The Loyne Specialist School

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Approved by the Governing Body on: October 2025

Signed (Chair of Governors): AM Moughton

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** NB – references and hyperlinks accurate at time of publishing*

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(as required and not more than 12 months from the publication date)

This Policy and Procedures are available on the school website or from the school office on request. A summary has also been produced and this can be found at Appendix 1)

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ESSENTIAL SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Role	Name and Contact Information
Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership website (CSAP)	https://www.safeguardingpartnership.org.uk/
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Kathryn Arts
School Deputy DSLs (DDSL)	Susan Campbell Emma Flynn Fiona Gemson Sarah Wisniewski
School Chair of Governors	Dr Ann-Marie Houghton
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Dr Ann-Marie Houghton
School Designated Teacher	Kathryn Arts
Children's Social Care Referrals Emergency Duty Team	0300 123 6720 / 6722 (out of hours) https://lancashiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/p/report-a-concern port/
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01772 536 694 LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk
Children Missing Education Contact	cme@lancashire.gov.uk 01257 517333
Pupil Sexual Exploitation Team	awaken@lancashire.pnn.police.uk 01253 477261
Prevent / Channel Contact / referrals	concern@lancashire.pnn.Police.uk 01772 412742 (advice - 01772 209733)
Looked After Children / Virtual School Head	virtualschool@lancashire.gov.uk Vanessa Nice 01772 531853
Young Carers Contact	lancashireyoungcarers@barnardos.org.uk 01772 641002
Private Fostering Contact	0300 123 6701
Vulnerable Adult Referrals	0300 123 6720 / 6722 (out of hours) https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/safeguarding-adults/lancashire-safeguarding-adults/
Lancashire Safeguarding Advice	01772 531196
Lancashire Children and Family Wellbeing Service	louise.jefferson@lancashire.gov.uk 07815 948 343

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION, SCOPE, DEFINITIONS, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES

At the Loyne Specialist School safeguarding permeates all aspects of school life and is everyone's responsibility. We recognise that schools and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for pupils. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with pupils and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding pupils. No single professional can have a full picture of a pupil's needs and circumstances. If pupils and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all staff are aware of the arrangements that the Loyne Specialist School have in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. It provides guidance to help staff who may have concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil, and sets out the school's position in relation to all aspects of safeguarding and child protection processes. The policy and related procedures will be central to staff training and induction.

This document aims to do more than demonstrate compliance. It can be used alongside other documentation and procedures and aims to assist in the development of awareness and greater understanding of safeguarding and child protection throughout our school. It is, therefore, something that can and should be read and re-visited as and when the need arises.

We aim to provide a positive, stimulating, caring and safe environment which promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of each pupil and young adult in our school. Therefore, we will strive to ensure that all pupils remain safe and free from harm and are committed to playing a full and active part in multi-agency safeguarding processes and responses.

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed as and when required and at least annually. Should any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding and child protection arrangements become apparent, these will be remedied without delay.

SCOPE

This Policy and Procedure reflects core statutory guidance (this list is by no means exhaustive):

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), which lays-out what schools must and should do. KCSIE 2025

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
EYFS 2025

Everyone should be aware of the systems within school which support safeguarding. The school's Policy and Procedures apply at all times to everyone providing or delivering services or activities at or on behalf of the Loyne Specialist School. In particular, staff should read and be familiar with the content of the following policies:

- School Attendance
- Prevent Duty
- Anti-Bullying
- Online Safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
- Staff Code of Conduct / Staff handbook
- Behaviour
- Managing pupils with medical conditions
- Low-level Concerns
- Complaints

The Loyne Specialist School will ensure that its documentation and practice is reviewed regularly in order that it remains complaint with legislation and guidance issued by the DfE.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

Guidance & Procedures	Legislation
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)	Children Acts (1989, 2004)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2025)	Human Rights Act (1998)
Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) (2025)	Equality Act (2010, inc. PSED)
Disqualification Under the Child Care Act (2006)	Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015
Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool & Lancashire Safeguarding Procedures Manual	Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire (1-3)	Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974, amended 2020)
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners (2024)	Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation
School Staffing (England) Regulations (2009)	Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
Teachers Standards (2024)	Serious Crime Act (2015)
DBS Code of Practice	Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)
Recruit Teachers from Overseas (2026)	Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
Supporting Pupils at school with medical conditions (2015)	Victims and Prisoners Act 2024)
Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)	Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)
Behaviour in Schools (2024)	Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act (2022)
RSE and Health Education (2025)	Online Safety Act (2023)
Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in Schools (2026)	
Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges (2025)	
Generative AI Product Safety Standards (2026)	
Mobile phones in Schools (2026)	
Protective security and preparedness for education settings (2025	
Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes (2024)	
Prevent Duty Departmental Advice (2023)	
The Prevent Duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation (2023)	
Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information (2020)	
Multi-agency statutory guidance and practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage (2013)	
Child Sexual Exploitation (2024)	

DEFINITIONS

Children

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, state that a child is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Alongside our pupils, our commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare extends to all children who visit our school.

Safeguarding & Promoting Welfare

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) defines safeguarding and promoting welfare as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's physical and mental health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

'Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare includes but is about much more than 'child protection'. For example, it encompasses issues such as bullying (including cyberbullying), health and safety, (about which there are specific statutory requirements), arrangements for meeting medical needs, first aid, school security, attendance, admissions, exclusions, children missing education, sex and relationships education, PSHE (including teaching safeguarding), staff conduct, managing allegations, whistle-blowing, equality and diversity, managing racist incidents, harassment & discrimination, school security, ICT / online safety, safer recruitment and selection.

Child Protection

Is one part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm.

See Part Three of this policy for a closer look at child protection, significant harm, related concepts and associated processes.

OUR COMMITMENT TO BEST SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE

We remain totally committed to ensuring that all pupils enjoy the same rights and protections. However, we are also very mindful that pupils are especially vulnerable to all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including online. Moreover, they may also face additional barriers in terms of recognising and communicating [potentially] abusive experiences.

A SAFEGUARDING ETHOS & CULTURE

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Senior staff and governors ensure that safeguarding is a priority for everyone;
- We adopt a whole-school approach and maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned.
- We are clear about our role and those of other agencies and do everything possible to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
- Policies and procedures are compliant and kept up-to-date. Designated Safeguarding Leads and governors ensure that these are embedded, reviewed and updated regularly;

- Everyone is clear about safeguarding and child protection arrangements and procedures so that pupils and families, as well as adults in school, know who they can talk to and what to do if they are worried;
- A comprehensive pastoral system helps us to identify vulnerability, risk and need and enables us to provide - and / or work with - other agencies to provide early help and support.
- We have high expectations of everyone in respect of courteous and responsible behaviour;
- We are clear that parents have a right to be informed in respect of any concerns about their pupil's welfare, or any action taken to safeguard and promote the pupil's welfare, providing this does not compromise the pupil's safety.
- We recognise the increased vulnerability of our pupils and young adults with SEND and as such, rely upon staff expertise, knowledge and understanding of the pupils in our school to identify any concerns.

A PUPIL / PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

- Our safeguarding practice is oriented around the wishes, feelings and best interests of pupils. We communicate appropriately with pupils so that their wishes and feelings can be known and taken into account. We always strive to give them a 'voice'.
- We are proactive and take positive steps to inform pupils of their rights to safety and protection and the options available to express any fears or concerns. We observe, listen and communicate effectively with them, take them seriously and work collaboratively in order to meet their needs.

IDENTIFYING RISK AND NEED AND PROVIDING EARLY HELP (INCLUDING AROUND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- A cohesive pastoral system helps us to identify vulnerability, risk and need and enables us to provide and / or work with other agencies to provide early help and support. Everyone knows what to look for, how to access early help and their role in its delivery;
- We do all that we can to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We also recognise, however, that some pupils are potentially at greater risk of harm and this is reflected in our policies and practice;
- We adopt, a whole-school, educative and proactive approach to promoting good mental health and wellbeing across all of our school community;
- We are mindful of our duties under the Equality Act 2010. This means that we do not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics. In addition, we:
  - consider how we are supporting pupils with protected characteristics[1]
  - take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these pupils face. For example, we make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and support girls if there is evidence they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment;
  - are also mindful of the implications of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for education settings which means we are conscious that pupils with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm.
- Moreover, we recognise that some mental health issues will meet the definition of

[1] https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics

disability;

- In line with the statutory SEND Code of Practice, we are also alert to how mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues; this means we are well placed to support pupils effectively, working with external support where needed;
- Our responses are graduated which helps us put the right support in place
- There are things that we do for all pupils e.g. intervening early, creating a safe and calm educational environment, strengthening resilience before serious mental health problems occur.

BUILDING RESILIENCE[2]

- We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, appropriate support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all pupils, and especially those at risk of or suffering abuse;
- We will maximise opportunities to teach safeguarding, including through work with parents and carers. We include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe - including online, how to communicate any worries, fears or concerns and how to take responsibility for their own and others' safety. We use a range of resources - in line with KCSIE 2025, Annex B for example, and sometimes use external speakers / organisations to help us do this.
- We work closely with our pupils to facilitate effective communication of feelings and emotions, recognising that this supports good mental health and wellbeing[3]

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- We implement robust recruitment procedures in respect of all staff, volunteers and visitors to our school, in-line with relevant legislation and guidance and, where necessary, beyond it;
- We take online safety seriously and do all that is reasonable to limit pupils' exposure to risk by putting safety mechanisms in place, monitoring usage and educating pupils, staff and parents / carers about safe and acceptable use;
- Everyone is clear about expected codes of conduct and what to do in the event that they are worried about an adult or pupil's behaviour;
- Everyone, including pupils and parents, is clear about and understands their responsibilities in respect of site security;
- We promote safety by undertaking, reviewing and updating various risk assessments, and consult and liaise with parents and pupils as part of these processes;
- We consider broader, health and safety issues and day-to-day arrangements are clear and understood by everyone;
- We ensure that staff have access to the training, skills, knowledge and support they need; A high priority is given to safeguarding training and we ensure that everyone is up-to-date, in-line with statutory guidance, including all governors.
- We ensure that staff have access to the training, skills, knowledge and support they need; A high priority is given to safeguarding training and we ensure that everyone is up-to-date, in -line with statutory guidance including all governors. In addition to annual refresher training staff are in receipt of regular summaries, workshops, briefings and training throughout the academic year. It is also integral to induction.

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

[2] Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience
[3] Mentally healthy schools / BBC mental health films for children

- We are clear about our role and those of other agencies and professionals. We do everything possible to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
  We ensure that staff are well trained, prepared and supported in order to contribute effectively to multi-agency work.

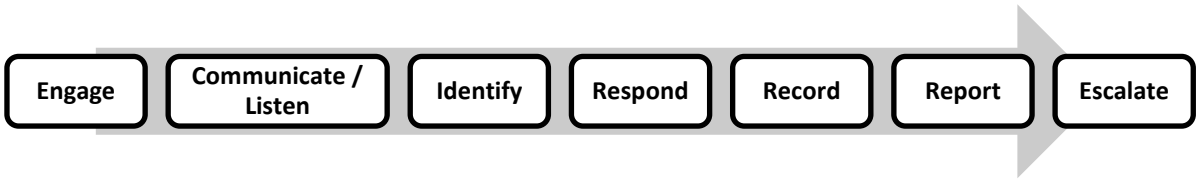
CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORD KEEPING & INFORMATION SHARING

- We know that information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in pupil's welfare, including their educational outcomes. We understand our powers and responsibilities to share, hold and use information for these purposes;
- Clear lines of accountability, communication and robust record-keeping systems enable us to build 'pictures' and, where necessary, share appropriate information with those who need it; in school, with children's social care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required;
- Staff are proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a pupil is already known to the local authority children's social care
- We manage sensitive information appropriately and ensure that our practice complies with legislation[4], local protocols and national guidance[5].
- Governors ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information. Fears about sharing information will not be allowed to stand in the way of the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. We are clear that the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping pupils safe. We may share information without consent if, in our judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so;
- Parents have a right to be told about any concerns in respect of their Childs welfare and about action that we intend to take or have taken to safeguard and promote it, providing this does not compromise the pupil's safety, cause undue delay or impede an investigation.

[4] Information Sharing Safeguarding Guidance May 2024
[5] ICO share information to protect a child, Lancashire guidance on requesting support

EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND INDUCTION

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. That means that everyone should know how to:



As a minimum standard, everyone MUST read and understand:

a) the relevant parts of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and EYFS (2025)[6]
   - **Working directly with pupils** – KCSIE Part One and Annex B (Further information).
   - **Not working directly with Pupils** – KCSIE Part One or Annex A.
   - **Early Years Practitioners** – EYFS 2025; and
b) Related school policies and procedures, e.g. behavior, attendance (including children missing education), online Safety, anti-bullying, staff code of conduct.

- We maintain a record which shows that everyone has read and understood the documents they need to.
- Governors ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. All relevant policies, procedures and guidance - or appropriate parts thereof - are provided to all staff on induction. They will be asked to sign and confirm that they have read and understood these, including KCSIE 2025, Part One, Annex A / B (as recommended);
- Training is refreshed / updated at appropriate intervals in-line with statutory requirements, safeguarding partner recommendations and best practice;
- Safeguarding training and induction for all staff and volunteers includes a focus on conduct, behaviour and safer working practice, including online safety, filtering and monitoring;
- Safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of our whole school safeguarding approach, wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- There is a rolling programme of training for all staff, some of whom are required to attend additional training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- We review the staff CPD programme to ensure that they receive, understand and know how to implement knowledge gained.

Safer Working Practice

- We ensure that staff have access to the training, support and, for DSLs in particular, supervision they need;
- Safeguarding training and induction for all staff and volunteers includes a focus on conduct, behaviour and safer working practice, including online;
- Everyone behaves courteously, responsibly and professionally at all times. They are clear about expected codes of conduct and what to do in the event that they are worried about an adult or pupil's behaviour or have concerns about the safeguarding ethos / culture in our school;

[6] For the purposes of this document, we note and adherence to the safeguarding and welfare requirements in Section 3, e.g. food and dietary-related matters / vigilance, staff training and qualifications and training, ratios and [safeguarding] supervision.

- Responsibility is shared by and across the entire staff team; professionalism, transparency and consistency are central to everything we do;
- There are clear and robust procedures in place for managing and dealing with any complaints;
- There are clear procedures in place in respect of the management of any so-called 'low level concerns', i.e. anything that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and / or allegations against employees, including sources of advice and support for them;
- Escalation and whistle-blowing procedures are clear.

ATTENDANCE, PERSISTENT ABSENCE, CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

We acknowledge that pupils being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

Our robust approach to persistently absent children missing from education helps us to identify such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where pupils are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a pupil who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after pupil), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community

We retain overall responsibility for pupils on our roll. Consequently, in-line with KCSIE 2025, we:

- agree at placement meetings what will happen if a pupil does not attend
- ensure that our DSL monitors those children and young people especially closely
- communicate on a regular basis with providers in order to gauge and monitor attendance, progress and effectiveness.
-

We set great store by good attendance at school, adhere to and comply with legislation and statutory guidance: Attendance Guidance

When a pupil leaves our school, the **DSL** will ensure that the local authority is informed wherever pupils:

- Leave the school (we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date when they leave our school)
- leave school to be home educated
- move away from the school's location
- remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards
- are permanently excluded
- are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place

The DSL will also ensure that relevant pupil information is sought and transferred in line with the statutory guidance. This occurs securely and receipts are retained.
The governing body monitors attendance and absence carefully and is mindful of the vulnerability of children missing education. We need to know where children are in order to keep them safe and follow-up non-attendance in a timely and robust way, especially where this is repeated.

Where reasonably possible, we hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil as this gives us additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a pupil does not attend school, is missing education and/or where there is a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. We work in partnership with parents to ensure pupils attend regularly and recognise the role that we all have to play as outlined in the following guidance:

DfE working together to improve attendance August 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

The school's attendance panel meets monthly to analyse attendance and to support parents where attendance falls below our expectations. Given the complex nature of many pupils in our school, consideration may be given to the medical needs that could prevent a pupil from attending. This said, we are never complacent around the non-attendance of any pupil and have robust systems in place to identify the whereabouts of a pupil who is not in school.

In line with statutory guidance, we will always inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for 10 school days or more.

Staff follow the school's procedures for unauthorised absences and for dealing with pupils who are missing education; these are made clear as part of induction and training.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as is possible, the identity of pupils of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Where necessary, we will liaise with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and that they attend regularly.
Children missing education Statutory guidance for local authorities August 2024

Lancashire Children Missing in Education Contact details are: cme@lancashire.gov.uk
01257 517333

Elective Home Education[7]
From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their LA of all deletions from their admission register when a pupil is taken off roll.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a pupil from school with a view to educating at home, we will work together with the local authority and other key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each pupil. This is particularly important where a pupil has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

[7] Elective home education

Children Attending Alternative Provision[8]
We are also mindful of the fact that pupils accessing alternative provision might, potentially, be especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Where a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we retain responsibility for the safeguarding of that pupil, and will always satisfy ourselves that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. To this end, we will:

- Gain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate staff safeguarding checks have been carried out, as well as written information about any arrangements that may put a pupil at risk.
- Have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the pupil may attend.
- Regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meets the pupil's needs.
- If safeguarding concerns occur, the placement will be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary. The reasons and any follow-up action taken will be documented.

SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE

Robust governance provides strategic challenge and ensures that governors test and assure themselves that policies and procedures are in place and effective in that they support the delivery of a robust, whole school approach. Our governors are visible and proactive. We ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training is regularly updated.

Following KCSIE 2025, Part 2, governors ensure that:

- the school complies with its duties under legislation and the law at all times. This includes our obligations under human rights and equality legislation, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED);
- safeguarding, and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development;
- safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, parents, and carers;
- systems should be in place that are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils to confidently report, any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback;
- appropriate safeguarding records are kept, as set out in KCSIE 2025, Annex
- C. (Governors also recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies, ensuring that we have arrangements in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within the school and with local authority children's social care, the safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required).

