receives child protection files from another setting, key staff members like Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) or named individuals overseeing SEND will be informed about any pertinent information as necessary.

When a child joins our school without any received child protection files, we proactively seek confirmation from their previous setting regarding existing child protections and whether those files have been sent.

The current early years, education, or skills setting is considered as "Custodian of Records." These records should be retained by that setting until the person reaches 18 years old and up until their 25th birthday before being destroyed at earliest convenience.

The CPOMS workflow is located on the following page.

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CPOMS - Workflow

CPOMS is for recording safeguarding and child protection logs/incidents only. **CPOMS is not a communication tool**. You must speak face to face or over the phone with a member of the Safeguarding Team if you are logging a Child Protection log/incident.

Recording logs/incident on CPOMS

Record the log/incident in a factual and professional manner. Where appropriate the child's viewpoint must be recorded. Send the record to the Safeguarding Team. You must not assume concerns have been addressed; you are responsible for following up and, where appropriate, challenge decisions to safeguard children.

The log/incident is with the Safeguarding Team

- The Safeguarding Team will categorise the log/incident and add relevant actions.
- For higher level Child Protection cases the team will assign the '**Safeguarding Monitoring**' tab.
- For low level concerns the team will assign a school specific tab. For example: '**Year 8 Monitoring**'.

Review

All children with the 'Safeguarding Monitoring' tab will be reviewed fortnightly by the wider Safeguarding Team.

Children under the following categories will be subject to the RASHEN (Review, Attendance, School, Home, Emotional Needs and Next Steps): **Child on Child Abuse;** self injury; prevent. **Sexual Harassment:** Bullying and Exploitation. The 'Safeguarding' tab will only be removed once the RASHEN process has been completed. RASHENs should never be completed by individuals.

Gatekeeping

The Headteacher will convene regular (2/3 weekly) gatekeeping meetings with the school DSL.

3.9 Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL):

The full responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are outlined in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 . The school will ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to provide cover for the DSL role at all times, including during out-of-hours activities and school holidays where safeguarding provision is required.

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has overall responsibility for overseeing safeguarding and child protection systems, including online safety. The DSL or another trained senior staff member will be available on-site during school hours to coordinate and advise staff on urgent Child Protection matters. The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

Although some responsibilities may be delegated to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leader (DDSL) or within pastoral structures, the DSL retains ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

Key responsibilities include:
- Providing advice, support, and information to staff as needed.
- Overseeing safeguarding training for staff and sharing relevant information.
- Ensuring appropriate safer recruitment procedures are followed.
- Collaborating with local authorities (LA) and other agencies, including participation in Early Help Assessments and plans.
- Maintaining confidential records of Child Protection cases within specified transfer periods.
- Coordinating safeguarding actions for individual children, especially those with social workers or who are looked after by the authority.
- Preparing reports for case conferences, core groups, and other multi-agency meetings.
- Arranging induction training for new staff members while providing regular updates as necessary.
- Liaising with the Headteacher regarding safeguarding matters.
- Maintain an up-to-date Risk Register that identifies and mitigates safeguarding risks.
- Following the Trust's Standard Operating Procedures. A copy of which can be found at the end of this section.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of safeguarding concerns, decisions made, and whether or not referrals have been made, and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

Governance and Leadership:

The Trust Board acknowledges its responsibilities regarding Safeguarding & Child Protection as outlined in Part 2 of KCSiE, 2026. The Board is responsible for monitoring all related arrangements such as policies, procedures, training effectiveness. Safeguarding will be an agenda item at every Local Governing Board meeting.

Management and leadership by the Headteacher and Local Governing Board ensures adequate time allocation/resources/training to carry out DSL duties based on KCSiE guidelines.

The Trust Board ensures that safeguarding and child protection are fundamental to policy development, with the best interest of children as a priority for all systems and processes.

The Trust Board, Local Governing Board, and Senior Leadership Team are aware of their obligations under relevant legislation (Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010) & local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Policies & procedures are in place to ensure prompt action in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

The Local Governing Board will:
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- Monitor the school's Child Protection Policy implementation/training/procedures.
- Receive regular written reports on the school's safeguarding activities.

- Revise/update the policy annually while seeking feedback from parents, children, and staff.
- Address any identified weaknesses promptly.
- Ensure governors complete annual Virtual College Safeguarding Training and online safety training every three years. DSG should complete advanced training every three years.
- Provide opportunities for governors to undergo Safer Recruitment training.
- Liaise with the Headteacher & DSL on strategic and operational safeguarding matters.

All Staff:
Staff play a crucial role in identifying concerns early, providing help to children, promoting their welfare, and preventing escalation. They have both professional and legal obligations to safeguard children' welfare by being alert to indicators of abuse/neglect/exploitation/other issues outlined in KCSiE. Any concerns should be reported immediately to designated staff members responsible for child protection within the school.

Staff understand that children may not readily disclose abuse or recognise harmful experiences but must maintain professional curiosity if they suspect any issues. Trusted relationships should be built with children through appropriate communication channels outlined in existing policies such as Code of Conduct or Behaviour Policy.

All staff must:
- Create a safe learning environment for children.
- Recognise signs of abuse/neglect requiring intervention.
- Know how to respond when a child discloses abuse or neglect.
- Identify and address indicators of mental health issues.
- Be aware of early help processes and their role in it.
- Understand safeguarding policies and systems within the school.
- Undergo regular, updated training.
- Understand local referral processes for child protection cases.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality levels.
- Be able to identify children who may benefit from early support, including Family Help
- Understand local safeguarding thresholds and referral pathways
- Not assume that someone else will share information about safeguarding concerns
- Act immediately when concerned about a child's welfare

Staff have access to various resources including Keeping Children Safe in Education, Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, Safer Working Practice guidance, etc.

Undertake safeguarding training, including online safety training (which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring), during their induction – this will be regularly updated.
Training will include awareness of emerging safeguarding risks, including:
- misuse of technology and artificial intelligence
- online harms, including exposure to harmful or extremist content
- misogyny, harmful sexualised behaviour and online culture.

Children & Young People:
The Trust ensures that children understand acceptable behaviour towards them and how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of a senior staff member responsible for child protection. Information is provided on whom they can talk to both inside and outside the school. Life lesson materials help educate children on personal safety. Resources such as NSPCC and Childline are made available to children.

Consultation with children occurs through various channels like form/class time, peer support programs, mentoring schemes, student voice initiatives, etc. These arrangements are communicated through assemblies, posters, letters, lessons, etc.

Efforts will be made to ensure that every child feels safe and heard by:

- Encouraging confident reporting of abuse or concerns about safety.
- Involving children in developing safeguarding policies/practices.
- Providing trusted adult support when needed.
- Teaching children how to keep themselves safe online.

Parents & Carers:
The Trust believes that effective Safeguarding relies on partnership with parents/carers. Support strategies like Early Help Plans can be valuable sources of assistance. However, parents are informed that there may be circumstances where concerns need further action according to local procedures.

The Trust works closely with parents/carers to ensure effective safeguarding practices and seeks their support by:
- Understanding and adhering to relevant Trust policies/procedures.
- Recognising behaviours indicating risks to their child's safety, including online.
- Seeking help/support from the school or other agencies.
- Discussing safeguarding issues with children and supporting the school's safeguarding efforts.

The school will:
- communicate with parents and carers in a clear, accessible and jargon-free way
- provide support for communication needs, including translation and interpretation where required
- ensure a “no surprises” approach wherever possible
- explain safeguarding processes, meetings and decisions
- enable parents/carers to bring a support person to meetings
- use feedback from children and families to inform service improvement

3.10 Family Help and Early Intervention
Family Help and Early Intervention means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life. The school will be proactive in ensuring that every pupil is able to access full-time education to aid their development and protect them from harm whilst utilising the unique position of having regular daily contact with children to identify concerns as early as possible.

Support for children and families exists along a continuum:
- Universal services available to all children
- Community-based early help
- Targeted early help (Family Help)
- Statutory intervention

Any pupil may benefit from family help and early intervention, but in particular, staff will be alert to the potential need for early help for children who:

- Are disabled, have certain health conditions, or have specific additional needs.
- Have SEND, regardless of whether they have a statutory EHC plan.
- Are suffering from mental ill health.
- Are young carers.
- Show signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Are frequently missing or going missing from care or from home.
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Are at risk of being radicalised.
- Have family members in custody or is affected by parental offending.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health problems, or domestic abuse.
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol.

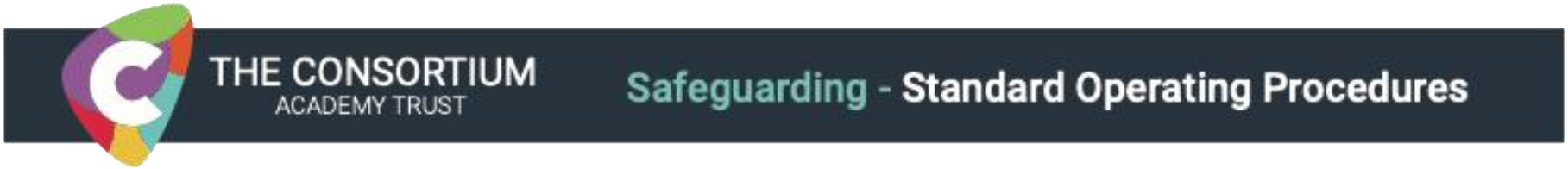
- Are at risk of HBA, such as FGM or forced marriage.
- Are privately fostered.
- Have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded from school, alternative provision or a PRU.