Governors also facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding by ensuring that policies, procedures and training are effective, embedded and followed by everyone in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote

[8] DfE Alternative Provision

pupil's welfare. Where there is a safeguarding concern, governors will ensure the pupil's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are fully implemented and followed by all staff. The governing body recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis.
Therefore, it will work with the Headteacher and DSL to ensure that staff have opportunities to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy. Our approach is absolutely whole-school.

The governing body receives information from the DSL each term and via our annual online safety review which enables them to review the effectiveness of school [online] filters and its monitoring systems to ensure that:

- Our Internet Service Provider is fit-for-purpose[9]
- Everyone is aware of and understands our protocols and systems
- We regularly test filters[10] to ensure that:
  a. we are not 'over-blocking
  b. they pick-up and manage any and all concerns, e.g. pornography, potentially indecent imagery / Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM,) radicalization or extremism, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, AI-related issues
- Everyone knows how to respond to and escalate concerns

Governors ensure that we take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with, e.g. Equality Act 2010, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and that we work to the relevant [statutory and non statutory] guidance:

Behaviour in Schools 2024
restrictive interventions and reasonable force Apr. 2026

Nominated Safeguarding Governor

Dr Ann-Marie Houghton (a.houghton@lancaster.ac.uk) is the Nominated Safeguarding Governor

The Chair is also our Nominated Safeguarding Governor (NSG) and takes leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements. She is also the named governor for online safety / filtering. The Chair will liaise with the LADO in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher.

The NSG works especially closely with senior leaders and the DSL to ensure compliance and that our safeguarding practice remains 'best'. She is a key conduit between leaders and

[9] Check your ISP
[10] https://testfiltering.com/

governors and meets at least each term with the DSL, ensuring that the requisite time, resources and support are being provided to enable the DSL to fulfill their responsibilities:

- Liaise with the local authority's designated officer (sometimes called LADO) in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher;
- Work closely with the Headteacher and DSL to ensure continued compliance and best practice.
- Take lead responsibility for the ensuring that the school's safeguarding arrangements are compliant and effective;
- Act as a strategic conduit between the DSL and the governing body on safeguarding matters;

Ensure that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff to

- discharge their responsibilities;
- Lead in such a way as to create an environment where all staff and volunteers feel empowered to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and will address any concerns sensitively, effectively and in a timely manner.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL) AND DEPUTY DSLs (DDSLs)

See Part Three for more detailed guidance about what to do if you are worried about a pupil.

The DSL is: Kathryn Arts
The Deputy DSLs are: Susan Campbell, Emma Flynn, Sarah Wisniewski & Fiona Gemson

At The Loyne Specialist School, the DSL also leads on other issues where there is a strong safeguarding component, e.g. Mental Health and Prevent. Therefore, the DSL liaises with the Head Teacher, governors and colleagues in school on these issues and safeguarding per se, to ensure that key personnel are informed and supported and that our approach remains robust and genuinely 'whole-school'.

The DSL [and Deputy DSL] role and responsibilities are detailed in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection; there are also three Deputy DSLs (DDSLs) who have been trained to the same, appropriate level in-line with local authority guidance.

Our DSL takes ultimate and lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). On a day-to-day basis safeguarding activities may be delegated to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) but final lead responsibility remains with the DSL. This is explicit in their job description.

We recognise that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (and their Deputies (DDSLs)) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture in school. Wherever possible, staff will **always** speak to the DSL (or DDSL in their absence) if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare, however 'minor' this might seem. This will happen as soon as possible and always on the same school day. During term time, the designated safeguarding lead and/or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL or DDSLs are not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken and concerns will be shared with another senior leader in school before the pupils leave for home.

As part of their wider responsibilities, DSLs and recognise the need to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust where there is access to out of school provision in line with current guidance.

DSL training

Training will be refreshed at intervals of not more than two years in line with KCSIE 2025 and supplemented by regular updates, at least annually through external mechanisms.

Training equips DSLs and Deputy DSLs (DDSLs) with a range of knowledge and skills including their role and responsibilities; the requirements are laid-out in KCSIE 2025, Annex C. We ensure that any training is fit-for-purpose and compliant and that any Deputy DSLs are trained to the same 'level'.

DSL / DDSL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DSL and DDSL responsibilities are explicit in the role-holders' job descriptions and consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Two and Annex C

Managing referrals

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a pupil to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required;
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Working with others

The DSL (and DDSLs where appropriate) also works closely and effectively with colleagues from other agencies. For example:

- As the Designated LAC Teacher, liaising closely with the Virtual School Head[11] to strengthen safeguarding and educational support for vulnerable pupils, i.e. by monitor progress and promote the educational achievement of children with a social worker, in kinship care, in local authority care or who are 'care experienced'
- Overseeing and co-ordinating early help and TAF processes
- Liaising and working closely with those leading on the promotion of educational outcomes for children who have or have had a social worker and to provide strategic oversight for the outcomes of these children and young people
- Named point of contact for Operation Encompass Notifications[12]

[11] Lancashire Virtual School
[12] https://www.operationencompass.org/

- Notifying the local authority if young people are privately fostered
- Referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority / supporting staff who make referrals
- Referring cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police.
- Referring cases to the Channel programme / supporting staff who make referral
- Referring cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required

Raising awareness

- Ensure that this and related policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- Work alongside the governing body to ensure that this and related policies are reviewed annually (as a minimum) and that the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly;
- Ensure that this policy is available publicly and that parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this;
- Link with the Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (Lancashire County Council, Morecambe Bay clinical commissioning group, and Lancashire police) to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

Taking the lead on Online Safety

The DSL leads on online safety. This includes working with colleagues, the LGB and partners to ensure that the school's approach to online safety, filtering and monitoring are proportionate and robust and that our approach complies with the relevant standards DfE filtering and monitoring standards updated 2026

The Governing body regularly reviews the effectiveness of school filters and monitoring systems. The Chair takes lead responsibility for the ensuring that the school's safeguarding arrangements are compliant and effective, including its processes for online filtering and monitoring in order to ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff are:

- aware of and understand the systems in place;
- manage them effectively;
- know how to escalate concerns when identified.

Maintaining Appropriate Records and Sharing Information

- Maintain fit for purpose safeguarding records centrally and securely and in- line with legislation and guidance
- Record all concerns (including a clear and comprehensive summary of them), discussions, referrals, decisions made, the reasons for those decisions, how any issues were followed-up and resolved and the overall outcome on the CPOMs system;
- Liaise and work closely with those leading on the promotion of educational outcomes of pupils who have or have had a social worker to provide strategic oversight for the outcomes of these pupils and young people;
- Where pupils leave the school, ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible. (This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit; confirmation of receipt will be obtained).
- Consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a pupil leaving. (For example, information that would allow them to have appropriate support in place when the pupil arrives).

Monitoring caseloads and providing mutual support

- Caseloads are reviewed regularly to respond dynamically to need and knowledge of individuals.
- In recognition of the complexity of safeguarding and welfare cases within a specialist setting, half termly meetings are held to complete these reviews
- Caseload meetings with other professionals, (e.g. Learning Disability team, Children with Disabilities team, therapists etc.) are held regularly and at least termly.
- Informal meetings between DSLs to provide mutual support form part of ordinary working and ensure consistency
-

Further Guidance

NSPCC Recording and retention guidance September 2023

PART TWO: SAFER SCHOOLS & THE BROADER SAFEGUARDING AGENDA[13]

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In line with EYFS (2025), KCSIE 2025 and Safer Recruitment Consortium training and guidance, we do everything possible to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from gaining access to our pupils in our care. We do this by:

- Ensuring that safeguarding remains front and centre in all that we do
- Ensuring that we fulfil our responsibilities in respect of school security and preparedness and that staff remain vigilant at all times.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are up-to-date and fit-for-purpose
- Vetting and managing visitors, including guest speakers,
- Training relevant personnel in Paediatric First Aid, safeguarding, recruitment and selection
- Ensuring that at least one person on every interview panel has completed relevant training
- Conducting online checks on short-listed candidates
- Conducting and documenting all relevant pre-appointment checks in line with KCSIE (Part 3) and EYFS (2025), including in respect of students, contractors and third-party providers. (These are maintained on our up-to-date Single Central Record (SCR) which is checked regularly by the DSL) [14]
- Maintaining up-to-date HR documentation which aligns with information on the SCR
- Seeking the requisite safeguarding assurances from any and all contractors and third-party providers / personnel in line with KCSIE 2025, i.e. confirming their identity and that the checks we would undertake if we were employing them have been completed
- Ensuring that pupils are indeed attending any extended services or Alternative Provision and that it is safe, compliant and effective
- Ensuring that third-party providers are clear about the school's role and responsibilities around the management of concerns or allegations pertaining to adults
- Maintaining up-to-date, written risk assessments, including in respect of any volunteers
- Complying with TRA regulations and the DBS Code of Practice in respect of referral, prohibition and barring[15]
- Ensuring that everyone, including visitors, know who the DSLs are and how to report and / or escalate a concern
- Ensuring that safeguarding, staff conduct and behavior (including online and outside school), safer working practice, the management of low level concerns, allegations and whistle-blowing are considered as part of induction and training
- Filtering, monitoring and managing devices and access to them, including in the early year provision
- Utilizing additional opportunities to reinforce procedures, core messages and our safeguarding culture through staff meetings and CPD, to ensure that staff feel supported in raising any concerns

[13] https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/iicsa-final-report/

[14] This includes complying with EYFS requirements EYFS 2025 alongside the duty to check in- line with s.128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 - barring individuals from taking part in the management of an independent school (This applies to governors of maintained schools and these checks will be included on the single central record.

[15] Teaching Regulation Authority (TRA) guidance

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All governors and staff are aware of systems within our school which support safeguarding. We adopt a whole-school approach to safeguarding training to ensure that everyone is clear about roles, responsibilities and processes in school and beyond. Formal training is delivered annually in the Autumn Term. Staff also receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the academic year in focussed morning briefings.

Minimally, safeguarding training always addresses the requirements of Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and this policy. We also ensure that everyone understands early help processes, the procedure for making a referral to Children's Services, and what happens following a referral (including any role they might be expected to play in assessments and related processes).

Governors also ensure that online safety training for staff is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the school's overarching safeguarding approach.
Some staff access more advanced safeguarding and / or additional training, commensurate with their role and responsibility and in-line with statutory guidance and Lancashire's recommendations e.g. Designated Safeguarding Leads, those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff, those responsible for administration of medication, staff requiring First Aid training for specific areas of school etc.
We retain a statement centrally, signed by staff, which makes clear that they have received, read, understand and will work to this Safeguarding and Child protection Policy and KCSIE 2025, Part One. In addition, we maintain a record of any safeguarding training and updates delivered to staff.

INDUCTION

The DSL and governors ensure that everyone receives meaningful induction, safeguarding, safer recruitment, Prevent, Paediatric First Aid (where appropriate) and other relevant training. This is delivered and updated in line with statutory requirements and a record of this maintained centrally. The content of our training is underpinned by statutory guidance and local protocols / procedures. It is, research and evidence-led, tailored to reflect the school's [safeguarding] context and updated at least annually to ensure that we remain abreast of emergent issues and themes.

Research over time tells us that our pupils are especially vulnerable to all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. A number of them are vulnerable due to multiple factors, e.g. age, dependency, capacity, speech / language / communication, health-related needs and complexities. Staff and governors are very mindful of this and it is reflected in the training they receive.
Safeguarding is **integral to induction** and the following information is made available and explained as part of the induction process:

- Part 1 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025;
- The Safeguarding and Child protection policy;
- The behaviour policy;
- The staff code of conduct;
- Online Safety;
- Low level concerns;
- The response to pupils who go missing from education;
- The identities and roles of DSLs and DDSLs

We adopt a proportionate, risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff and volunteers. This means that, as a minimum, everyone is provided with key information regarding the Designated Safeguarding Leads in school and how and where to record and report **any** safeguarding issues
or welfare concerns, however minor these might seem at face value.

CONDUCT, BEHAVIOUR AND SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

Everyone at our school is clear about expected codes of conduct and we set the highest possible standards in this respect, both in and outside school. All staff and volunteers must uphold public trust in our school and, where applicable, the teaching profession. We encourage others to do the same and will challenge and respond appropriately and immediately where this is not the case.

The principles which underpin our practice derive from the Safer Recruitment Consortium's (Feb. 2022) national 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Young People in Education Settings'.
Guidance for Safer Working Practice Feb 2023

These are reflected in our school Code of Conduct which is provided to all staff and volunteers during induction and again at the beginning of each school year. Everyone must read and adhere to this.

Physical Contact

We are clear that a 'no contact' policy in school is unworkable as it would mean that we would be unable to fully support pupils. Therefore, staff must exercise their professional judgement and everyone will adopt and implement a sensible, proportionate approach oriented around the following principles:

- Physical contact will occur where it is needed to meet the needs of a pupil or pupils;
- We will encourage pupils to do things for themselves wherever possible;
- We will behave professionally, consistently and transparently at all times.

Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Practices

In our specialist school, we are very mindful that pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

Therefore, we:

- Have created an inclusive, adapted environment according to the varying needs of our pupils
- Understand underlying and potential triggers, e.g. by focusing on effective communication
- Provide ongoing support to pupils, parents / carers and staff and work with them and

other professionals to develop prevention/ de-escalation strategies and fit-for-purpose Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSP) and risk assessments
- Review and evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event, to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a PBSP

Whilst they are mindful of its limitations and what can be inferred from it, governors regularly review and interrogate data to ensure that leaders:
- Identify and address any inappropriate or disproportionate use
- Identify and implement improvements to policies and practices
- Identify areas of learning and development for staff, to improve understanding, policy and practice
- Interrogate the effectiveness of PSBPs and share this information with staff and parents

At The Loyne Specialist School, our aim is to minimise/eliminate the use of restrictive practices, through implementing positive behavioural support strategies devised upon individual needs, characteristics and preferences and focused upon improving quality of life outcomes.

Where restrictive interventions are needed as part of a gradient approach, this is documented and shared with parents through the PBSP which also outlines a 'Restrictive Intervention Reduction Plan'. The school uses the supportive, pupil-oriented Proact-Scipr ® framework to embed our ethos around behaviour support. It is underpinned by a 'whole approach': the individual, staff and the school. There are four licensed Proact-Scipr® instructors who oversee staff training and compliance and review the approach

Restrictive intervention, including the use of reasonable force, is a last resort and will be avoided wherever possible. Whether its use is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a PBSP.

Staff are required and expected to exercise professional judgement and act in the best interests of pupils. In so doing, they MUST ensure they are familiar with:
- The pupils they are working with, including any potential triggers and how to communicate with them
- Relevant PBSPs, risk assessments and agreed de-escalation strategies
- Our systems for recording and reporting any such incidents

Recording and Reporting the Use of Force
In line with statutory guidance, the governing body has ensured that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each significant use of force to the parents of the pupil involved[16]:
- Records will be made that day and align with the updated statutory guidance (April 2026, p.14)
- Reports will be made to parents in writing in line with statutory guidance (April 2026,

[16] The requirement to inform parents applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's PBSP. We note the exception criteria around reporting (p.20)- restrictive interventions and reasonable force Apr. 2026

p.15) This will occur as soon as practicable after the incident and, wherever possible, also that same day.

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the school's I complaints procedure. An allegation will be dealt with in line with KCSIE 2025, Part 4 (i).

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF (INCLUDING SUPPLY) AND VOLUNTEERS

This guidance should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teachers and volunteers, has:

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

Any and all allegations will be managed in-line with KCSIE 2025, Part four, local procedures and protocols as detailed in the flow chart below on page 22. This includes historical or non-recent allegations; alleged abuse will be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Non recent allegations will be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures. The LADO will coordinate with children's social care and the police.

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher, member of staff or volunteer is dealt with quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the pupil and, at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The Loyne Specialist School has a duty of care to its employees and will ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. Suspension is not an automatic response to an allegation and the school will respond proportionately to them in order to manage risk and provide appropriate support.

Reporting an Allegation

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers) posing a risk of harm to pupils, then this should be referred to the Headteacher. Where there are concerns/allegations about the Headteacher, this should be reported to the chair of governors, Dr Ann- Marie Houghton.

What Happens Next

Allegations will be discussed immediately with the local authority designated officer in order that the nature and context of the allegations can be considered and a next course agreed upon.

Lancashire LADO
01772 536694
lado.admin@lancashire.gov.uk

The person to whom an allegation has been reported becomes the case manager and will ensure compliance with the Loyne Specialist School's Management of Allegations Policy, KCSIE (2024, Part four (i)) and locally agreed procedures. If the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or a teacher's family, for example, those concerns should be reported to the designated officer, social care or the police.

The flowchart over the page provides a step-by-step guide to the management of allegations and this clarifies important issues such as consultation, information sharing, confidentiality, support, feedback, recording and notifications.

For further and more detailed guidance please refer to the 'Management of Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers' policy
or, externally:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 *Part Four and Annex F.*
https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and- families/safeguarding-children/local-authority-designated-officer/

Process For Managing Allegations About Staff KCSIE 2025, Part 4

KCSIE 2025 defines an allegation as information which indicates an adult has:

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

Report to Head who becomes the Case Manager

(Report to Chair of Governors if Allegation is against Head)

- Case Manager gathers basic information, begins timeline / record & manages immediate risk
- Case Manager may seek advice via HR
- **Any allegation which meets or may meet the above criteria MUST be reported IMMEDIATELY to the Local Authority's Designated Officer**
- Nature and context discussed and next steps agreed, including information sharing

- Following HR, LADO and any CSC/ Police advice case manager ensures appropriate information is shared and support provided to those involved.

Agreed that Matter to be Dealt with in and by School / Employer

- Ensure appropriate support for all
- Case Manager records, including formal outcome on HR file

Formal External Referral

- Case Manager completes referral to LADO **and** any onward consultation / referral(s) to Children's Social Care and Police

Employer's internal action

Strategy Meeting

Police enquiries

s47 / CP

Manage confidentiality, speculation, leaks, gossip and any media issues in consultation with LA HR advice

Unfounded | **False** | **Malicious** | **Unsubstantiated** | **Substantiated**

Once external enquiries and processes have run their course

Case manager discusses with LADO and HR whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is

This procedure applies to all adults working in or for the school, including supply staff and volunteers

LOW LEVEL CONCERNS WHICH DO NOT MEET THE [ALLEGATIONS] HARM THRESHOLD[17]

We will adhere to the **School's Low Level Concerns Policy** and KCSIE 2025, Part Four (ii).

Prevention / Culture

We promote an open and transparent culture which enables us to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early. We ensure that every adult working in our school or on behalf of it is clear about and acts within professional boundaries, in accordance with our ethos and values. This helps to minimise the risk of abuse.

What is a 'Low Level Concern'

The term does not mean that it is insignificant. 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 harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
- being over friendly with pupils
- having favourites
- taking photographs of pupils on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a pupil on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

How Might they Arise?

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources, e.g.

- suspicion
- complaint
- or disclosure made by a pupil, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation
- as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

Responding to a Low Level Concern

All concerns about any adults working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately, i.e. they are always:

- shared responsibly with the right person
- recorded and dealt with appropriately
- reflected upon to see whether we need to improve or change anything

Who a low level concern is reported to will depend on the nature of it but the Principal will always be the ultimate decision maker on these matters. Anyone who has concerns should

[17] As defined in KCSIE 2025, Part Four (ii) & Farrer's Guidance

discuss it with the DSL / Principal as soon as possible. They should not discuss it with anyone else.

Recording
Where the DSL / Headteacher is unsure whether the harm threshold may have been met they will seek advice from LADO and School's HR

The DSL / Headteacher will record:

- details of the concern
- the context in which it arose
- any action taken
- name of the person who raised the concern[18]

These notes will be kept securely within CPOMS StaffSafe in line with the DPA 2018 and UKGDPR. Principals will ensure that any records of low level concerns are brought to the attention of their successor in the event that they are to leave the school. Low level concerns will not be included in references.

Learning Lessons
The Headteacher and DSL will reflect and check for any patterns wider, cultural, procedural, training or practice issues and take the requisite remedial action.

CONCERNS ABOUT SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE & WHISTLE BLOWING

Anyone should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
Appropriate whistle-blowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, are in place. These provide clear direction and enable any concerns to be raised appropriately.

Where someone feels unable to raise an issue with the school, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them:

Local Authority Designated Officer (see above)
Lancashire CC Whistle-blowing WhistleblowingComplaints@lancashire.gov.uk 01772 532500
Public Concern at Work (National charity offering free whistle-blowing help and advice):
helpline@pcaw.co.uk
Tel: 020 7404 6609

Ofsted
Tel: 0300 123 3155

NSPCC Whistle-blowing Helpline
Tel: 0800 028 0285

[18] Their wish to remain anonymous will be respected as far as possible.

PART THREE: TAKING ACTION

Important Safeguarding Personnel & Contacts

In School	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Kathryn Arts *also the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and the Prevent Lead
Deputy DSLs	Susan Campbell Emma Flynn Fiona Gemson Sarah Wisniewski
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Kathryn Arts
Chair of Governors & Nominated Safeguarding Governor (NSG) Chair is the operational point of contact for allegations against the Head Teacher. The NSG Works closely with the DSL to link and lead on safeguarding governance	Dr Ann-Marie Houghton a.houghton@lancaster.ac.uk
Advice, Referrals, Other Services	
Safeguarding Advice (Schools)	01772 531196
LADO	LADO.admin@lancashire.gov.uk 01772 536694
Website for all Local Authority referral information (children & adults) https://lancashiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/p/report-a-concern	
Children's Services (Referrals) **Out of Hours**	0300 123 6720 0300 123 6722
Adult Services (Referrals)	0300 123 6720
Prevent / Channel / Extremism	Advice: 01772 209733 Refer: 01772 412742 concern@lancashire.pnn.police.uk
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Team	awaken@lancashire.pnn.police.uk 01253 477261
Virtual School Head (Looked After Children)	Vanessa Nice 01772 531853 virtualschool@lancashire.gov.uk
Children Missing Education	cme@lancashire.gov.uk 01257 517333
Young Carers in Lancashire	lancashireyoungcarers@barnardos.org.uk 01772 641002
Private Fostering	0300 1236701
Lancashire Children and Family Wellbeing Service Contact	Louise.jefferson@lancashire.gov.uk 07815 948343
Parents seeking Family Support	0300 123 6720 Out of hours 0300 123 6722
Whistle-Blowing	
Lancashire County Council **OFSTED whistle-blowing** **Public Concern at Work** **NSPCC whistle-blowing**	WhistleblowingComplaints@lancashire.gov.uk 01772 532500 whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk 0300 123 3155 helpline@pcaw.co.uk 020 7404 6609 0800 028 0285

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All children & young people can communicate. Our job to support them to do this in whichever way works for them. That means finding out about and adapt to their individual communication style, rather than expecting them to adapt to yours.

It is always safer to discuss any welfare concern or potential safeguarding / child protection matter with the DSL or DDSL in school, regardless of how minor it may appear at face value. You are not bothering anyone, being a nuisance, overly cautious or wasting their time or! If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety *you should act immediately*.

Any and all of the following concerns MUST ALWAYS be reported to the DSL without delay (this list is not exhaustive):

- Any suspicion that a pupil is injured, marked, or bruised in a way that is not readily attributable to the normal bumps and knocks associated with play
- / growing up; and / or,
- Where the pupil is able to articulate and the explanation is inconsistent or changes;
- Any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a pupil may have suffered harm (e.g. significant changes in behaviour, worrying drawings or play);
- Any concerns that a pupil may be receiving inadequate care, suffering or likely to suffer any form of abuse or neglect;
- Any significant changes in a pupil's presentation, including non- attendance
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse or neglect by a pupil or from any other person - including disclosures of abuse or neglect perpetrated by adults outside of the family or by other children or young people;
- Any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. staff in school or person living in a household with children present) including inappropriate behaviour e.g. inappropriate sexual comments;
- Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of a staff member / professional or volunteer's usual role and responsibilities;
- Inappropriate behaviour online inc. the sharing of images.

EARLY HELP

No single professional can have a full picture of a pupil's needs and circumstances. If pupils and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Schools are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for pupils, and prevent concerns from escalating. Our pastoral system enables us to identify pupils who may benefit from early help – this means providing support as soon as a problem emerges. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of pupils than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a pupil's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if a pupil's behaviour is becoming problematic due to lack of appropriate guidance and boundaries at home. Effective early help relies upon

local agencies working together to:

- Identify pupils and families who would benefit from early help;
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a pupil and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the pupil.

The Loyne Specialist School is committed to early help and the identification of unmet needs and vulnerabilities of its pupils and works in partnership with other agencies to promote the welfare of the pupils and to keep them safe. All staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other agencies and for some staff acting as the lead professional in undertaking early help assessments.
The Loyne Specialist School adheres to Lancashire's Young People's Wellbeing Prevention & Early Help procedures and will implement the early help process to support the wellbeing of pupils and families by tackling emerging needs at the earliest opportunity. This involves working with pupils and their families to engage and include them as equal partners and to support them in accessing additional services.

CON guidance Lancashire
Early Help & TAF Lancashire

In the first instance, staff will discuss early help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy (DDSL), who will advise where staff are required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.

The DSL and DDSLs have all completed the Early Help Assessment training.

- Any pupil may benefit from early help, but staff are particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a pupil who:
- is a young carer;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the pupil, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse; and/or
- has returned home to their family from care.

REPORTING A CONCERN IN SCHOOL

We recognise that those who are new to school, who are there in an unpaid capacity or on a temporary basis, can sometimes pick-up on things. Everyone has a responsibility to report concerns and everyone will be listened to and heard if they do so, whatever their role and however trivial or insignificant the concern might seem at face value. Anyone who has a 'niggle' or concern about the need for early help for a pupil / family should liaise with the DSL.

The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns during school hours. However, in exceptional circumstances, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children's social care.
https://www.safeguardingpartnership.org.uk/report/
Report Child abuse to local council (search by postcode to find CS number)

In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible. The DSL will ensure that there is prompt follow-up and that a complete and fit-for purpose record is maintained in school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Everyone in school must be aware of the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and, where necessary, Children's Services or the police.

Where a member of staff is asked for sensitive information and any uncertainty remains about whether to share it they should:

- Ask for a means of verifying the identity of the person making the request;
- Explain that the information is sensitive and that you need to seek advice (from the Headteacher);
- Ensure that there is a timely and appropriate response from a member of SLT.

RECORDING

We recognise that accurate and up-to-date record keeping is essential for a number of reasons:

- It helps the school identify causes for concern at an early stage. (Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are taken as a whole that a safeguarding or child protection concern becomes clear);
- It helps the school to monitor and manage its safeguarding practices
- It helps to evidence robust and effective safeguarding practice in inspections and audits.
- Accurate and specific records are important where there are child protection and safeguarding concerns (e.g. a chronology of information gathered and action taken].

The DSL is responsible for the maintenance of fit for purpose safeguarding records; these will be kept centrally and securely via CPOMS and in-line with legislation and guidance[19]. When a pupil leaves our school, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible. (This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit; confirmation of receipt will be obtained). The DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a pupil leaving. (For example, information that would allow them to have appropriate support in place when the pupil arrives).

RECORD KEEPING GUIDANCE FOR DSLs / DEPUTY DSLS

Safeguarding records (and low level concerns) are recorded centrally and securely on the Child Protection Management System (CPOMS) The DSL oversees and monitors the system and ensures that safeguarding record-keeping is robust and fit-for-purpose: This means that all concerns are recorded and that records contain:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of them
- discussions and advice sought

[19] NSPCC 2023 Child protection records retention and storage guidance website
NSPCC 2023 briefing Child protection records retention and storage guidelines pdf

- decisions made and the reasons for those decisions
- how any issues were followed-up and resolved
- the overall outcome

The DSL will also ensure that the system is maintained so as to maximize its usefulness, e.g. archiving as appropriate, running reports to produce meaningful overviews for the Headteacher and governors. Broadly speaking, this means:

- Circumstances of the case
- What course of action was agreed and why
- The outcome of any action taken
- If no action was taken, the reason for this

When a welfare concern is brought to their attention, DSLs will:

- Check to ensure that this is sufficiently detailed
- Ensure that any supplementary information is attached, signed and dated;
- Hand written notes, e.g. made when a pupil made a disclosure, body maps etc - should be scanned into CPOMS and reference made to this in the chronology;
- Make a record of the action you take in response to every welfare concern brought to your attention. The level of detail will clearly depend on the nature and seriousness.

In addition, DSLs will record:

- Positives and change(s) in chronologies as these can be really important, especially where cumulative forms of abuse such as neglect are concerned;
- Requests to staff for monitoring specific aspects of the pupil's presentation,
- behaviour, attendance etc;
- Discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, parents and children / young people, Social Care and other agencies or services);
- Professional consultations;
- Letters sent and received;
- Early Help Assessments and referrals (both for external and education- based services)

RECORD KEEPING GUIDANCE FOR ALL STAFF - RECORDING A CONCERN

What is a 'welfare concern'?

Concerns may arise in one or more of the following areas:

- The pupil's behaviour;
- The pupil has a physical injury;
- Someone makes a disclosure or allegation;
- Someone's physical, emotional or behavioural presentation;
- Information from someone else who is worried.

What Should Be Recorded?

- Describe the incident / event / observation clearly and concisely;
- Use straightforward (but sensitive) language;
- Differentiate between a fact and an opinion (and stick to the former where possible);
- Make clear what, if any, action you have already taken.

What if I don't have CPOMS log-in?
Anyone who does not have a CPOMS log-in should speak to the DSL / DDSL without delay and always that same day / before pupils leave. They must also ensure that an appropriate professional record is made following a safeguarding-related observation, report or disclosure. This is their professional responsibility. Staff with a log-in should use the system to record and report although everyone must be mindful that this is not a substitute for raising or discussing concerns with the DSL / DDSL.

PHYSICAL MARKS AND INJURIES (INC. THE USE OF BODY MAPS)

Body maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries:

- Do not remove clothing unless the site of the injury site is available because of treatment;
- Record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g. red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds and burns:

✓ Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek;
✓ Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches;
✓ Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line;
✓ Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so;
✓ Is the skin broken?
✓ Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
✓ Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
✓ Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc?
✓ Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
✓ Does the site of the injury feel hot? Does the pupil feel hot?
✓ Does the pupil feel pain?
✓ Has the pupil's body shape changed?
✓ Are they holding themselves differently?

☹ **DO NOT** try to explain what you think caused the marks;
☹ **Do NOT** take photographs.

- The date **and time** of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record.
- Ensure that appropriate first aid is provided where required and document this.

Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the DSL and any appropriate, onward referral made. The pupil's social worker should be informed if the case is already open or pupils are subjects of CP Plans etc.

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OR REPORT OF ABUSE

It is recognised that a pupil may seek out an individual teacher/adult to share information specifically about abuse or neglect, or a pupil may talk spontaneously, individually or in a group when staff or volunteers are present.

Spontaneous disclosures are rare from disabled pupils, especially those who use alternative or augmentative communication systems and abuse is more likely to be identified via physical signs, behavioural responses and /or emotional presentation / changes.

National guidance makes it clear that for some children it is not yet possible to proscribe techniques for communicating about possible abusive experiences in ways which are reliable and evidentially safe. In order to give our pupils a 'voice', we tailor our approach to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, we:

- Ensure that staff know individual pupils well so that they can help them to communicate in ways and at a level that the pupil understands
- Consider the environment in order to ensure that pupils feel as safe as possible and that added distractions and/or potential sources of anxiety and minimised
- Don't rush and ensure that sufficient time is allowed for pupils to process questions or information.
- Will use only clear and specific questions or phrases
- Don't re-phrase any questions that we might need to ask in order to achieve more clarity. We will repeat questions in the same way, be led by and go at the pupil's pace

Use visual supports with which pupils are familiar in order to assist and reinforce communication. More generally, in these situations it is important to:

- Listen to the pupil, and allow them to freely recall significant events, without interruption;
- Take into account the communication needs of the pupil but if you must clarify something use minimal prompts such as 'what happened next ... go on ... I see ... tell me more about that ...';
- If you must ask questions ensure that these are 'open', i.e. sentences should not begin with words like 'did, had, can, were ...
- 'When was the last time this happened?' is sometimes a really important
- question to ask, especially where timeframes are unclear
- Focus on the facts i.e. who, what, when, where? Don't get embroiled in 'how' or 'why'?
- **DO NOT** judge or react negatively. Avoid displays of shock and keep

opinions to yourself as this may act as barriers to a pupil who has something sensitive to tell you.

RECORDING A DISCLOSURE

- Include timing, setting and who was present;
- Use the pupil's own words and language;
- Record any questions you may have asked;
- Record the pupil's demeanour as well as what is said;
- Any repetition is important to note i.e. things that the pupil repeats – these may be particularly significant;
- Gestures are important to describe accurately e.g. which hand / which cheek, open /closed hand / fist etc.
- Explain that they cannot promise to keep confidential anything the pupil says if the matter is related to child protection or abuse;
- Explain that help may be required to keep them safe, but do not ask the pupil to repeat their account to anyone else.

The individual who receives the information will be expected to pass it on as a matter of urgency to the Designated Safeguarding Lead - **this record is important, evidentially, and everyone must take responsibility for making a suitable record in these circumstances.** Where any doubt remains around record-keeping, staff must discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) as soon as possible and always that same day.

CONSENT & INFORMATION SHARING[20]

Children are best protected when professionals work effectively together and we will always act in their best interests. Records and information will be managed in line with legislation, statutory and best practice guidance and local procedures / protocols. The DSL ensures that relevant pupil information is sought and transferred in line with the statutory guidance. This occurs securely and receipts are retained

REFERRALS TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare and undertake assessments of the needs of individual children to determine which services to provide and what action to take. To this end, there are two types of referral that can be made to local authority children's services.

Pan-Lancashire: Key Information and Guidance

Family Safeguarding in Lancashire
Family safeguarding - Lancashire County Council

Requesting Support
https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and- families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/

MASH: Advice & Referral Information:
https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and- families/safeguarding-children/childrens-services-support-hub/

Working Well Guidance: 'Thresholds' and Services
https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/#5

Safeguarding Adults
https://lancashiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/safeguarding-adults

[20] DSLs should also refer to Requesting Support from Children's Services https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children- and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/

CHILDREN IN NEED / SECTION 17 CHILDREN ACT 1989

A pupil in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a pupil who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a pupil who is disabled.

Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17. Professionals should submit a referral form directly to Children's Social Care via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The referral form must be completed as comprehensively as possible. If you are a professional, you should always inform the parent of your concerns and that you will be making a referral and wherever possible seek their consent beforehand.

The following referral form should be used.

When assessing children in need and providing services, specialist assessments may be required and, where possible, should be co-ordinated so that the pupil and family experience a coherent process and a single plan of action. Children in need should be discussed with the DSL in the first instance.

CHILD PROTECTION / SIGNIFICANT HARM / SECTION 47 CHILDREN ACT 1989

Child protection is one part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect pupils who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Significant Harm

The definition of significant harm is not absolute and its interpretation will depend largely on professional judgement, based on the known facts. It can include inappropriate touching, an assault, or a series of compounding events e.g. bullying. Other factors to be considered include the age and vulnerability of the pupil, the degree of force used, the frequency of the harm, the nature of the harm in terms of ill treatment, and the impact on the pupil's health and development.

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquires under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm - this is sometimes referred to as the 'threshold' for child protection.

Section 47 enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the pupil's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour based abuse, as well as extra- familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.

When there are concerns about a pupil or young person at level 4 of the CON (child protection), you should make direct contact on 0300 123 6720 or the Police (999 in an emergency) and complete the referral form once the immediate concerns have been addressed. If the pupil you are concerned about already has an allocated Social Worker go directly to this person by contacting 0300 123 6720.