The school will not limit its support to children affected by the above and will be mindful of a variety of additional circumstances in which children may benefit from early help, for example, if they are:

- Bereaved.
- Viewing problematic or inappropriate online content or developing inappropriate relationships online.
- Have recently returned home to their family from care.
- Missing education, or are persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education.

Staff will be mindful of all signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and use their professional curiosity to raise concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will take the lead where early help is appropriate. This includes liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. The local early help process will be followed as required.



Daily

- CPOMS Check
- DSL/SG Team check in
- Vulnerable Attendance Check
- Welfare checks on identified students
- Behaviour Check
- Alternative Provision Attendance Checks
- Smoothwall Checks

Weekly

- Wider team review meeting to monitor cases (secondary)
- RASHEN
- Staff briefing/safeguarding email
- Active and closed cases - run report

Every 2/3 Weeks

- Headteacher gatekeeping of monitored cases
- Wider team review meeting to consider cases (primary)

Half Termly

- CP/CIN meetings
- DSL SCR Check
- Governor Meeting
- DSL network meeting
- Learner Voice
- Governors Report - trend analysis
- Check training logs (HR)
- Site Walks

Termly

- Staff CPD
- Safeguarding Risk Register Review
- Harder to reach staff CPD
- DSL Alternative Provision visit
- Supervision
- Meet with local Policing Team

Annual

- Mid year quiz
- Review Procedures
- Map Safeguarding Training
- Trust Stakeholder Voice

3.11 Children absent from education.

The absence of a child from school can serve as an important indicator of various safeguarding concerns, such as neglect, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and Criminal Exploitation (CCE), including county lines involvement. To address these risks effectively, the school is committed to responding appropriately when children are persistently absent from education.

Our response aims to not only identify potential instances of abuse but also prevent future occurrences where children may become absent from education. Staff members will diligently monitor any instances of learner absence, particularly those that occur repeatedly or extend over prolonged periods. Following established safeguarding procedures outlined in the Children Absent from Education Policy, any such cases will be promptly reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This ensures that appropriate actions can be taken to safeguard the well-being and educational engagement of our students.

The school will follow the DfE's guidance on improving attendance where there is a need to work with children's services due to school absences indicating safeguarding concerns.

3.12 Use of school premises for non-school activities

When the school/Trust decides to hire or rent out school facilities to external organisations or individuals for activities such as community or extracurricular programmes, it is crucial to establish appropriate safeguarding measures to ensure the safety of children. In these instances, the school will refer to the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance on keeping children safe in out-of-school settings.

If the activities are provided directly by school staff under their supervision and management, standard child protection arrangements will apply. However, if the activities are delivered separately by another organisation, it cannot be assumed that they have similar safeguarding and child protection policies in place. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Trust to seek assurance from these external bodies regarding their safeguarding practices. This may involve inspecting their policies and procedures as necessary.

Furthermore, the Trust will establish effective communication channels with these external providers to ensure ongoing collaboration on safeguarding matters when appropriate. To reinforce compliance with safeguarding requirements, any transfer of control agreement such as a lease or hire agreement for premises usage will include explicit provisions outlining that failure to adhere to these requirements may result in termination of the agreement.

By implementing these measures, we prioritise learner safety and maintain robust safeguards within our school community when engaging with external organisations using our premises or providing activities under our supervision.

3.12.1 Extracurricular activities and clubs

External organisations, such as charities or companies, that host extracurricular activities and clubs at the school will collaborate closely with us to ensure effective safeguarding of our children. It is essential that these external bodies adhere to local safeguarding arrangements and work in alignment with our school's policies and procedures.

Staff members and volunteers who are involved in running these extracurricular activities and clubs are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They actively promote the welfare of our children, ensuring a safe environment for their participation. Both paid staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of how to respond appropriately to any child protection concerns that may arise. They are also knowledgeable about the process for making referrals to relevant authorities such as Children's Social Care Services (CSCS) or the police if necessary.

Furthermore, it is important to note that all national governing bodies of sport receiving funding from Sport England or UK Sport must strive towards meeting the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport. This ensures that sports organisations maintain high standards when it comes to safeguarding children participating in sporting activities.

By working collaboratively with external bodies, promoting awareness among staff and volunteers, and adhering to national standards for safeguarding in sports, we prioritise the well-being and safety of our children during extracurricular activities at our school.

4 IDENTIFYING HARM

School staff are in a unique position to observe and should be vigilant for outward signs of abuse, neglect, various forms of exploitation, and any changes in behaviour or poor attendance. Staff understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school. Staff will also be aware that the children can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing effects of abuse.

When concerned about a child's well-being, staff will always prioritise the best interests of the child and maintain an attitude that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Both Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) outline the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect, which all staff members are made aware of. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ensures that all staff have received KCSIE 2026 Part One and Annex A, allowing them access to full guidance.

All staff members are informed about possible indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation as well as how to respond to disclosures or other concerns. Staff will understand that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap one another; therefore, staff will be vigilant and always raise concerns with the DSL.

Understanding these indicators is crucial in responding appropriately at an early stage and providing necessary support to prevent further escalation. It is acknowledged that school staff should be aware of a wide range of potential safeguarding issues. When assessing whether a child may be experiencing actual or potential harm, there are four categories: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Child-specific issues will always be taken into consideration as some children have additional complex needs that may require intensive or specialist services; therefore, collaboration with appropriate colleagues such as SENDCo will occur.

Safeguarding incidents or concerns can extend beyond home and education settings; children can face risks outside their families. Extra-familial harms come in various forms including but not limited to sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence, and county lines.

Indicators of child abuse vary from one individual to another; concerns may arise from different contexts and sources, differing in nature and seriousness. Children develop and mature at different rates, so it is necessary to consider concerns and behaviours on a continuum. What may be worrisome behaviour for a younger child could be normal for an older child. It is also important to note that indicators of abuse or neglect do not automatically confirm that a child is being abused. The DSL will take all concerns seriously and investigate them individually.

Technology plays a significant role in many safeguarding issues; children are at risk of online abuse from both known individuals (including other children) as well as strangers. In many cases, abuse can occur simultaneously online and offline.

Following any concerns about a child's safety or welfare, searches and confiscations of items, including electronic devices, will be managed according to the school's Behaviour Policy or 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' policy based on the guidance provided by the DfE (July 2022).

The DSL (or deputy) should be informed about any searching incidents ideally in advance so they can contribute to decision-making processes and arrangements. This allows consideration of potential wider safeguarding concerns related to the searched individual. Staff members should involve the DSL (or deputy) promptly if they believe that a search has revealed any safeguarding risks.

5 Taking Action

1. Never Do Nothing - Focus on the Basics: It Could Happen Here
2. When in Doubt, Share - Protecting the School, Child, and Yourself

All staff members have a responsibility to respond promptly to any disclosures or concerns raised by children or others and report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff members do not need definitive proof of abuse and should not attempt to investigate these concerns themselves. All information must be recorded on the CPOMS system (page 11). Any concerns regarding marks or injuries should also be documented using a 'Body Map' feature on CPOMS. If using a body map, staff members must describe the injuries or marks in addition to indicating their location.

Photographs of any marks or injuries should not be taken, unless under instruction from other agencies, EG. Police.

Staff members are briefed on procedures regularly and reminded to maintain an attitude of vigilance, acknowledging that incidents can occur within their own environment. They should never dismiss concerns or disclosures as insignificant as they may provide crucial links to additional information.

Staff members must:
- Not keep such concerns to themselves.
- Avoid investigating or seeking proof.
- Refrain from promising secrecy but reassure children and adults making disclosures that information will be shared appropriately and confidentially.
- Use open-ended 'TED' type questions if clarification is needed about a disclosure (e.g., Tell me – Explain - Describe).
- Not delay recording or reporting concerns to the DSL.

Staff members are informed that it is legally, professionally, and morally unacceptable for anyone (including other staff members) to keep such concerns private, including concerns about the conduct of another staff member. Failure to report such matters may lead potential disciplinary action.

The DSL will evaluate each case individually while considering:
- Any urgent medical needs of the child.
- Checking with the Central Database (previously known as Child Protection Register).
- Consulting with relevant agencies involved with the family.
- Seeking advice from appropriate parties, such as the police or children's social care.
- Considering the child's wishes.
- Reporting any suspicion of female genital mutilation in girls under 18 years old to the Police and Children's Social Care.

Based on these considerations, the DSL will decide whether:
- To communicate with parents/carers whenever possible, unless doing so would place a child at risk of significant harm, impede a police investigation, or put staff members or others at risk.
- To make a child protection referral to Children's Social Care or the Police if there is evidence that a child is currently suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and immediate action is required.
OR
- Not to make a referral at that stage.
- Determine if further monitoring is necessary.
- Consider whether early intervention support may be appropriate. In such cases, the DSL should assist staff members in coordinating with other agencies for an inter-agency assessment. The case should be kept under constant review, and if no improvement is observed or it worsens, consideration should be given to making a referral to children's social care or other services through Common Assessment.