DISCUSSING CONCERNS OR THE INTENTION TO REFER WITH PARENTS

Wherever possible, the DSL in school will share concerns and discuss the intention to make a section 47 referral openly and honestly with parents before doing so. However, there are some circumstances under which a decision can and will be taken to share information prior to / without a discussion with parents:

- To avoid undue delay which might compromise a pupil's safety; and / or where to do so might increase the risk of harm and / or jeopardise or impede an investigation. Examples include concerns about (and this list is not exhaustive):
- Fabricated or induced illness;
- Intra-familial sexual abuse;
- So-called honour-based violence;
- Abusive images of children.

The welfare of the pupil will always be our paramount consideration.
The person making the referral must maintain a contemporaneous record of discussions (who, role, time) and actions. The local authority should make a decision, within one working day of a referral being made and should let the referrer know the outcome. **The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.**

FOLLOWING A REFERRAL TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES[21]

Options include:

- The pupil requires immediate protection and urgent action is required;
- Whether the pupil is in need, and should be assessed under section 17;
- There is reasonable cause to suspect the pupil is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant
- harm, and whether enquiries must be made and the pupil assessed under section 47;
- Any services are required by the pupil and family and what type of services;
- Further specialist assessments are required in order to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.

If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as required). Where it is believed that a crime has or may have been committed police will be contacted without delay.

PROFESSIONAL DISAGREEMENTS, ESCALATION AND CHALLENGE[22]

Seeking Feedback after raising a concern

Having passed your information onto the DSL or a Deputy DSL, if you want or think you need some feedback or an update you should seek it from the DSL or a Deputy DSL. Information will be shared with staff on a 'need to know basis'.

If You don't feel listened to or taken seriously or if nothing changes

In the highly unlikely event that you don't feel listened to, your concern doesn't appear to have been taken seriously or nothing changes it is your responsibility to follow this up by:

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[21] Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 pages 57-70 contains lots of helpful information and flowcharts in respect of what happens after a referral.

[22] Resolving Professional Disagreements (Escalation and Conflict Resolution)

- Approaching the DSL;
- Approaching a Deputy DSL;
- Raising your concerns with the Head Teacher;
- Raising your concerns with the Chair of Governors
- Contact an external agency / professional.

While it usually falls to the DSL / Deputy DSL to refer to external agencies anyone can do so.

If after a referral the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving the DSL will press for re- consideration to ensure that concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the pupil's situation improves. Where a referrer feels that the response to a referral is inappropriate or unsafe they must escalate and challenge other agencies and professionals. This will be carried out in-line with multi-agency protocols and procedures.

MULTI-AGENCY MEETINGS

The DSL / DDSL will attend and represent the school at multi-agency safeguarding and child protection meetings such as Child protection Conferences, Core Groups and Strategy Meetings. Anyone representing the school must be clear about their role and responsibilities in order that they are able to make an appropriate, professional contribution. (This includes being clear about associated escalation and professional disagreement protocols). Records will be maintained securely on CPOMS by the DSL.

Where staff are required to attend they will be provided with appropriate support by the DSL.

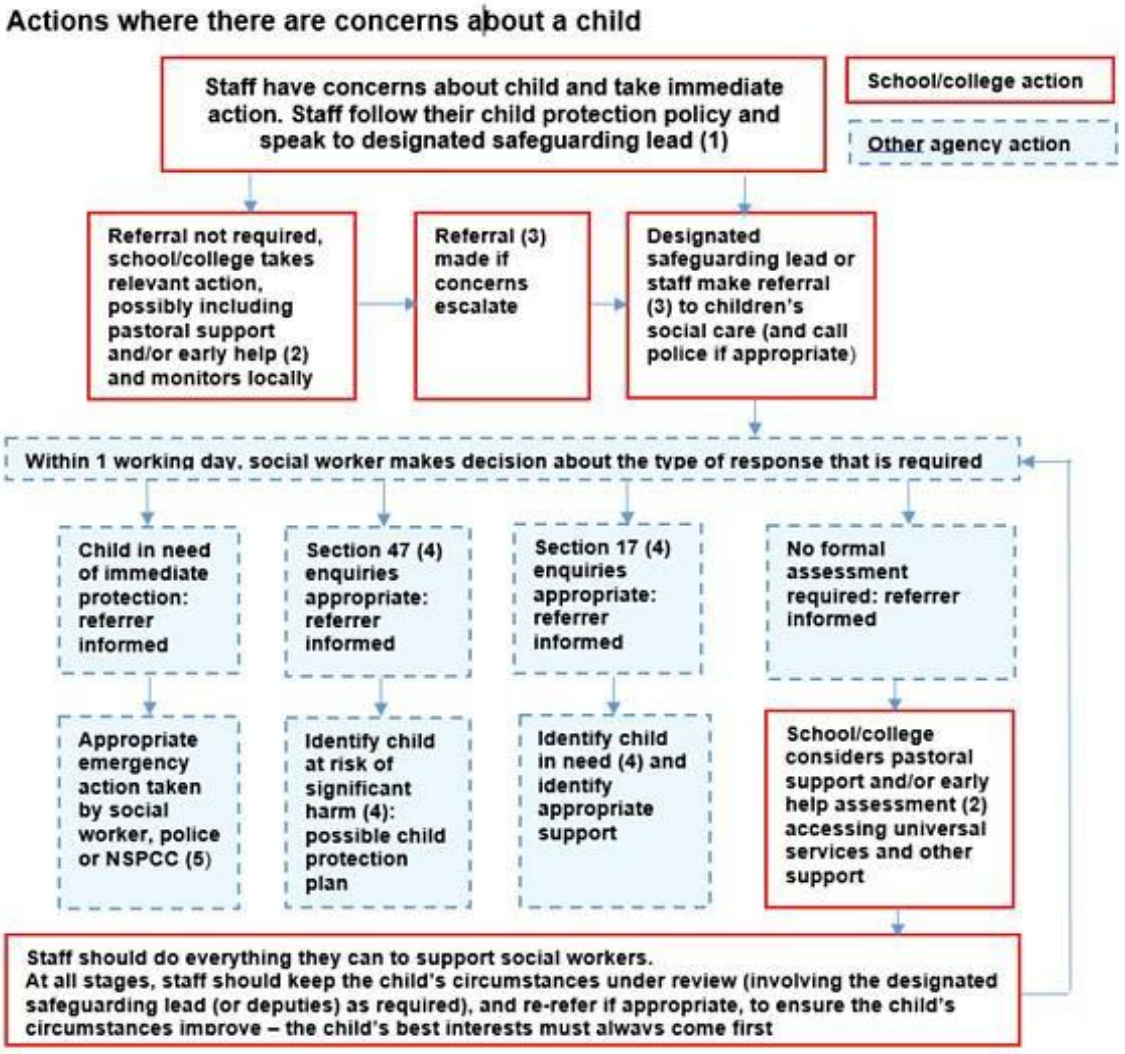
Reports will be provided in advance of such meetings, in-line with and, where applicable, using locally agreed templates and protocols.

Pan Lancashire Procedures

Working Together (WT) 2026 page 62

WORRIED ABOUT A PUPIL - TAKING ACTION FLOWCHART

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025: Flowchart



If concerns relate to the conduct of or an allegations against a member of staff / adult in school these must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. If the concerns relate to the Headteacher then the concerns should be brought to the immediate attention of the Chair of the GB.

1. Chapter Three of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 provides more detailed information about early help processes
2. Chapter Three of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 provides more detailed information about referral processes.
3. Assessment under s17 of the Children Act 1989 or enquiries under s47 of the same act.
4. For example, deciding whether to apply to Court for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO)

Ref: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, page 10

PART FOUR: TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HARM, ABUSE AND NEGLECT

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

One crucial aspect of our safeguarding work in school involves protecting pupils from abuse and neglect. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) defines four, overarching categories of Child abuse: Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse and Neglect:

1. **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);
- Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- They may also include non-contact activities such as:
- Involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images;
- Watching sexual activities;
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- 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.

2. **Emotional abuse is:**

- The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. 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 the
- child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection 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;
- The exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

3. **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.

4. **Fabricated Illness**

- The carer does not physically harm the child but reports a clinical story which is fabricated. This is frequently 'supported' by false specimens e.g. use of menstrual or animal blood;
- Induced Illness
- The carer inflicts harm on the child e.g. poisoning, suffocation, tearing et.

5. 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 misuse;
- 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.

ADULT ABUSE

Physical	Physical abuse is causing physical pain, injury or suffering to someone else. Examples include: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, not giving someone their medication, or too much medication or the wrong medication, the use of illegal restraint for example, where someone holds another person by forcing them down, inappropriate physical sanctions like locking someone up in a room or tying them to furniture.
Sexual	Sexual abuse is when someone does sexual things to another person who does not want it happening to them or may not understand what's happening. Examples include: forcing someone to have sex against their will, i.e. rape, sexual assault, touching, making sexual remarks, making someone take part in sexual acts, like made to watch sexual activity or films, sexual exploitation
Psychological	Psychological abuse is also known as emotional abuse. This is when someone says and does bad things to upset and hurt someone else. Examples include: humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating, harassing, verbal abuse, bullying and cyber bullying, isolating, threatening to harm or abandon (leave someone in need), coercion, stopping someone from seeing other people, e.g. their friends and family, stopping someone from having access to services or support.
Financial & Material	Financial and material abuse is when someone takes someone's money or things without asking. Examples of financial and material abuse include: theft, which is stealing money, benefits or things, fraud, misuse of a person's property or things, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone to change their financial arrangements, such as wills, property or inheritance, misuse of any lasting power of attorney or appointeeship
Neglect & Acts of Omission	When someone says they are going to help someone by giving them care and support but they do not. Acts of omission occur when someone ignores situations when someone else is being neglected. Examples include: leaving someone alone for a long time, ignoring

	medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to the right health or social care services, withholding medication, not giving adequate nutrition or heating
Organisational	Any form of abuse is caused by an organisation. It can include neglect and poor practice within a specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or where care is given to someone in their own home.
Self Neglect	When someone does not take care of themselves properly. This can put their safety, health and well-being in danger, e.g. when someone does not keep clean, does not look after their own health, does not clean where they live, lives in hoarding conditions by keeping lots of things around them. Self-neglect may happen because a person is unable or unwilling (or both) to manage to care for them self or their home. Sometimes some people choose to live like this. It is important their rights are supported if they have the mental capacity to make the decision
Discriminatory Abuse	When someone says or does bad things to someone else because they are different to them. People are treated unfairly because of their race or religion, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, age, disability. Examples include: harassment, verbal abuse, physical and psychological abuse, hate incidents or hate crime.
Mate Crime	Mate crime is a form of disability hate crime. It happens when someone pretends to be a friend and then uses, manipulates or abuses the person.
Domestic Violence & Abuse	Domestic violence and abuse happens between people in relationships or family members. It is a pattern of behaviour which involves violence or other abuse by one person against another. Examples include: emotional abuse/psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, honour-based violence, forced marriage female genital mutilation.
Modern Slavery	When someone is forced to work or do other things they do not want to. It is a growing problem that can happen to men, women and children. People are treated like slaves; they are forced and tricked into an inhumane life of abuse. It is treating people in an inhumane way. Modern Slavery can take many forms including: trafficking people where the traffickers are the slave masters forcing someone to work, they can be made to work for free in a shop, in a factory or even sell sex, forcing someone to be a domestic slave and not letting people have their own life

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Threats and risk can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as 'county lines', trafficking, modern day slavery, child-on-Child abuse including sexual

violence and harassment, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extra- familial harms take a variety of different forms then and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlapare and staff are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a pupil may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

Possible Indicators

Neglect	**Emotional Abuse**	**Physical Abuse**	**Sexual Abuse**
Tired/listless	Failure to thrive	Unexplained injuries	Age inappropriate sexual behaviour/ knowledge/ promiscuity
Unkempt	Attention seeking	Injuries on certain parts of the body	
Poor hygiene	Over ready to relate to others	Injuries in various stages of healing	Wary of adults/ running away from home
Untreated medical conditions	Low self esteem	Injuries that reflect an article used	
Medical appointments missed	Apathy Depression/self harm	Flinching when approached	Eating disorders/ depression self harm
Constantly hungry or stealing food	Drink/drug/solvent abuse	Reluctant to change	Unexplained gifts/ money
Over eats when food is available	Persistently being over protective	Crying/ instability	Stomach pains wh walking or sitting
Poor growth	Constantly shouting at, threatening or demeaning a pupil	Afraid of home	Bedwetting
Poor/late attendance	Withholding love and affection	Behavioural extremes Apathy/depression Wanting arms and legs covered even in very hot weather	Recurrent genital discharge / infections
Being regularly left alone or unsupervised	Regularly humiliating a pupil		Sexually transmitte diseases
Dressed inappropriately for the weather condition			
Having few friends and/or being withdrawn			
Ill equipped for school			

Further, really useful information about possible indicators of different types of abuse and neglect can be found at www.nspcc.org.uk/core-info

Lancashire's Neglect Tool : Neglect and the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2)
https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/graded-care-profile-2/

THE INCREASED VULNERABILITY OF PUPILS WITH SEND[23]

The well-being of all pupils in our school is supported and our pastoral system ensures that we build relationships and monitor pupil wellbeing on a regular basis.

We recognise that pupils within our setting, who may also have additional medical conditions can face safeguarding challenges, not least because additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's disability, without further, appropriate exploration;
- There can be a reluctance to even consider the possibility that someone would abuse a disabled pupil;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils;
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Early signs of mental health difficulties being more challenging to identify due to communication barriers and complex behaviour presentations

Research indicates that disabled pupils are **especially** vulnerable to all forms of abuse and neglect, including fabricated or induced illness. The reasons for this are multiple and can include increased dependency, communication difficulties and isolation. Moreover, a number of serious case reviews have highlighted the dangers inherent in an overriding emphasis on adult / parental support where disabled pupils are concerned.

Disabled pupils might also suffer abuse other than via overt physical or sexual assaults. This means that staff need to think carefully and holistically about the needs of individual pupils in respect of things like privacy, dignity and respect, food, mobility, online activity, promoting positive behaviour, medication, finances, supervision, restraint, intimate care and the use of aids and adaptations.

It is imperative that staff are sensitive to what might be very subtle indicators of abuse and neglect, especially where pupils have multiple disabilities.

Consequently, professionals must avoid making the assumption that all signs and indicators are attributable to abuse or that all are attributable to the pupil's disability. We are very clear that the best outcomes are achieved when designated persons and safeguarding professionals consider both possibilities and explore these carefully and thoroughly.

In practice, this means that three essential questions always need to be considered:

- What is expected of this pupil? - developmentally, behaviourally etc;
- Do I / we understand how any condition, disability, impairment or other factor e.g. culture impacts?
- How well do we understand this pupil and give them a 'voice'.

WHAT WE DO

First, we will apply the principles and practice laid-out in this and related policies to all pupils who attend our school. Similarly, the governing body will monitor what we do in order to

[23] NSPCC we have the right to be safe too

ensure that we remain compliant and effective. Furthermore, we will ensure that:

- We fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and our Public Sector Equality Duty;
- We know our pupils and their wider circumstances and context(s) well;
- We work effectively with parents, carers and other agencies / professionals, including where any safeguarding or child protection issues arise;
- Key staff are absolutely familiar with relevant guidance protocols, procedures and documentation;
- Staff possess / develop the skills they need to give **all** pupils a 'voice' and, where necessary, to ensure that we are able to advocate effectively for them
- Triangle Image Vocabulary;
- Staff develop appropriate skills and knowledge around issues and conditions affecting individual pupils, accessing further and specialist training where necessary;
- Transitions are well planned and as smooth as possible.

We are especially mindful of the need for a proactive, cautious and measured approach where promoting positive behaviour and, where necessary, ensure that the use of reasonable force is risk assessed, shared with transparency and recorded.

We plan carefully and in partnership so that we can deliver positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up PBS (Positive Behaviour Support) plans for identified pupils, and agreeing them with parents and carers. We will also monitor, review and reflect on any issues or incidents in order to try and reduce the occurrence of behaviour which challenges and the need to use reasonable force.

Further Information and Guidance
Council for Disabled Children EHC Plans explained
Council for Disabled Children useful resources
Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school Mental health and behaviour 2018
Ofsted 2021 Positive environments where children can flourish
A guide for inspectors about physical intervention and restrictions of liberty.
Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention June 2019

FABRICATED OR INDUCED ILLNESS SEE UPDATED GUIDANCE[24]

Definition
Fabricated or induced illness (FII) occurs when a parent or carer, usually the childs biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. The term FII covers a wide range of behaviours, from anxiety to deliberately causing symptoms. Some psychiatric illnesses and conditions may also affect the carer's perception. The carer may benefit from the attention in some way.

Fabricated or induced illness by carers (FII) can cause significant harm to pupils. It involves a well pupil presented by a carer as ill or disabled, or presented with a more significant problem than he or she has in reality, and suffering harm as a consequence. FII often goes unreported or remains undetected and is emotionally harmful. Usually involving the pupil's mother, most cases commence when children are under five.

[24] RCPCH Perplexing Presentations guidance March 2021 RCPCH Paediatrician's Guide to FII

A large number of mothers involved in FII have borderline personality disorders characterised by emotional instability, impulsiveness and disturbed thinking.
Some mothers involved in FII have so-called "somatoform disorders", where they experience multiple, recurrent physical symptoms. A proportion of these mothers also have Munchausen's syndrome.

Some carers have unresolved psychological and behavioural problems, such as a history of self-harming, or drug or alcohol misuse. Some may have e experienced the death of another child.
There have also been reported cases where illness was fabricated or induced for financial reasons – for example, to claim disability benefits.
FII needs to be understood and assessed in terms of the interaction(s) between three variables:

- the pupil's health;
- the parent's view; and
- the medical view.

Medically, conditions which are particularly vulnerable to fabrication are generally those where a diagnosis rests primarily on history and where abnormalities on physical examination or tests are episodic, with periods of normality in between, e.g. epilepsy. Carer may falsify objective features of illness, without directly harming the pupil. Examples include placing blood on the child's clothing or in their nappy, contaminating samples to mimic infection, and falsifying blood sugar records to suggest diabetes. At the more damaging end of the spectrum, carers may induce illness in their child by smothering or poisoning, or by withholding food or essential medicines.

Things to be Mindful of and to Look Out For
Some potential indicators of FII include:

- Symptoms only appear when the parent or carer is present;
- The only person claiming to notice symptoms is the parent or carer;
- The affected pupil has an inexplicably poor response to medication or other treatment;
- If one particular health problem is resolved, new symptoms reported;
- The pupil's alleged symptoms don't seem plausible – for example, a pupil who has supposedly lost a lot of blood but doesn't become unwell;
- The parent or carer has a history of frequently changing GPs or visiting different hospitals for treatment, particularly if their views about the child's treatment are challenged by medical staff;
- The pupil's daily activities are being limited far beyond what you would usually expect as a result of having a certain condition, e.g. they never go to school or have to wear leg braces even though they can walk properly;
- The parent or carer has good medical knowledge or a medical background;
- The parent or carer doesn't seem too worried about the child's health, despite being very attentive;
- The parent or carer develops close and friendly relationships with healthcare staff, but may become abusive or argumentative if their own views about what's wrong with the pupil are challenged;
- One parent (commonly the father) has little or no involvement in the care of the pupil;
- The parent or carer encourages medical staff to perform often painful tests and procedures on the child (tests that most parents would only agree to if they were

persuaded that it was absolutely necessary;
- The medical history doesn't make sense.

It should be clear that suspected FII is a serious safeguarding issue and child protection procedures must always be followed. All staff should also be especially mindful of confidentiality and record-keeping issues as these things are especially important in these cases. The adult(s) who may be implicated should not be confronted directly. To do so could have significant evidential implications and increase the risk of harm to a child.

The following, updated Fabricated & Induced Illness and Perplexing Presentations Guidance 2022 provides DSLs with procedural support.

FALTERING GROWTH[25]

It may be difficult to distinguish between neglect and material poverty. However, care should be taken to balance recognition of the constraints on the parents' or carers' ability to meet their children's needs with an appreciation of how people in similar circumstances have been able to meet those needs. This term 'faltering growth' (previously referred to as 'failure to thrive') is used in relation to infants and young children whose weight gain occurs more slowly than expected.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. practitioners need to develop their knowledge and skills in addressing the impact that domestic violence has upon children. Moreover, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's[26] recent (2022) analysis of cases where domestic abuse 'featured' highlighted the following core themes:

- Overly simplistic, optimistic and at times dangerous assumptions which fail to explore, assess or understand the nature of the abuse and its impact of the pupil / family
- Problems distinguishing parental conflict from domestic abuse
- Physical violence often used as primary indicator and risk factor
- Children are, in themselves, victims (DA Act 2021)
- Need to understand impact of abusers' behaviour on children and young people – inc. five cases where adolescents took their own life
- Absence of children's voices in review processes and need to consider their wellbeing beyond [physical] appearance
- Need for specialist services to be better integrated into multi-agency [pupil] safeguarding arrangements.

All concerns regarding domestic abuse must be reported to the DSL / DDSL without delay.

[23] NICE guidance on Faltering Growth

[26] 2022 Analysis CSPRP Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse: CASPAR briefing

Operation Encompass
This mechanism is used by police to alert schools in a timely manner of any domestic incidents where a pupil has been present / witnessed. The school has a dedicated Operation Encompass inbox that is checked daily by the DSL and two DDSLs.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

This is underpinned by the knowledge and interpersonal skills which enable us to understand, appreciate, and work with individuals from cultures other than our own.

Being culturally competent means:

- being open to, accepting, valuing diversity and difference;
- being responsive to the beliefs, practices, cultural and linguistic needs of children and families.
- awareness around the impact of our own cultural identity on others;
- being conscious of how cultures interact with each other and the significance and impact of this in practice (for example power imbalances and traditional boundaries within and between cultures);
- developing specialised knowledge and understanding of the history, religions, traditions, values, family systems and languages represented in your community;
- developing an understanding of communities and resources within communities and being able to make appropriate connections with them
- contributing to the development of practice that reflect understanding of diversity.
- reflecting on our own assumptions and stereotypes associated with any cultural, ethnic or religious group.

Being culturally competent does not mean shying away from questioning & challenging beliefs or behaviour which are abusive or harmful.

ABUSE LINKED TO A BELIEF IN SPIRIT POSSESSION OR WITCHCRAFT

Research indicates that the belief in 'spirit possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread across the world. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country. These beliefs occupy a broad spectrum, and the effects range from harmless to harmful. Belief in spirit possession and witchcraft is not of itself evidence of maltreatment.

Although the number of known Child abuse cases linked to accusations of 'spirit possession' or 'witchcraft' in Britain is small, it is possible that a significant number of cases go undetected. The nature of the abuse can be particularly disturbing and the impact on the pupil is substantial and serious.

There are links between 'spirit possession' and 'witchcraft' and exploitation in that belief in magic or witchcraft may be used to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

The term 'spirit possession' means that a force, spirit, god or demon has entered a child and is controlling him or her resulting in a change in health or behaviour. Sometimes the term 'witch' or 'witchcraft' is used. This is the belief that a pupil is able to use an evil force or supernatural powers to harm others. There is a range of terminology connected to such beliefs, for example black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah and child sorcerers.

Families, carers and the children involved can hold genuine beliefs that evil forces are at work. Families and children can be deeply worried by the evil that they believe is threatening them. There may also be an element of the adult gaining some gratification through the ritualistic abuse of the child, which may even result in the death of the child.

Vulnerability
In cases of 'spirit possession' or 'witchcraft' which involve children, the parent/carer views the pupil as 'different' and attributes this to the pupil being 'possessed'. This can lead to attempts to exorcise the child.

The reasons for being 'different' can be varied, and include disobedience, independence, bedwetting, nightmares or illness. In some cases there will be no obvious difference and the pupil will have been targeted because they are perceived to be 'spiritually' different. The attempt to exorcise may involve beating, burning, starvation, cutting/stabbing and/or isolation within the household, all of which obviously constitute abuse.

Things to Look Out For
Indicators of abuse linked to belief in spirit possession, which may also be common features in other kinds of abuse, include:

- A pupil reporting that they are, or have been, accused of being 'evil',
- and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them';
- Signs of physical abuse (Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Glossary with explanations);
- A pupil becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated;
- Personal care deteriorating;
- Attendance becoming irregular or pupil being taken out of school altogether;
- A deterioration in a pupil's performance at school;
- Lack of parental concern or attachment.

Further Information
Safeguarding Children in Faith Communities
Faith based abuse: National Action Plan
Afruca report

SO-CALLED HONOUR BASED ABUSE (HBA)

Defining HBA
The issue of HBA is important in safeguarding people of all ages from South East Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, LGBT and Gypsy/ Romany/ Traveller communities. The Crown Prosecution Service definition of honour based abuse is: **"A collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour."** This is abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' and it often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.
HBA encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All **forms of so- called HBA constitute abuse** - regardless of the motivation - and should be handled and escalated as such i.e. **any concerns should always be reported to the DSL without delay.**

When dealing with the possibility, suspicions or allegations of HBA it is also imperative that staff apply the **'one chance rule'** i.e. we may only have one chance to listen, gather crucial

information and, potentially, save a life.

Under no circumstances should attempts be made to mediate or discuss HBA related concerns with parents, carers, siblings, community leaders, elders or anyone other than the DSL in the first instance. Liaison can then take place with children's services, police and other agencies as required, information shared, any risk(s) assessed and management and support strategies put in place.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Defining FGM

Female Genital Mutilation 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. Professionals from all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of FGM.

UNICEF indicates that 125 million women and girls in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East have experienced FGM or Cutting. According to the most recent NHS annual report, between April 2017 to March 2018 there were 6,195 individual women and girls who had an attendance where FGM was identified or a procedure related to FGM was undertaken. There were 9,490 attendances reported at NHS trusts and GP practices where FGM was identified or a procedure related to FGM was undertaken. Of the 6,195 women and girls, 85 cases of FGM took place in the UK.

Like breast ironing / flattening, FGM can come to be seen as a natural and beneficial practice carried out by a loving family, which places barriers in the way of [potential] victims coming forward to raise concerns or talk openly. Equally, staff should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them.

Who Might Be Vulnerable and What to Look Out For:

- Victims are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM;
- Any girl born to a woman who has been subjected to FGM;
- Any girl who has a sister who has undergone FGM;
- Girls taken abroad at start of school holidays;
- Parents state that they or a relative will take the pupil out of the country for a prolonged period;
- A professional hears reference to FGM in conversation e.g. a pupil may tell other pupils.

Things Which Might Indicate that FGM Has Taken Place:

- Girl may have difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- May spend longer in the bathroom or toilet owing to difficulties in urinating;
- Recurrent urinary tract infections or complaints of abdominal pain;
- Spend longer periods away from the classroom;
- Prolonged absence from school with noticeable behaviour changes on
- the girl's return.

If staff have a concern regarding a girl that might be at risk of FGM they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's services. If is believed that there is an immediate risk of

FGM then this should be reported to the police.

Mandatory Reporting
On 31 October 2015, Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) placed a statutory duty upon **teachers,** along with social workers and healthcare professionals, 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 will face disciplinary sanctions.

In reality, it will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is applied to all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Therefore, teachers **must personally report to the police** cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, by telephoning 101. Unless a teacher has been specifically told not to disclose, they should consider and discuss any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Fact sheet on mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation

BREAST IRONING / FLATTENING

What is It?
Breast ironing is a form of physical abuse and should be responded to as such. Is practiced in all ten regions of Cameroon and has also been reported in Benin, Ivory Coast, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Togo, Zimbabwe and Guinea- Conakry. The United Nations (UN) estimates that it affects 3.8 million women around the world. Girls usually aged between 9 – 15 years and from practicing communities are at greatest risk.

The practice uses large stones, a hammer or spatulas that have been heated over hot coals to compress the breast tissue of girls. (Those who derive from richer families may opt to use an elastic belt to press the breasts so as to prevent them from growing). The mutilation is designed to make teenage girls look less "womanly" and to deter unwanted male attention, pregnancy and rape.

The practice is commonly performed by family members, often the mother, and girls are led to believe that it is in their best interests and so often remain silent about it. Research indicates that some fathers may be unaware that the practice is being carried out.

Advice, Further Information & Training
NSPCC FGM Helpline
Email: **fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk**
Telephone: **0800 028 3550**
FGM National Guidance 2016
FGM Risk Assessment Templates including children Female genital mutilation help and advice
Gov.uk Collection of free online resources on FGM and related issues

FORCED MARRIAGE

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales and schools can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

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

Definition
A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, (physical, emotional or psychological) threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage.

A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example).

Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example)[27]. Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

It is important to remember that this happens to boys as well as girls and equally important not to assume that this does not happen to children of primary school age.

Things to Look Out For:
- Requests for extended period of absence;
- Failure to return from another country;
- Absence or persistent absence;
- Deterioration in behaviour, attendance, performance, punctuality;
- Not allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities;

Advice and Further Information / Guidance
Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) for advice or information:

Email: **fmu@fco.gov.uk**
Telephone: **020 7008 0151**

Multi Agency Guidelines for Handling Cases of Forced Marriage

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING[28]

Safeguarding policy and practice at our school reflects and is tailored to our local context and that of pupils and partners. This means that what we do and how we do it is oriented around a wide view and understanding of what may happen to pupils in school and beyond, including online

We understand that pupils may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families too. For example, extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. Everyone (and especially the DSL and DDSLs) will consider whether pupils are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families, including online and within

[27] CQC guide to capacity and consent July 2019
[28] NSPCC What is Contextual Safeguarding Information Sheet

their peer groups.

Threats and risk can take a variety of different forms and pupils can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as 'county lines', trafficking, modern day slavery, child-on-child abuse - including harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and harassment - online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods,
schools and online can feature violence and abuse, e.g. child criminal and sexual exploitation, serious violence and gang-related activity. Contextual safeguarding is oriented around and facilitates early intervention and prevention, community- based support and local partnerships alongside effective law enforcement and criminal justice responses.

We set great store by our relationships with pupils and their families. This helps us to pick-up on change(s), recognise and respond to the indicators of potential vulnerability and to provide early support that is effective. Wherever a young person begins to show the signs of exploitation or vulnerability to exploitation, and is therefore at increased risk from serious violence, we will intervene as early as possible to help reduce the risk s and increase protective factors. We also remain firmly committed to making the fullest possible contributions to multi-agency planning, information gathering / sharing, risk assessment / management, support and review processes in order to:
establish whether wider environmental factors are present in a pupil's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare; and ensure that interventions focus on addressing these.

All of the above constitute safeguarding issues and will be dealt with as such, i.e. any concerns must be discussed with the DSL / Deputy DSL without delay. The school will work closely with safeguarding partners around any and all of these issues and any suspected criminal activity will be reported to the Police.

CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

All staff and governors recognise that pupils may be harmed by other pupils or young people and are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via harmful sexual behaviour, child-on-child abuse and the virtual world. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside school, including intimate personal relationships.

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images
- and or videos (also known as 'sexting' or youth produced sexual imagery (YPSI));
- 'Upskirting'[29] 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; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

We are also mindful that:

- Intimate partner relationships can be abusive;
- Child-on-Child abuse might manifest differently for boys and girls e.g. girls being touched inappropriately or coerced into sexual activity, boys being initiated into gangs - they may also be experiencing difficulties in respect of masculinity, gender roles and sexual identity;
- Such behaviour may also be indicative of a previous or ongoing abusive experience for a perpetrator and / or victim;
- Pupils who have been the victims of violent crime may be especially vulnerable and may respond to this by abusing younger or 'weaker' pupils;
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers and additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND pupils;
- Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a pupil who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as pupils who identify as LGBT;

While it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, all child-on- child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Some children and young people may also be vulnerable because of issues pertaining to identity and / or SEND. Staff can be victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment too, e.g. via 'upskirting'.

Therefore, everyone is mindful that these things can happen to males as well as females, to adults as well as children and young people and it might occur in situations and places outside school, including online or on public or school transport.

Relevant Guidance/Compliance

We ensure that we comply with our duties and obligations in law, e.g. Section 175 Education Act 2002, Human Right Act 1998, Equality Act 2010. Safeguarding and child protection run through everything we do and, in this particular context, our policies, procedures and practice are underpinned by and consistent with the following guidance (the list isn't exhaustive):

- KCSE 2025, paras. 159-165 and Part Five
- NSPCC – When to Call the Police

Minimising Risk

[29] We adhere to the requirements of The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019.

We recognise that is not enough 'just' to respond to incidents should they arise. Therefore, we adopt a whole school, preventative approach which is multi- faceted and underpinned by a culture of zero tolerance. This applies to language and / or behaviour or concerns in or outside school, including online. It also applies to staff and adults as well as children and young people.

Culture
We have an 'it could happen here' mindset and recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Consequently, we guard against anything which might lead to worrying indicators, unsafe, unacceptable or abusive behaviour(s) being ignored or downplayed. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. We adopt a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. It will never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

Moreover:

- We create and maintain an environment which is safe, caring, respectful and stimulating, and which seeks to promote social, physical and moral development;
- All adults associated with our school understand their role and responsibilities as role models and what that means in practice;
- Everyone actively discourages and challenges any and all unacceptable behaviour, including all forms of bullying and abuse. We will also challenge the attitudes and behaviours which underpin it and the language which signals it;
- Everyone uses sensitive and appropriate language and terminology in discussing and dealing with any issues that arise, especially with and around parents and children;

Governance

- Is robust and well informed;
- This is a standing item in safeguarding reports for governors from the DSL
- Governors will ask specific questions about what we are doing to prevent it and satisfy themselves that any incidents were dealt with effectively.
- All relevant and associated policies and procedures are clear, consistent, up-to-date and embedded, e.g. online safety, promoting positive behaviour; measures to prevent all forms of bullying (including cyber- bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).

Education and training

- We are mindful that harassment, sexual violence and child-on-child abuse can be driven by wider societal factors beyond school, e.g. stereotyping, inappropriate language. Therefore, we maximise preventative educational opportunities and tailor these to the needs of pupil's;
- We plan and deliver PSHE / RSE in a co-ordinated way. This means that key personnel, e.g. DSL, SENDCO, ICT and PSHE leaders - work together;
- We ensure that staff have the training, tools and support they need to deliver the curriculum effectively[30].

[30] Occasionally draw on external expertise / providers too.

- All staff receive up-to-date and fit-for-purpose safeguarding training - including regular updates - which include a focus on HSB, pupil-on-Child abuse. This ensures that they are absolutely clear about what is healthy, respectful and acceptable (and what is not).

Giving Pupils, Parents and Carers a Voice
Our culture seeks to empower people by breaking down barriers and giving them a voice; We understand the need to build confidence and break down barriers so that people feel confident enough to report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. We do this by:

- Building appropriate, nurturing relationships via which staff act as positive role models at all times;
- Promoting accessible and easily understood systems via which anyone can express / report any worries or concerns.

Partnerships

- We liaise and work effectively with pupils, parents, carers;
- Where necessary, we consult with external agencies in order to seek advice, contribute to multi-agency assessment, planning and support and, where necessary, criminal justice and other proceedings;

Balance and Rigour

- Appropriate balances are struck around pupil's right to privacy and the need for proportionate supervision to keep them safe in and around school;
- All responses and interventions are sensitive, proportionate, and robust;
- These manage risk and consider the individual needs of both alleged perpetrators and victims.
-

Mapping and Continually Improving
We liaise with pupils, parents and partners to:

- Check where any issues arise - both in and outside school;
- Gauge the ongoing effectiveness and impact of RSE / PSHE and see what school can do to improve its still further;
- Check to ensure that systems via which pupils can express / report any worries or concerns are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible;
- Ensure they feel that they have a voice and are confident that it will be heard, both in and outside school, including online.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)[31] - see also TA-HSB
Knowing how to distinguish healthy and harmful sexual behaviour from pupils helps in both supporting the development of healthy sexuality and in the protection of pupils from harm or abuse. HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context.
The following staff at our school have completed the up-to-date Brook Traffic Light training

UKCIS external visitors guidance

[31] This may also include Technology Assisted HSB (TA-HSB) Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour including TA-HSB

and know how to use the tool: **Kathryn Arts, Susan Campbell, Emma Flynn, Sarah Wisniewski and Fiona Gemson**

That training has been disseminated at whole school level. This means that all staff understand that children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected, to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause harm on a number of levels.