Ideally, referrals should be made by the designated safeguarding lead. However, anyone can make a referral in their absence without delaying appropriate action. It is crucial to inform the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible when referrals are made by someone else.

All actions taken and relevant information must be fully documented on CPOMS alongside reasons for any decisions made.

5.2 Action following Child Protection Referral

The DSL (or another suitable staff member) will:
- Maintain regular contact with Children's Social Services.
- Contribute to strategy discussions and initial assessments.
- Provide reports for Child Protection Conferences and attend them accordingly.
- Participate in creating Child Protection Plans if needed and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Child Protection Conferences related to those plans.
- Share all reports with parents before meetings take place.
- In case of disagreement with decisions made, such as not applying Child Protection Procedures or not convening a Child Protection Conference, discuss the matter with the Education Safeguarding Manager.
- If a child under a Child Protection Plan moves schools or goes missing, immediately inform the key worker in Social Services.

5.3 Allegations Against Staff

Concerns that meet the 'Harm Threshold'.

Staff members are aware that an allegation may be made when:
- Behaviour has caused harm to a child or may have done so.
- There is suspicion of committing a criminal offense related to or against a child.
- Behaviour towards a child indicates possible risk of harm to children.
- Behaviour suggests that they may not be suitable for working with children.

All staff members have access to relevant information including "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – Part Four: Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors," "Staff Code of Conduct," "Whistleblowing Policy," and contact details for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Staff members are informed about their responsibilities and the procedures they should follow while maintaining strict confidentiality. However, during whistleblowing situations, an investigation process might reveal the source of information and require a statement from the person who reported it.

Staff members are reminded that if they receive an allegation regarding inappropriate or abusive behaviour by a colleague or feel compelled to make such an allegation themselves, they must promptly report this information to the Headteacher. If the accusation involves the Headteacher, then contact should be made immediately with either Chair of Governors, another senior member of staff, DSL, or LADO.

It is unacceptable for any staff member not to report concerns promptly.

On receiving such information on any given day:
The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors, senior staff member) will contact the LADO and follow the statutory guidance outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Part Four. Additionally, they will inform the Trust DSL or HR Business Partner.

After sharing information and making a referral to the LADO, discussions will determine whether the allegation or potential concern meets the Harm Threshold. Based on this assessment, further action will be agreed upon for both the child involved and any staff member implicated.

All parties involved must strive to handle any allegations fairly, quickly, proportionately, and consistently. The aim is to provide effective protection for children while supporting individuals facing allegations.

If a staff member believes that actions taken are inappropriate or ineffective or if they believe an urgent situation persists despite initial steps taken, they should raise their concerns and request reconsideration or discussion.

The Dealing with allegations involving people who with children workflow can be found on the following page.

THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

Dealing with allegations involving people who work with children

What is an allegation?

Information which indicates that an adult has or may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may 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

Allegation against an adult which may meet criteria above

- In line with the Trust's whistleblowing policy, if against staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, staff must refer to the **Headteacher immediately.** If the Headteacher is not available the member of staff must refer to the next senior member of staff.
- If the allegation is against the Headteacher, the member of staff must refer to the Chair of Governors, the Trust DSL or the Trust's Director of People Services.

Allegation reported to the Headteacher or identified leader

- Leader collates basic information but **does not** investigate.
- Informs LADO within 24 hours.
- Informs the Trust DSL and or the Trust Director of People Services

Initial consideration by LADO

SG Team meet to agree LADO/low level concern

Recorded as low level concernn.

LADO criteria not met

Low level concerns policy followed

LADO criteria met

LADO and school/Trust agree action
For example: police referred; Section 47 or employer action

5.4 Low-Level Concerns

The Headteacher may need to act in response to concerns about staff that are considered "low-level." The following documents contain additional information about low-level concerns:
- Whistleblowing Guidance
- Low-level Concerns Policy, which includes the definition of low-level concerns, the importance of sharing them, and the confidential procedure to follow when reporting them.

Examples of such behaviour could include (KCSiE, 2026, Paragraph 426), but are not limited to:
- Being overly friendly with children
- Showing favouritism
- Taking unauthorised photos of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging in one-on-one interactions with a child in a secluded area or behind closed doors
- Humiliating children.

The Trust promotes an open and transparent culture where all concerns regarding adults working in or on behalf of our schools are promptly and appropriately addressed. This helps us identify inappropriate behavior early on, minimise the risk of abuse, ensure that staff act within professional boundaries and according to our ethos and values.

A low-level concern does not mean it is insignificant. It refers to any concern where an adult working in or on behalf of the school has acted inconsistently with expectations and the Staff Code of Conduct. This can also include inappropriate conduct outside of work if it doesn't meet the "harm threshold" or isn't serious enough for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Low-level concerns can arise from various sources such as suspicions, complaints, allegations made by a child, parent, or other adults within or outside of the organisation, or through vetting checks.