- Behaviours are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

- Behaviours are:

- unusual for that particular pupil or young person
- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context

- Behaviours are:

- Excessive
- secretive
- compulsive
- coercive,
- degrading or threatening
- involve significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration
- or context

Many expressions of 'sexual' behaviour may not be primarily sexual in nature. Those that are may themselves be part of healthy development and give no cause for concern. Factors which can influence such behaviour are known to include:

- Sexual excitement or curiosity;
- Sensory issues;
- Lack of sex and relationships information / education;
- Lack of privacy;
- Boredom, loneliness, anxiety, confusion or depression;
- Family/carer conflict;
- Lack of appropriate models / boundaries;
- Trauma inc. emotional, physical, sexual abuse and neglect;
- Communication / sensory difficulties;
- Attachment / relationship needs / issues;
- Gender, masculinity and / or identity issues;
- Copying the behaviour of others / behaviour seen on the internet or TV.

Research suggests that a very significant proportion of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18. Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older – particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other isn't. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, greater capacity etc.

Research also tells us that children and young people who harm others sexually are more likely to:

- Have poor self-regulation and coping skills;
- Experience social anxiety and a sense of social inadequacy;
- Have less well developed and internalised rules for social behaviour;
- Possess a poorly developed or primitive sense of morality;
- Lack secure and confident attachments to others;
- Exercise limited self-control, and act out their emotional experiences through negative or otherwise inappropriate behaviour;
- Have little insight into the feelings and needs of others and, indeed, their own mental states;
- Place their own needs and feelings ahead of the needs and feelings of others;
- Exhibit a poorly defined sense of personal boundaries;
- Have developed strong and not easily corrected cognitive distortions about others, themselves, and the world they share;
- Have deficits in social skills and in social competence overall.

Some children and young people may be at increased risk of exposure to, or of developing, unhealthy sexual behaviours. These include children and young people who have a disability, have been abused, or have experienced other disruptions to their development or socialisation. When children or young people display sexual behaviour which increases their vulnerability or causes harm to someone else, staff have a responsibility to provide support and protection.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
Sexual Violence - sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003

Sexual Harassment - means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' between children. It can occur online and offline, both inside and outside of school and between two or more people. Harassment can violate a child's dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. It can have a significant, detrimental impact then, including upon educational attainment.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important to understand and assess overlap, not least the 'line' between harassment and violence and when it may have been crossed - see table below.

Normal →	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
Developmentally expected Socially acceptable Consensual, mutual, reciprocal Shared decision-making	Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group Context for behaviour may be inappropriate Generally consensual and reciprocal	Problematic and concerning behaviour Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected No overt elements of victimisation Consent issues may be unclear May lack reciprocity or equal power May include levels of compulsivity	Victimising intent or outcome Includes misuse of power Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance Intrusive Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given by victim May include elements of expressive violence	Physically violent sexual abuse Highly intrusive Instrumental violence that is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator Sadism Ref: Hackett, S

Consent[32]
Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

- a pupil under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

[32] Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent

HOW ALLEGATIONS OR REPORTS OF CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE WILL BE RESPONDED TO, RECORDED, INVESTIGATED AND DEALT WITH

Practice Principles for All Cases[33]

We acknowledge the need for sensitivity and good judgement when dealing with these matters and everyone should be clear about how to respond. All issues will be dealt with sensitively, on a case-by-case basis, supported by children's social care and police if required, and in-line with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Part Five.

10 Key things to remember

1. This guidance applies to immediate, recent and non-recent concerns or allegations. It applies to alleged incidents both in and outside school(s) and online.
2. Do **NOT** assume that someone else has dealt with / is dealing with it. If in doubt ensure that immediate safety is ensured before speaking to the DSL without delay;
3. A sensitive, appropriate initial response to a report is **REALLY** important!
4. Stick to the basic 'rules' when it comes to listening and responding to a disclosure - as set out in this policy
5. Respond to any online issues as set out in this policy
6. The needs of victims and alleged perpetrators will be considered separately. The safety and best interests of victims will be the paramount consideration at all times;
7. Children and young people who abuse others are responsible for their behaviour and safeguarding action must include addressing their behaviour and its causes;
8. Any plan to reduce and / or manage risk posed by a pupil who is alleged to have abused another must also address their needs and staff must be alert to the possibility that a pupil or young person who has harmed another may also be a victim; as such, they may have significant unmet needs themselves. They may also be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection.
9. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
10. Responses should not criminalise children unnecessarily

In the event of report or allegation of child-on-child abuse

Staff WILL:

- ✓ Ensure immediate safety;
- ✓ Respond to any and all incidents, allegations or disclosures sensitively;
- ✓ Reassure all potential victims that they are being listened to and taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- ✓ Ensure that an alleged victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor will they ever be deterred from or made to feel ashamed for making such a report.
- ✓ Adopt a zero-tolerance approach and challenge any language or behaviour that is inappropriate, disrespectful, discriminatory or abusive;
- ✓ Draw clear, consistent boundaries around what is and is not acceptable;
- ✓ Apply consistent sanctions in line with behaviour, anti-bullying and acceptable use

[33] https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/addressing-pupil- on-pupil-abuse.pdf

policies;

- ✓ Make an appropriate, professional record and discuss the behaviour / concerns with the DSL / DDSL. (ASAP and always that same day).

The DSL / Deputy DSL will lead the in-school response

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL / DDSL taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, as required.

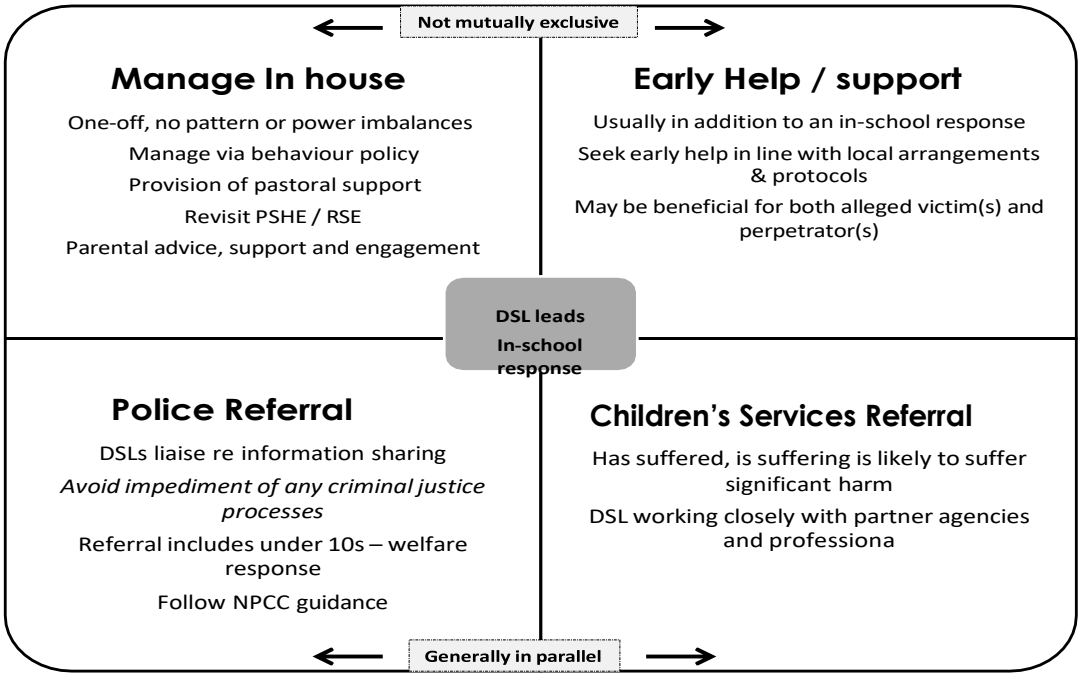
The DSL / DDSL will:

- Consider the wishes and needs of victims and alleged perpetrators separately. (The safety and best interests of victims will be the paramount consideration at all times).
- Consider the possibility and take account of any wider and / or ongoing risk(s) to others / in other contexts, e.g. CSE / CCE[32];
- Seek appropriate and timely safeguarding and, where necessary, legal advice and liaise with colleagues on a case-by-case basis, e.g. the SENDCO, and ensure that information is shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- Follow locally agreed procedures and, in so doing, will consider the possibility and take account of any wider and / or ongoing risk(s) to others.
- Participate fully in a co-ordinated, partnership-based approach to information sharing / management, risk assessment / management, planning and support, including with parents and carers (as appropriate);
- Consult and refer to Police in line with the relevant guidance:
- NPCC When to call the police
- Ensure that comprehensive records are maintained in-line with this policy.
- Reflect on any incidents or cases in order that the effectiveness of policies, procedures and practice can be maintained / further improved and any cultural issues addressed.

Key Considerations for DSLs

Sense Making[34]	Actions
• Nature and seriousness of alleged incident(s) • Ages & developmental stages of those involved • Any power imbalance(s) / capacity issues • One-off or part of a pattern • Part of an established relationship • Aggravated or experimental	• **Violence** - immediate risk and needs assessment • **Harassment** - risk assessment on case-by- case basis • Immediate steps to protect and support those involved and other pupils • Wishes of victim / confidentiality / information sharing • Any potential implications for other CYP inc. siblings • Any wider issues within local area, emergent trends or patterns – work with safeguarding partners • **Record** • Ongoing review of risk assessments and support plans

Response Options for DSL / DDSLs



[34] Using appropriate 'tools' as required, e.g. Brook Traffic Light, NPCC When to call the police https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and- sectors/safeguarding/addressing-pupil-on-pupil-abuse.pdf

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for them will always be recorded.

Making Decisions which Safeguarding and Support
Risk management and support will be considered immediately, i.e. without delay in every case. The basic safeguarding principle is:

- if a pupil is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority **children's social care**, and
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the **police**[35].

In making what can be difficult decisions, DSL / DDSLs will always consider:

1. the age and the developmental stage of the victim
2. the nature of the allegations, and
3. the potential risk of further abuse.

Decision makers should also be mindful that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s).
Overall, decision making and responses are underpinned by the following principles:

- The needs and wishes of the victim will be our paramount consideration (along with protecting the pupil). It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible.
- Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. (Overall, our priority will be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them).

Confidentiality and Information Sharing
Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality and there are no easy or definitive answers where a victim asks school staff not to tell anyone about sexual violence or sexual harassment. If they do not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR[36].

DSLs will make these decisions, with appropriate advice. Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).

Ultimately, the DSL / DDSL will need to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other pupils. Any decision to make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes must be handled extremely carefully. The reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered.

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[35] NPCC When to call the police Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases

[35] Gov.uk Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing Advice and NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners.

Anonymity
Where a case is progressing through the criminal justice system the DSL / DDSL will continue to lead on the school's behalf, in consultation with the Principal and will be mindful of anonymity, witness support, and the criminal process in general so they can offer support and act appropriately.[37]3 This also requires that they consider what staff 'need to know' and how to manage any associated social media issues.

Unsubstantiated, Unfounded or Malicious Reports
If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider whether the pupil who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our behaviour policy.

Further Information / Resources - *See KCSIE 2025, page 131

ONLINE OR CYBERBULLYING

We adopt a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying behaviour and expect pupils and parents to do the same. Everyone will minimise the potential for and be aware of the impact of so-called cyberbullying, which might include:

- Sending threatening or disturbing text messages;
- Homophobia, racism or sexism;
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls;
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos;
- 'Trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or via online games;
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups;
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular pupil;
- Encouraging young people to self-harm;
- Voting for someone in an abusive poll;
- Hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name;

Sometimes known as 'sexting', the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18 has risen to prominence in recent years. This occurs via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It can also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

Staff are mindful that concerning, unacceptable and potentially criminal behaviour must be dealt with as safeguarding issues. For example:

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos;
- 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;
- upskirting (a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals

[37] CPS: Safeguarding Children as Victims and Witnesses.

or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Indecent Imagery
Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images. There are no circumstances that will justify adults making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (Child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the settings or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children are discovered on school equipment the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. The images / equipment should be secured; there should be NO attempt made to view, search, save or delete the images. The DSL must be notified immediately. The DSL will seek advice from and make any appropriate referrals, e.g. LADO / Police / children's social care as appropriate.

How to Respond[38]
Anyone who becomes aware of such an image must report the matter to the DSL immediately. The table below offers steer in terms of what to do and what to avoid:

☺ Do	☹ Do NOT
✓ Stay Calm	View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download – this is illegal.
✓ Listen carefully	(If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL and seek support)
✓ Explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL	Delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it Ask the pupil/pupils or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. (Leave this to the DSL) Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their / other parents and/or carers Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people.

Note: It is a criminal offence to create or share explicit images of a child, even if the person doing it is a child. If a child (aged ten or over) does this they are [technically] committing an offence.

Any incidence of adults sharing nudes or semi-nudes of under 18-year olds is a form of pupil sexual abuse and must be referred to the police as a matter of urgency. Moreover, the Serious Crime Act 2015 made it unlawful for an over 18 to intentionally communicate with a child under 16 for a sexual purpose. This includes talking sexually to a child in a chat room

[38] UKCIS Guidance on Sharing nudes and Semi-nudes

as well as sending sexual messages. In law, sending or possessing an indecent image (Inc. Video) of a pupil u18 is unlawful.

UK Safer Internet Centre Profs Online Safety Helpline 0344 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

Reporting / Removing Images / Content
It may be necessary to assist a young person and / or parents in reporting and / or removing an image from a website or elsewhere. The following mechanisms are all useful and appropriate:
Reporting to social media sites ChildLine Report Remove Tool 2021
Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
Pupil Exploitation and Online Protection Command

Searching Devices[39]
The Education Act 2011 gives schools and/or teachers the power to seize and search an electronic device if they think there is good reason to do so i.e. if there is reason to believe it contains indecent images or extreme pornography. However, staff should exercise caution and bear the following in mind before searching a device:

- The action must be in accordance with this and related policies and procedures e.g. ICT / online safety, anti-bullying, behaviour;
- Any search should only be conducted following authorisation by the Head Teacher;
- Any search must be conducted sensitively i.e. by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil wherever possible.

Invariably, it will be the DSL who is best placed to respond to concerns about online activity or incidents involving technology and staff must consult with and report all potential online safeguarding matters to them without delay.

The DSL will liaise with external agencies and professionals in order to assess risk and / or seek advice, ensuring that appropriate records are maintained and that safeguards, risk management and support strategies are put in place.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We recognise the complex nature of addressing the mental health and wellbeing needs of all pupils and students. For example, research tells us that people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are more likely than the general population to have comorbid psychiatric disorders, with evidence indicating that anxiety disorders and ADHD are most prevalent. In meeting the mental health needs of our population, we work alongside a range of professionals, including the Mental Health Support team to offer highly personalised support and resources and promote these widely with care givers.

Alongside specific work, where appropriate, around the poor mental health associations online, our approach is summarised here: https://www.loyneschool.org.uk/wellbeing/

Our trained Senior Mental Health Lead is Kathryn Arts

[39] DfE searching screening and confiscation advice July 2022

PREVENTING RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

Radicalisation: "vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of armed forces as extremism".

Terrorism: "an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause." (KCSIE 2025, p.156).

A Legal Duty

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on a number of organisations, including schools, to prevent all radicalisation and extremism. The purpose is to protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and British values

Preventing radicalisation and extremism is an integral part of safeguarding in school. For example, we will be mindful of its potential significance in respect of recruitment and selection, online safety, the use of external providers and speakers, the curriculum and our duty to promote and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values.

We adopt a whole school approach and ensure that training, including induction, policies, procedures and practice take account of and comply with the latest DfE guidance (24 October 2022):

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty- safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/the-prevent-duty-an- introduction-for-those-with-safeguarding-responsibilities

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/managing-risk-of-radicalisation-in-your-education-setting
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
- Prevent Duty of Care risk assessments

Vulnerability & Potential Indicators

The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. As with any other concern, the risk of harm is raised when young people are vulnerable and is often noticed when people change their behaviour, clothing or attitudes.

Research findings - things to be mindful of and vigilant around		
Online Radicalisation	**On the Ground**	**Vulnerability**
Particularly associated with radicalisation to Extreme Right-Wing and mixed/unclear ideologies Exacerbated by parents having an insufficient understanding of the risks and threats linked to online platforms Children and young people being groomed or radicalised through online discussion forums Social media platforms or online games acting as introductory spaces Online influences had become more significant during the COVID-19 pandemic – more time online, increased isolation exacerbated some underlying vulnerabilities	Increases in referrals relating to Extreme Right-Wing ideology coincided with international or local events, such as local activity by Extreme Right-Wing political parties, elections and referendums, and local immigration Familial influences remained important in relation to Islamist extremist and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies	Almost all children and young people referred as at risk of radicalisation are young men Common underlying vulnerabilities were: Social isolation (i.e. looking for connection and struggling with social relationships) Limited sense of belonging (i.e. wanting to be needed, seeking a group. Distinct from, but often linked to, social isolation) Low confidence/self-esteem Mental health concerns Autism (manifesting itself here in children and young people being more vulnerable to developing fixations and finding it more difficult to shift their viewpoints) Other learning needs (such as communication and language difficulties, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or Obsessive-compulsive Disorder (OCD)) Neglect Past trauma (such as exposure to domestic abuse).

Pupils within a setting such as ours may repeat the language and comments of adults while older siblings and adults may also show signs. Early indicators which everyone should be aware of include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes;
- Glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures;
- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school;
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature;
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups;
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent);
- Secretive behaviour;
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles;
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality;

- Graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes;
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others;
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views;
- Advocating violence towards others.

Acting on Concerns
Any concerns about radicalisation or extremism of any kind should be treated as a safeguarding issue, in-line with this policy i.e. in the first instance a discussion should take place with the DSL, who will make a decision about speaking to parents / carers, the need to seek external advice and, where necessary make ongoing referrals to Channel[40] children's social care and / or police in-line with locally agreed procedures and protocols.