It is essential that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly and recorded appropriately to protect staff from potential false accusations or misunderstandings. Confidentiality should be maintained according to the Low-Level Concerns policy.

Depending on local arrangements, low-level concerns may be initially shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another nominated person, or with the Headteacher. If reported to the DSL, they should inform the Headteacher of all low-level concerns in a timely manner. The Headteacher may consult with the DSL and make collaborative decisions regarding these concerns.

The ultimate decision-maker in responding to low-level concerns is the Headteacher. If necessary, they may share concerns and liaise with the LADO to determine if it meets the harm threshold or can be addressed as a low-level concern.

Low-level concerns involving supply staff and contractors will be shared with their employers for identifying potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour.

All low-level concerns will be documented and reviewed to identify any concerning patterns of behaviour. Records will be kept confidentially, securely, and in compliance with relevant data protection laws and policies.

If a pattern is identified, appropriate actions such as consulting with the LADO enquiry line or following disciplinary procedures will be implemented by the school.

5.5 Safeguarding Culture and Whistleblowing

The Trust is committed to maintaining a safeguarding culture characterised by openness, trust, transparency, where our values and expected behaviours stated in Staff Code of Conduct are consistently

upheld by all staff members (including supply teachers, volunteers, contractors). All staff have access to KCSIE 2026 guidelines at all times.

Staff members are aware that they hold a Position of Trust and understand its implications. Engaging in any sexual relationship or misconduct—consensual or otherwise—with children under 18 would constitute a criminal offense. Such behaviour involving children above 18 would still be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.

If staff find themselves in situations that could be misinterpreted or compromising to others due to their own behaviour falling below professional standards expected from them; they are encouraged—and should feel confident—to self-refer even if allegations are believed to be deliberately invented or malicious. Reporting and recording all concerns, even if rare, is crucial.

The leadership team takes all concerns and allegations seriously, and staff members/volunteers should feel comfortable raising concerns about poor or unsafe practices within the school safeguarding system.

Staff members are familiar with the Whistleblowing Policy and their obligation to report any concerns. Failure to report concerns about a colleague's conduct that could endanger a child is considered a disciplinary offense.

Staff members adhere to relevant school/Trust policies regarding the professional risks associated with social media and electronic communication (e.g., email, mobile phones, texting, social networking).

If staff members feel unable to raise child protection failures internally, they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline at 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

The Trust has a legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child—and who has been removed from regulated activity—to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA). The DBS will consider whether barring action should be taken against such individuals. If these circumstances arise concerning staff at Trust schools, referrals will be made following advice from LADO, HR, and Trust DSL after resignation or removal of the individual.

5.6 Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

All staff will be vigilant in identifying any child who may experience discrimination due to protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, they will take steps to prevent and address any instances of discrimination.

5.6.1 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

Most children become looked after due to abuse or neglect. Each school ensures that appropriate staff members have information about looked after children's status and care arrangements including contact details for their social worker as well as local authority's virtual head for children in care. The designated teacher for Looked After Children collaborates with the virtual head regarding funding allocation for supporting their progress and meeting their Personal Education Plan needs.

5.6.2 Children who Need a Social Worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

Children may require a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs arising from abuse, neglect, or complex family circumstances. Designated Safeguarding leads have access to information about children with social workers, enabling them to make decisions in the child's best interests regarding safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. This information is routinely considered when addressing issues such as unauthorised absence or missing education with known safeguarding risks. The school also collaborates with the Virtual Head to monitor attendance, attainment, and progress of these children.

5.6.3 Children Requiring Mental Health Support

Schools play an important role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. Mental health problems can indicate that a child has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The Trust has implemented a mental health strategy that includes staff training, curriculum development, and the presence of both child and staff mental health ambassadors for identifying and assisting children who may need mental health support. A copy of the social, emotional and mental health workflow can be found on the following page.

5.6.4 LGBTQ+ children

The fact that a pupil may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm; however, staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ children can be targeted by other individuals. Staff will also be aware that, in some cases, a pupil who is perceived by others to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+.

Staff will also be aware that the risks to these children can be compounded when they do not have a trusted adult with whom they can speak openly. Staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by these children and provide a safe space for them to speak out and share any concerns they have.

5.6.5 Care leavers

Local authorities have ongoing responsibilities for young people leaving care including keeping in touch with them, conducting assessments of their needs, appointing personal advisers who develop pathway plans for their education or training participation plans after leaving care situations.

Designated safeguarding leads liaise with the Local Authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support care leavers regarding any concerns affecting them.

5.6.6 Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities face additional safeguarding challenges which can include assumptions about indicators of possible abuse being related solely to their disability without further investigation; increased vulnerability to peer isolation; potential disproportionate impact by behaviours like bullying without outward signs; communication barriers hindering identification of abuse. Schools should provide extra pastoral support for these children considering these challenges.

5.7 Work Experience (Secondary Phase)

Each school has detailed procedures to safeguard children participating in work experience, including checks on placement providers and supervisors, following guidelines stated in Keeping Children Safe in Education. These procedures are outlined in the school's Work Experience Policy.

5.8 Children staying with Host Families

Schools may arrange for children to stay with host families during foreign exchange trips or sports tours. In such cases, if it amounts to Private Fostering, schools follow guidelines from Keeping Children Safe in Education to ensure hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

For overseas children residing with host families in the UK, parents, and all individuals over 18 years old undergo a no-cost enhanced DBS check with a barred list check.

5.9 Child on Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse can manifest in various forms, including but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Physical abuse involving actions such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or causing physical harm
- Sexual violence encompassing rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault
- Sexual harassment defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online or offline. Child-on-child sexual harassment can violate a child's dignity and make them feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated, or create a hostile and offensive environment.

- Upskirting refers to the act of taking pictures under a person's clothing without their knowledge with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification or causing distress.
- Sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery) involves sharing explicit images/videos of oneself or others and sending sexually explicit messages via mobile devices (including those generated using artificial intelligence, such as deepfakes).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), which encompasses inappropriate, problematic, abusive, and violent behaviour that is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. It can occur both online and offline.

Staff should be particularly vigilant at times of increased risk, including during transitions, unstructured times and immediately after the school day.

While we acknowledge the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse where girls are more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators; all instances of child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously regardless of gender. Such incidents will not be dismissed as "banter" or "part of growing up" but addressed in accordance with appropriate policies such as safeguarding and behaviour management. These issues will also be addressed through PSHE lessons and discussions while ensuring support for victims through our school's pastoral system.

To provide additional support for those who have experienced sexual abuse in an educational setting or have concerns about someone else experiencing it; there is now a dedicated NSPCC helpline available at 0800 136 663.

Our approach includes:
- Handling reports/disclosures according to our policy by referring them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy.
- Educating children about positive, responsible, and safe relationships, consent, and the appropriate use of mobile technology and social media through PSHE, RSHE, and the wider curriculum.
- Ensuring children know how to report abuse or witness it while understanding that any form of child-on-child abuse is unacceptable.
- Conducting risk assessments to identify specific risks faced by our children and addressing them accordingly.
- Maintaining a zero-tolerance stance towards such behaviour and making it clear that it is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or harassment as "banter," "part of growing up," "just having a laugh," or excusing it as "boys being boys."
- Challenging potentially criminal behaviour such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, genitalia, flicking bras, or lifting skirts.

We understand that societal factors beyond the school environment can contribute to these issues. Therefore, adopting a whole-school approach is crucial.

We also recognise that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are more vulnerable to abuse. Barriers may exist in recognising abuse in SEND children due to assumptions about their behaviours relating solely to their disability. Additionally, communication barriers may hinder reporting. Consequently, reports involving SEND children will involve collaboration between the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and the SENCO.

Children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by their peers. It's important to note that even those perceived as LGBTQ+ can be equally vulnerable. Our schools provide a safe space for all children to speak up about concerns with staff members.

For further information on sexual violence and harassment among children in schools and colleges please refer to: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-child ren-in-schools-and-colleges.

5.9.1 Appropriate Management

Appropriate management of child-on-child abuse requires a comprehensive response that considers the following:
- Conducting a thorough investigation into the alleged concern(s) or allegation(s), taking into account the wider context in which they may have occurred. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the incidents, involvement of the police and/or children's social care for further investigation may be necessary.
- Treating all children involved as potentially at risk, recognising that while the alleged perpetrator may pose a significant risk to others, they themselves may also have unmet needs and be at risk of harm.
- Implementing a safeguarding response for both victims and alleged perpetrators, which may involve additional intervention or support for the latter.
- Considering that child-on-child abuse can indicate broader safeguarding concerns related to sociocultural contexts such as peer groups (both within and outside school), family dynamics, school environment, experiences of crime/victimisation in the local community, and online presence. Identifying necessary changes in these contexts to address children's needs and mitigate risks is crucial.
- Recognising the complexity of child-on-child abuse and children's experiences, including power dynamics, limited choices affecting consent. Even if it appears that children are making choices, their ability to provide genuine consent might be compromised due to limitations.
- Seeking input from affected children and their parents/guardians regarding proposed actions unless immediate referral is deemed unsafe. Consent should be obtained before making any referrals.