Staff will use their judgement in identifying pupils who might be at risk of radicalisation and respond proportionately; this may include making a referral to the Channel programme (with consent). If school makes a referral to Channel, the DSL may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred to determine whether and what ongoing support is required.

Our single point of contact (SPOC) for Prevent in school is:
Kathryn Arts
External advice and Points of Contact
If you are concerned about extremism in school or if you think a pupil might be at risk of extremism you can also seek external advice and support via: **Lancashire Police**:
E: concern@lancashire.pnn.Police.uk
Tel. 01772 412742
or
E: counter.extremism@education.gov.uk
Helpline: 020 7340 7264
(Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm (excluding bank holidays)

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of Child abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a pupil in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE occurs where anyone under the age of 18 is persuaded, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for, amongst other things, money, drugs/alcohol, gifts, affection or status. Children can be groomed by peers and / or exploited as part of gang-related activity. Children from all walks of life are sexually exploited, boys and girls. Looked After Children might be especially vulnerable, as might those with additional or complex needs.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the pupil's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any pupil, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities.

[40] Channel Guidance

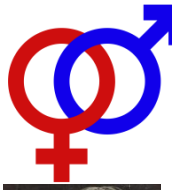
(This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship).

Consent is irrelevant, even where a pupil may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them.
A significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and / or education. We will adopt a pro-active and robust approach to any issues or episodes in this context and will work in partnership with other agencies and professionals in-line with national guidance and locally agreed protocols and procedures

Any concerns relating to pupil sexual exploitation will be reported to the DSL who will follow the procedures laid-out here and the Operation Awaken procedures: **Operation Awaken (Blackpool, Fylde, Lancaster, Morecambe and Wyre):**
01253 477 261 CSE Operation Awaken

Further information and resources
CSE Definition & Guide for Practitioners 2017 & Annexes
Barnardos CSE resources and information Information and Support for Parents PACE
https://www.brook.org.uk/spotting-the-signs-tool/#download

Possible Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation



SEXUAL HEALTH & BEHAVIOUR

Sexually transmitted infections; pregnancy, terminations; inappropriate sexualised behaviour(s)

ABSENT FROM SCHOOL OR REPEATEDLY RUNNING AWAY

Truancy or regularly going missing / running away

FAMILIAL ABUSE AND / OR PROBLEMS AT HOME

Familial abuse or neglect; forced marriage or 'honour-based' violence; domestic abuse; substance / alcohol misuse; parental mental ill-health; homelessness / being in temporary accommodation; privately fostered / Looked After

EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION

Suicidal ideation, self-harm; low self-esteem / confidence; confusion re sexual orientation; learning difficulties / disability; poor mental health; unexplained injuries or changes in appearance

GANGS, OLDER AGE GROUPS, INVOLVED IN CRIMINALITY

Direct involvement with gang members; involvement in criminal activity; involvement with older individuals or lacks same-age friends, contact with victims of CSE

USE OF TECHNOLOGY, SEXUAL BULLYING

Evidence of 'sexting', sexualised communication online; problematic use of internet / social networking; multiple phones

ALCOHOL OR DRUG MISUSE

Problematic substance use

RECEIPT OF UNEXPLAINED GIFTS OR MONEY

Unexplained finances / gifts including mobile phone credit, clothes, jewellery, money

DISTRUST OF AUTHORITY FIGURES

Resistance to communicating with parents, teachers, social workers, foster carers, health professionals, Police etc.

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (TA-CSA)

Research tells us that it is very difficult to estimate prevalence of online grooming in the UK because official estimates have only recently included online offences. (There is also only very limited research around sexual offences mediated through ICT and even less is known about any relationship between online and contact abuse/offences). What we do know is that online grooming behaviour is
varied, cyclical and occurs in a non-linear way.

We also know that victims commonly experience a number of things, including:

- Manipulation;
- Deception;
- Regular / intense contact;
- Secrecy;
- Sexualisation;
- Kindness and flattery;
- Erratic behaviour / nastiness;
- Simultaneous grooming of those close to the victim.

Recent serious case reviews have highlighted the ways in which technology can be used to groom and perpetuate abuse. They have also highlighted key lessons for agencies and professionals about dealing effectively with it:

- It can be more difficult to recognise abuse;
- Speed of occurrence;
- Technology can be used to initiate, escalate and maintain the abuse;
- The outcome can be significant in terms of image control, permanence and the scope for re-victimisation;
- The dangers inherent in perceptions of victims having played an 'active' role in the abuse, which may be compounded by misconceptions or fears about criminal justice responses and implications;
- The inherent danger that professionals and services can view it as less serious (than contact offences / abuse).

For clarity then:

- TA-CSA (Technology assisted child sexual abuse) abuse has the same degree of impact as offline sexual abuse;
- Technology provides additional routes both to access young people to abuse and to manipulate and silence them;
- With TA-CSA there are additional elements for young people to contend with, related to control, permanence, blackmail, re-victimisation and self- blame;
- It is really important to avoid victim-blaming.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION & COUNTY LINES[41]

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or
- For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator;' and/or

[41] County Lines Toolkit
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870035/Safeguarding_children_at_risk_from_criminal_exploitation_review.pdf

- Through violence or the threat of violence.

Victims may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact and can occur through the use of technology. It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, young people or adults. Perpetrators may use enticement-based methods to ensure compliance, often accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others.

As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

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

County Lines - Some common terminology explained:

- **Cuckooing** - where gangs establish a base in the market location by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing';
- **Going country** - term that describes county lines activity. It can also mean the act of travelling to another city/town to deliver drugs or money;
- **Trapping** - the act of moving drugs from one town to another or the act of selling drugs in one;
- **Trap House** - A building used as a base from where drugs are sold (or sometimes manufactured). These houses are usually occupied by someone (usually adult drug users but sometimes young people are forced to stay in trap houses);
- **Trap Line** - when someone owns a mobile phone specifically for the purpose of running and selling of drug.

Cuckooing - for information:

- 50% of county lines use cuckooed properties, typically a vulnerable adult, to facilitate crime, manufacture or cultivate drugs, store weapons or sell drugs
- Increase in the sharing on social media of videos taken of the vulnerable adult being bullied, abused, demeaned or assaulted

In UK law, it isn't possible for someone to consent to their home being used for certain things if:

- They are under 18 years old
- They do not have capacity to give consent
- They do not have sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision

- They have not given consent freely
- They have withdrawn their consent
- UK law also recognises that a person cannot freely give consent for their home to be occupied if this consent is obtained by coercion, deception, or other forms of abuse

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin but MDMA, cannabis, amphetamines and spice also 'feature'.) into one or more importing areas [within the UK - usually suburban areas, market and coastal towns], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line'.

These activities may also involve the commission of the offences of 'slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour' and 'human trafficking', as defined by the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Consequently, referrals to the National Referral Mechanism should also be considered by the DSL.[42]

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and adults at risk being exploited to move [and store] drugs and money.
Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure the compliance of victims. Girls may be groomed and forced into abusive 'relationships' with gang members and made to perform sexual acts (see also pupil sexual exploitation). Victims may also be coerced into pick-pocketing, shoplifting, benefit fraud, sham marriages, begging and cultivating drugs e.g. cannabis farming.

Victims may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations. In so doing, they may be exposed to activities such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection - this is difficult for people to do themselves which means that sexual offences may be commissioned at the same time.

Children and young people can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools and residential settings. One important way of identifying potential involvement is the emergence or a pattern of missing episodes (both from home and school). Other potential indicators to look out for include:

- unexplained behavioural change / changes in emotional well-being;
- unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- association with other young people involved in exploitation;
- misuse of drugs and alcohol;
- going missing or regularly come home late;
- signs of assault and/or malnutrition;
- possession of / access to numerous phones;
- use of unusual terms e.g. "going country";
- associating with gangs or other young people who are;
- unexplained bus or train tickets;
- unexplained gifts (clothes, trainers) and cash.

[42] Guidance National referral mechanism guidance: adult (England and Wales)

Further Information and Guidance
County Lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults
County Lines Criminal Exploitation Toolkit
Children's Society spot the signs resources

GANG RELATED ACTIVITY

The Early Intervention Foundation's (2015) report on the risk factors for gang involvement and youth violence showed that risk factors can be identified in children as young as seven. Therefore, it is essential that we take every opportunity to intervene as early as possible on a key issue affecting outcomes for children.
The report identified a range of predictors of gang involvement and youth violence in primary school-aged children, as well as protective factors which reduce the likelihood of youth violence and gang involvement.

We acknowledge that school is a critical setting for supporting pupils who are at risk of gang involvement, youth violence and other poor outcomes and in order to be effective, we will continue to work effectively within the wider system to fulfil our early intervention, safeguarding and child protection responsibilities effectively.

Further Information
Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges

SERIOUS VIOLENCE

All staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, e.g.:

- being male;
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

They also know about potential indicators which may signal pupils are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime include:

- Absence, poor attendance, going missing from home or care;[43]
- A significant decline in performance or change in wellbeing;
- A change in friendship or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Suddenly have money/ new clothes/possessions / mobile phones which are unexplained;
- Receiving lots more calls or texts than usual;
- Suspicions around carrying, selling or using drugs;
- Are carrying weapons or know people that have access to weapons?
- Are involved with known gang members or people that are older and who seem controlling
- Signs of assault(s), suspicious or unexplained injuries
- Seem very reserved, scared or seem like they have something to hide?
- Are self-harming.
- Staff should also be mindful that pupils are especially vulnerable during the transition from primary to high school.

[43] Children missing education Pupil missing from home or care

We recognise that tackling CCE, county lines, serious violence and gang-related activity is about contextual safeguarding. This is oriented around and facilitates early intervention and prevention, community-based support and local partnerships alongside effective law enforcement and criminal justice responses.

We set great store by our relationships with pupils and their families. This helps us to pick-up on change(s), recognise and respond to the indicators of potential vulnerability and to provide early support that is effective. When a young person begins to show the signs of exploitation or vulnerability to exploitation, and is therefore at increased risk from serious violence, we will intervene as early as possible to help reduce the risk s and increase protective factors.

Concerns around Child Criminal Exploitation, serious violence and / or gang related activity will be dealt with in line with local safeguarding partnership arrangements, procedures and protocols and any concerns must be treated as safeguarding issues.

TRAFFICKING & MODERN SLAVERY

Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency (NCA) if they observes signs or receive intelligence relating to modern slavery, e.g. human trafficking, slavery, sexual and criminal exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. The public authority (including schools) bears this obligation where it has 'reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking'.
Currently, victims of human trafficking who are identified by a 'first responder', including local authorities, can be referred to the NCA via the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) however this is on a voluntary basis and with the adult victim's consent. Children do not need to give their consent to be referred to the NCA. Modern Slavery Victims Referral
Staff must discuss any modern slavery-related concerns with the DSL in school without delay. Externally, the point of contact for all modern slavery crimes should be local police.

Advice, Support & Further Information
Trafficked Children Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Modern Slavery Helpline:08000 121 700
Home Office booklet
HM Govt posters and fact sheets
Trafficking: safeguarding children
GLAA modern slavery video

PART FIVE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SAFEGUARDING & SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

We recognise and are very mindful of the fact that some children and young people are especially vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, their communication needs, or other issues.

Where pupils need a social worker, this informs decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks and about promoting welfare, e.g. for example, considering the provision of pastoral support, alongside action by statutory services.

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Moreover, a previously looked after child remains vulnerable, potentially. We recognise that in order to safeguard these children all agencies need to work together.

Awareness is raised by and reflected in policies such as this and the Designated Teacher Policy, which are consolidated in practice via staff training and practice across school. For example, we ensure that:

- We have designated and well trained staff in place;
- Within the boundaries of professional confidentiality, relevant information is made available to those who 'need to know' e.g. legal status, key personnel, contact arrangements;
- We provide additional pastoral support;
- The Governing Body continually assesses how effectively we are using additional monies and resources and monitors attendance closely;
- We plan carefully and review regularly in order to ensure a positive and proactive approach to behaviour support;
- We draw-up individual plans, in consultation with young people, parents, carers and other agencies / professionals and in-line with relevant guidance and legislation;
- We liaise with key professionals, (e.g. social workers, Virtual Schools Heads), parents and carers to ensure that planning is effective and that any transitions are as smooth as possible.

The Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher in our school is Kathryn Arts. She works closely with the DSLs, the Chair of Governors and the virtual school head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the pupil's personal education plan.

The designated teacher also works with the virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. Local authorities have on-going responsibilities to the young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. That includes keeping in touch with them, preparing an assessment of their needs and appointing a personal adviser who develops a pathway plan with the young person

Working closely alongside the Designated Teacher, the DSL will ensure that teaching staff are supported so they can identify the challenges that pupils who have or who have had a social worker might face: even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on pupils' educational outcomes. Via its co-ordinated, whole-school

approach, the school will provide the additional support and adjustments that best support these and which help them reach their potential and stay safe.

Latest Guidance - the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children 2018

Promoting the educational attainment of looked after and previously looked after children 2018

Virtual school heads manage pupil premium plus for looked after children; they receive this funding based on the latest published number of children looked after by the local authority.
Contact details: virtualschool@lancashire.gov.uk
Vanessa Nice 01772 531853

Virtual school heads also have responsibilities towards children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England or Wales. Their primary role for this group will be the provision of information and advice to relevant parties.

It is recognised that there are specific safeguarding challenges associated with Looked After Children including but not only:

- persistent absence
- poorer educational outcomes
- post-pandemic support linked to poor mental health and wellbeing

HOMELESSNESS

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL and Deputy DSLs are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority will be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and will not, replace a referral into children's social care where a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness would have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live[44][45].

The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis. In most cases we in school will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, we recognise that in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and

[44] Homelessness reduction bill policy factsheets

support. Children's social care will be the lead agency for these pupils and the DSL / Deputy DSL will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on children's circumstances.

CHILDREN & THE COURT SYSTEM

There are various circumstances whereby the school may need to support pupils in relation to court processes. For example:

- We might need to help them to understand a particular process;
- We might need to support them as part of a process involving parental separation or dispute(s) or care proceedings;
- They may be required to give evidence in court and this can be stressful for them and their families;
- We may need to support pupils who are members of a family that has had to be relocated after threats have been made to them.

It will be the DSL and Headteacher who lead in these circumstances and they will work closely with relevant agencies and professionals, as required and in-line with locally agreed protocols and procedures. They will also refer to the following, age appropriate guides:

Gov.uk Young witness guidance
Gov.uk 12-17 year old witnesses in criminal courts
Guide for parents – your pupil is a witness

CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year and we are mindful that these children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. For some children the process can feel very like bereavement and we will provide them with appropriate support at every stage.

It will be the DSL and Headteacher who lead in these circumstances. They will work closely with relevant staff in school as well as any other agencies and professionals involved, as required and in-line with locally agreed protocols and procedures.

They may also draw upon the useful guidance provided by the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) which provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

National Information Centre on Children of Offenders

PRIVATE FOSTERING

Most children spend some time staying with friends and relatives. However, in some situations the arrangements can become more permanent. If a pupil aged under 16 years (or 18 years if they have SEND) goes to live with a person who is not a close relative to them (e.g. a great aunt or a friend) for more than 28 days or more, this is known as private fostering and the local authority must be notified.

Private Fostering happens for lots of different reasons some of which include:

- Children living with a friend's family as a result of separation, divorce or problems at home;
- Children sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents living overseas;

- Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend;
- Teenagers who have broken ties with their parents and are staying with friends or non-relative;
- Those living with host families whilst pursuing courses of study.

If a private fostering arrangement is brought to the attention of someone in school, the DSL must be informed. The DSL then has a duty to notify the local authority of the arrangement:
Private fostering: local authorities
Contact Details: 0300 123 6701

Once notified, a social worker from the local authority will to arrange to visit the pupil's parents, the private foster carers and the pupil themselves. They will keep in touch with those people at regular intervals in order to ensure that everything is going well. They will offer support and guidance to both the foster cares and parents, particularly in respect of making plans for the pupil's future and helping the pupil to keep in touch with their culture and background. The social worker will also offer advice on any welfare benefits that the private foster carers may be entitled to.

YOUNG CARERS

Definition
A young carer is a child (under 18) who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem. Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister.

Some examples of the tasks young people undertake are:

- Household chores – including washing, cooking and cleaning on behalf of the whole family;
- Personal/nursing care – such as giving medication, changing dressings, assisting with mobility;
- Intimate care – washing, dressing and assisting with toilet requirements;
- Emotional support – monitoring and meeting the emotional needs of the person;
- Childcare – helping to care for younger siblings, including escorting to school, in addition to other caring tasks
- Other – household administration such as paying bills, accompanying the cared-for person to hospital, or acting as a translator for non-speaking sensory impaired, or those whose first language is not English.

Caring responsibilities can impact significantly on children and young people, both in and outside school. Within the context of the Loyne Specialist School, it is important for staff to be mindful of siblings of pupils who may be young carers.

Impact
Potential difficulties which staff should be particularly mindful of include:

- Attendance / lateness;
- Completing homework;
- Lack of time to play, relax and socialise;
- Isolation from friends, peers and wider family;
- Inability to participate in extra-curricular activities and the broader life of the school;
- Conflict between the needs of the person they are helping and their own needs leading to feelings of guilt and resentment;

- Feeling that there is nobody there for them, that professionals do not listen to them and are working only with the adult;
- Lack of recognition, praise or respect for their contribution;
- Feeling that they are different from other pupils and are unable to be part of the group;
- Problems with transitions and change.

The Children and Families Act and Care Act 2014 strengthened the rights of young carers by giving them the right to be assessed, regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it. In addition, a young carer has the right to an assessment based on the *appearance* of need – which means that they do not need to request an assessment or be undertaking a 'regular and substantial' amount of care. (An assessment can be requested however).

All of this means that when a pupil is identified as a young carer, the needs of everyone in the family are to be considered. In conducting assessments, local authorities are required to:

- Assess why a pupil is caring;
- What needs to change;
- What would help the family to prevent children from taking on this responsibility;
- Take a whole family approach, i.e. by assessing and supporting adults so that young carer's needs are identified when undertaking an adult or adult carer's needs assessment;
- Ensure that adult's and children's services work together to assess
- effectively.