Child-on-child abuse involving sexual assault or violence always requires a multi-agency response. In addition to supporting victims effectively, professionals must consider whether alleged perpetrators could also be victims themselves since harmful sexual behaviour often stems from prior experiences of abuse/neglect. Collaboration among various agencies including children's social care, police services specialised in supporting those displaying harmful sexual behaviour; involvement of families; engagement with other relevant professionals who have interacted with or know about these individuals is essential.

If alleged incidents occur between children in the same class, it is crucial to separate them during the investigation. In cases of alleged rape or assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must always be removed from classes shared with the victim. The school should devise appropriate measures to ensure physical separation and safety on school premises as well as during transportation to and from school. These separation arrangements must continue for as long as necessary to ensure children's safety, even beyond the investigation stage, regardless of whether a conviction is obtained or not.

The school will develop a safety plan for:
- Any child accused of abusive or violent behaviour.
- Any child who has reportedly been abused or affected by another child's abusive or violent behaviour.
- Any child at risk due to alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child, based on DSL's professional judgment and considering individual circumstances.

When inappropriate or problematic behaviour (as opposed to abusive/violent) is alleged against a child, DSL will assess whether it warrants contacting children's social care and implementing a safety plan based on specific concerns/allegations and individual needs/circumstances.

If other children have witnessed the abuse/violence, DSL should also consider potential risks they may face and determine if implementing a safety plan is necessary.

Disciplinary action may be considered for involved children; however, collaboration with police and/or children's social care is critical if there are ongoing proceedings or potential involvement. Even when matters are not of interest to external agencies, schools must determine appropriate actions for positive behaviour management. Disciplinary action may be warranted in certain cases to hold responsible parties

accountable while demonstrating zero tolerance towards child-on-child abuse and ensuring the safety/well-being of other children.

5.10 Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force

The use of physical intervention and reasonable force should be approached with caution and as a last resort. Staff members are encouraged to prioritise de-escalation techniques and explore creative alternative strategies that are tailored to the individual child's needs. Restraint should only be employed when all other options have been exhausted, and any instances of its use will be thoroughly reviewed, documented, and closely monitored. The application of reasonable force will adhere to government guidelines and the Trust's Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy. When restraining children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), safeguarding and welfare concerns will be considered.

5.11 Alternative Provision

We will ensure that any alternative provision we work with conducts thorough checks on their staff, like our own procedures. We will request written confirmation that the provider has conducted all relevant safeguarding checks on staff and will satisfy the school that the placement is meeting the pupil's needs.

Additionally, we will share relevant risk assessments and safeguarding concerns with the alternative provision and maintain regular visits to monitor the well-being of our children. It is crucial that effective safeguarding measures are in place at the alternative provision, and we will keep the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) appropriately informed. Further information regarding this can be found in the Trust's Alternative Provision Policy.

Those responsible for the commissioning of alternative provision will be aware that children in alternative provision will often have complex needs – they will be mindful of the additional risk of harm that these children may be vulnerable to.

5.12 Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement refers to the private arrangement made for the care of a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, within their own home, with an intended duration of 28 days or longer. (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great-grandparents, or cousins.)

If the school becomes aware of such arrangements, we will promptly notify the Local Authority. This notification allows the Local Authority to assess whether the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child involved.

5.13 Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse encompass a range of behaviours, including controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between individuals aged 16 or older who are or have been intimate partners or family members. This definition applies regardless of gender or sexuality and includes various forms of abuse such as psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.

It is important to recognise that all children can be witnesses to domestic abuse within their family environment. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have significant and long-lasting emotional and psychological effects on children. They may internalise blame for the abuse or even experience displacement from their family home as a result.

To support children in these situations, the school collaborates with the Police through Operation Encompass. This initiative ensures that the key adult in school (usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead) is informed by the police before the child arrives at school on any day following an incident of domestic violence involving them. By receiving this timely information about the child's circumstances through this scheme, relevant support can be provided to address their needs effectively.

5.14 Elective Home Education

While many children who are educated at home have a positive learning experience, we acknowledge that this may not be the case for all. Home education can sometimes result in certain children being less visible to the services that exist to ensure their safety and provide appropriate support based on their needs.

In accordance with the revised Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, we will notify the Local Authority (LA) whenever a child is removed from our admission register. This ensures that relevant authorities are informed of any changes in a child's educational status.

When a parent or carer expresses their intention to withdraw a child from school for home education purposes, we will collaborate with other professionals to arrange a meeting with the parents or carers whenever possible. Ideally, this meeting will take place before any final decisions are made, allowing us to ensure that parents or carers have considered what is truly in the best interests of each individual child involved.