Contact Details: lancashireyoungcarers@barnardos.org.uk. 01772 641002

Further Information about Young Carers
The Children's Society facilitates support groups for young carers in many areas:
Children's Society
Carers UK help and advice

PART SIX: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AT OUR SCHOOL - A QUICK GUIDE

INTRODUCTION
This brief guide provides an overview of safeguarding and child protection arrangements in school; we hope you find it useful. The school's [full] Safeguarding and Child protection Policy and Procedures can be found on our website or, alternatively, a copy can be requested from the school office.

WHAT DOES SAFEGUARDING MEAN?
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils is a really important part of our school's work and we have certain legal duties that we must fulfil; it is the responsibility of our school and our governors to make sure that we have the right things in place. When we are inspected, Ofsted checks to make sure that this is the case and we are meeting our safeguarding responsibilities.

When we talk about safeguarding we mean helping pupils to keep safe. This means protecting them from Child abuse and neglect, but safeguarding is about much more than that. Schools are particularly important because staff see pupils every day. This means that they are in a good position to pick-up on problems and concerns and that schools can provide or get some early help which might stop things from getting worse.

WHAT WE DO TO SAFEGUARD PUPILS
Some examples of the ways that we safeguard pupils in school include:

- Observing our pupils closely, understanding their unique methods of communication and ensuring that we share with the DSL any changes we may notice;
- Teaching them to understand the risks around them and what to do when they feel unsafe. We do this as part of the curriculum but also use assemblies and speakers / organisations from outside school e.g. the NSPCC;
- Listening carefully to what pupils tell us and regularly ask them what they think;
- Consulting and working in partnership with parents, carers and, where necessary, external agencies and professionals;
- Recruiting and checking staff and volunteers who work in our school safely, in- line with national guidance and best practice;
- Keeping our site as secure as possible, so that we know where pupils are and who comes into school;
- Promoting good attendance and positive behaviour. This helps us to prevent and protect pupils from different types of bullying, among other things;
- Helping pupils to understand and keep safe from risks and dangers which they may encounter online or via the use of phones and other technologies;
- Promoting healthy eating;
- Promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural wellbeing and development, including British Values, so that they understand and are protected from all forms of radicalisation and extremism;
- Dealing properly with sensitive and confidential information. This includes keeping records safely and securely, seeking appropriate consent and sharing information only with people who need to know;
- Ensuring that contractors and other people who come into school or use our facilities are checked and trained in safeguarding and child protection;

- Making sure that all governors, staff and volunteers know how to conduct themselves and that they are well trained and up-to-date on safeguarding issues so that they all know what to look for and exactly what to do if they are worried;
- Having staff trained to lead on particular issues in school so that they are in a position to advise and support other staff, parents and pupils e.g. Carla Huddleston – Online Safety Co-ordinator, Kathryn Arts – Prevent Lead,
- Having senior staff who act as Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in school. They receive more in-depth training and take the lead on safeguarding and child protection. The DSLs work closely with other professionals as part of their safeguarding role.

THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP US SAFEGUARD CHILDREN

We ask all parents and carers to do all that they can to help us to keep pupils safe. Some especially important things that you can do include:

- Delivering, reinforcing and supporting keeping safe messages such as the importance of sharing worries and having good school attendance;
- Respecting school policies on things like parking on and around the site;
- Sticking to Acceptable Use Policies on the use of mobile phones, cameras / videos / images, including online and at school events etc;
- Modelling responsible use of social media and helping to reinforce key messages to your children about keeping safe when using technology and the internet;
- Treating one another, all staff and pupils with dignity and respect at all times;
- Keeping open lines of communication by letting school know about anything that may be affecting your pupil at home
- Sharing good ideas and / or practice as well as bringing any issues, problems or concerns to our attention as soon as possible and in good faith. This includes concerns about an adult's conduct or about the behaviour of or concerns about a pupil's welfare.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Information about pupils' welfare may be shared with others outside the school to help keep them safe from harm. We always aim to discuss this with parents or carers before we do so, but this may not always be possible. The law does allow us to share information without asking first under circumstances where we are acting to protect pupils from harm.

USEFUL CONTACTS IN SCHOOL

School Website	https://www.loyneschool.org.uk/
School Office	01524 64543
School email	info@loyne.lancs.sch.uk
Headteacher	Susan Campbell
Chair of Governors	Ann-Marie Houghton
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Kathryn Arts
Deputy DSL	Susan Campbell, Sarah Wisniewski Emma Flynn, Fiona Gemson
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Kathryn Arts
Online Safety Co-Ordinators	Kathryn Arts, Carla Huddleston

APPENDIX 2

CUMILATIVE HARM AND POLY-VICTIMISATION

Brandon et al also draw attention to the link between abusive experiences, ensuing mental health difficulties and bullying for a significant proportion of children and young people.

We know of course that traumatised children - who may be or have been Looked After or have a social worker, for example - might feel especially confused and 'lost' in the sense that they might feel that they don't belong with anyone or anywhere. This exposes them to the risk of being re-abused as they seek identity, a sense of belonging and validation. These children may also be less likely to pick-up on inappropriate behaviour from others and be more likely to make less safe choices in, including online.

Research indicates that disabled children and those with additional or complex health needs can be especially vulnerable to all forms of abuse and neglect, including fabricated or induced illness. The reasons for this are multiple and can include increased dependency, communication difficulties and isolation.[45]

Additional barriers can exist when it comes to recognising abuse because:

- There can be a reluctance to even consider the possibility that someone would abuse a disabled child;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Where keeping these children safe is concerned, we should be mindful of and avoid the following, quite common pitfalls:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to disability, without further, appropriate exploration;
- failure to distinguish between developmentally normative and / or experimental and sexually harmful behaviour, harassment and abuse;
- failure to understand or recognise the sexual and identity rights of people with disabilities;
- the danger inherent in an overriding emphasis on adult / parental support where disabled children are concerned.

Disabled pupils might also suffer abuse other than via overt physical or sexual assaults. This means that staff need to think carefully and holistically about the needs of individual pupils in respect of things like privacy, dignity and respect, food, mobility, online activity, promoting positive behaviour, medication, finances, supervision, restraint, intimate care and the use of aids and adaptations.

[45] NSPCC we have the right to be safe too - see also page 45 this policy

Physical Indicators
DSLs in schools are not qualified or expected to diagnose whether marks or injuries are non-accidental. They must exercise their judgement, however, and in so doing the following should be borne in mind:

- ✓ Bruising is strongly related to mobility. Once children are mobile they are more prone to sustain bruises from everyday activities and accidents. Most children who are able to walk independently have bruises;
- ✓ Only one in five infants who is starting to walk by holding on to the furniture has bruises;
- ✓ Bruises usually happen when children fall over or bump into objects;
- ✓ Children tend to have more bruises during the summer months;
- ✓ The shins and the knees are the most likely places where children who are walking, or starting to walk, get bruised;
- ✓ Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body – e.g. knees and elbows – and are often seen on the front of the body;
- ✓ Infants who are just starting to walk unsupported may bump and bruise their heads – usually the forehead, nose, centre of their chin or back of the head;
- ✓ Head injuries and fractures - particularly rib or metaphyseal (corner of long bone fractures - especially U2s), can occur without any bruising;
- ✓ Accidental scalds usually occur as "spill injuries", e.g. where a toddler reaches out and pulls hot liquid over themselves. This typically leads to a scald affecting the upper trunk, face and/or arms which usually has an irregular edge, is variable in depth and deepest at the initial point of contact;
- ✓ As many as 50 per cent of children sustain an injury to the mouth by the time they leave school. Most are accidental and, in older children, often caused by falls and sporting accidents.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Definition
The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality". The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional. (Research estimates that 140,000 children live in households where there is high-risk domestic abuse (SafeLives (2015), Getting it right first time: policy report. Bristol: SafeLives)).

The impact of domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, has been integrated throughout Working Together to Safeguard Children:

"Controlling or coercive behaviour - Also known as coercive control, controlling or coercive behaviour is a form of domestic abuse. In 2015, the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was introduced under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act as a criminal offence. Controlling or coercive behaviour is included in the definition of domesticabuse in section 1(3)(c) of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021."

It is described as:

- Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support,

- exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour; and
- Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim
- Coercive control is a form of abuse that involves multiple behaviours and tactics which reinforce each other and are used to isolate, manipulate and regulate the victim. This pattern of abuse creates high levels of anxiety and fear. This has a significant impact on children and young people, both directly, as victims in their own right, and indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on the non-abusive parent.

Children may also be forced to participate and / or collude in controlling or coercive behaviour towards the parent who is being abused.

Impact[46]

There is no such thing as a hierarchy of domestic abuse, it is all serious, potentially very harmful and can be life-threatening. Every person will respond differently and what is not particularly traumatic for one pupil and/or victim may be hugely so for another.

Prolonged and / or regular exposure to DVA can have a serious impact on a child's development and emotional wellbeing, despite the best efforts of the victim parent to protect the child. It can pose a threat to an unborn pupil, because assaults on pregnant women frequently involve punches or kicks directed at the abdomen, risking injury to both mother and foetus. It can also lead to other possible risks, such as i.e. foetal death, low birth weight, early birth, infection etc. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Assessing Risk

Most risk is fluid and dynamic which means that things can change very quickly. It is not for staff in schools to assess risk where domestic abuse occurs. Formal risk assessments will be undertaken by Children's Services, Police and / or specialist domestic abuse agencies and / or personnel; this is complex and potentially dangerous work. Anyone who is worried about domestic abuse must always seek advice and support as soon as they become aware of the possibility of it.

Research, serious case reviews and experience tell us that domestic abuse poses a particularly significant risk in some circumstances. Things to be mindful of include the following:

- Physical injuries being sustained, especially where they require hospital treatment (obviously, it is of great concern if treatment is delayed or not sought);
- During pregnancy;
- Babies or disabled children are implicated;
- people are locked-in or prevented from leaving;
- Accompanying issues pertaining to culture and / or 'honour';
- Where children and young people may be used as 'shields' and / or where their possessions are destroyed;
- Animals are harmed;
- The abuse is continuing / repeated or escalating;

[46] https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/childhood-trauma-and-the-brain?cn-reloaded=1 https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk/trauma-informed-lancashire-workshops/

- Control of finances;
- Sexual violence;
- Bizarre / ritualistic elements;
- Victim has left / plans to leave;
- Stalking / harassment;
- History of child protection / CP Plans previously or currently in place;
- Court Orders previously or currently in place, especially if there is breach.
- Research continues to remind us that suspected perpetrators of domestic abuse are not necessarily the individuals who pose the greatest risk of harm to a pupil in a relationship / household.

The following *might* indicate that some progress is being made and / or be potential signs of safety although they obviously offer no guarantees:

- Adults taking account of the impact or potential impact on children and taking appropriate steps to address behaviour;
- No evidence of children being directly involved (although they are still highly likely to know about, hear and / or see abusive behaviour);
- Evidence of protective / support networks.

It is important for assessments to consider and distinguish between immediate concerns for a pupil's safety and wellbeing and risks which can be mitigated with appropriate support. These judgements and decisions are usually best left to those with a detailed understanding of the issues and dynamics.

DSLs MUST seek appropriate and timely advice and should NOT act unilaterally.
SafeLives practice and support resources for other professionals
Women's Aid – support for professionals
NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
Refuge Website with range of advice for those experiencing domestic abuse
SafeLives: young people and domestic abuse

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (available 24:7) 0808 2000 247.
Operation Encompass & Clare's Law
Operation Encompass directly connects the police with schools to ensure better outcomes for pupils who are subject or witness to police-attended incidents of domestic abuse. Rapid provision of support within the school environment means pupils are better safeguarded against the short-, medium- and long-term effects of domestic abuse.
Operation encompass

Clare's Law was introduced following the death of Clare Woods in 2009, the aim of DVDS is to allow the person potentially at risk a formal mechanism to make enquiries about any individual who they are in a relationship with, so they can make a more informed decision regarding their continued relationship.
Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

Domestic Violence & Abuse Useful Links and Resources
Safe Lives resource library
NSPCC Domestic Abuse Information
Direct Work Resources - social workers toolbox

Women's Aid Website

SUBSTANCE AND / OR ALCOHOL MISUSE

Most parents and carers who drink alcohol or use drugs do so in moderation and don't present an increased risk of harm to their children. However, parents and carers who misuse substances often have chaotic, unpredictable lifestyles and may struggle to provide their children with safe care and clear boundaries

Definitions

Alcohol misuse is harmful drinking and alcohol dependence. Harmful drinking is a pattern of alcohol use which causes alcohol-related health problems, including psychological problems such as depression, physical illnesses or alcohol-related accidents. Alcohol dependence is characterised by craving alcohol and continued drinking in spite of harmful consequences. It's associated with increased criminal activity, domestic abuse and an increased rate of significant mental and physical health problems (NICE, 2011).

Drug misuse is a dependence on, or regular excessive consumption of, psychoactive substances leading to social, psychological, physical or legal problems. Drug misuse is more prevalent in socially deprived areas. In England and Wales, the most commonly used psychoactive substance is cannabis, followed by cocaine and ecstasy. Opioids such as heroin are used less commonly but present the most significant health problems (NICE, 2012).

Not all parents who drink or take drugs harm their children, but children living with parents with alcohol or drug problems can be at more risk of harm and neglect. Getting parents the right help and support as early as possible is crucial in helping them to develop secure and healthy relationships with their children. Therefore, living in a household where a parent or carer misuses substances doesn't mean a child will experience abuse, but it is a risk factor. An analysis of 175 serious case reviews (2011-14) found that 47% of cases featured parental substance misuse.

Impact

Research estimates that between 250,000 and 978,000 children have a parent who misuses drugs 920,000 to 3.5 million children in England are affected by parental alcohol problems (Source: How safe are our children? NSPCC).

Parental alcohol misuse (PAM) disrupts everyday routines and leads to inconsistent and unpredictable parenting meaning that children may feel isolated, stigmatised, and guilty; they may also have to take on caring responsibilities. PAM is also associated with neglect and domestic abuse and the prognosis for children is poorer in child protection cases involving PAM.

Problematic drug or alcohol misuse by parents can affect children differently, according to their age, developmental stage and personality. There may be some family factors which increase risk to children and others which reduce the impact of parents' problems. Women who misuse substances during pregnancy may put their babies at risk of impaired brain development, congenital malformations, premature delivery, low birth weight and withdrawal symptoms after birth.

Children most at risk of suffering significant harm live in families experiencing a number of different problems, such as substance misuse, domestic abuse and parental mental health

problems or learning difficulties. The impact of substance misuse on parents and carers can lead to negative consequences for children.

In later stages, impacts to children can include:

- Physical and emotional abuse or neglect as a result of inadequate supervision, poor role models and inappropriate parenting;
- Behavioural, emotional or cognitive problems and relationship difficulties;
- Taking on the role of carer for parents and siblings;
- Preoccupation with, or blaming themselves for, their parents' substance
- misuse;
- Infrequent attendance at school and poor educational attainment;
- Experiencing poverty and inadequate and unsafe accommodation;
- Exposure to toxic substances and criminal activities;
- Separation from parents due to intervention from children's services,
- imprisonment or hospitalisation;
- Increased risk of developing drug or alcohol problems or offending behaviour themselves.

Assessing Risk

Some key things to consider in assessing risk where parents or carers misuse alcohol or drugs include:

- Whether the person is a main / sole carer;
- Whether use is stable and managed or chaotic;
- Associated health risks;
- How securely and where substances are stored;
- How things are procured and what this might involve;
- Impact on mood and behaviour;
- Impact on mood - can lead to unavailability and / or unpredictable parenting;
- Risk to unborn children;
- Impact on routines e.g. school, bed, meals;
- The possibility of children being corrupted and becoming involved in crime, gang-related activity, abused or exploited;
- Young carers;
- Levels of supervision.

It is important for assessments to consider and distinguish between immediate concerns for a pupil's safety and wellbeing and risks which can be mitigated with appropriate support.

Further Information & Resources

Talk to Frank Information and advice on drugs
Updated Drug Strategy 2022 and 10 year plan

PARENTAL MENTAL ILL HEALTH

Living in a household where parents or carers have mental health problems doesn't mean a pupil will experience abuse or negative consequences. Most parents are able to give their children safe and loving care. Many children whose parents or carers have mental health problems go on to achieve their full potential in life, particularly if their parents receive the right support at the right time.

The term 'mental health problems' refers to diagnosable conditions such as depression, anxiety-related disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar and personality disorders. Mental health problems affecting mothers and fathers during the perinatal period, in pregnancy and after birth, can include anxiety, depression and postnatal psychotic disorders.

Parents and carers with mental health problems may experience stressful life events, like anyone else. For example, divorce or separation, unemployment, financial hardship, poor housing, discrimination and isolation and a lack of social support may be a consequence of their illness, or cause or make their condition worse. Together, these problems can make it very hard for parents to provide their children with safe and effective care.

Impact

Research estimates that between 50,000 and more than 2 million children are affected by parental mental ill-health (Source: How safe are our children?
NSPCC). Parents' and carers' mental health problems may affect children differently according to their age, development and personality. There may be some family factors which increase the risks to children. There may also be other factors which protect children or reduce the impact of their parents' problems.

Assessing Risk

It is important to remember that most parents or carers who experience mental ill health will not abuse or neglect their children. However, mental health problems are frequently present in cases of Child abuse or neglect. An analysis of 175 serious case reviews (2011-14) found that they featured in 53% of those cases.

The risks to children are greater when parental mental health problems exist alongside domestic abuse and parental substance misuse. Local authorities participating in a study by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) estimated that all 3 of these factors were present in between 65-90% of their Children in Need cases (ADCS, 2016).

The risk of harm to children increases when they are exposed to a number of problems at the same time or over a period of time:

- A thorough assessment of potential risks should be conducted if a family is experiencing domestic abuse or drug and alcohol problems alongside mental health difficulties;
- Always consider the severity of a parent or carer's mental health symptoms. If they are making threats to harm themselves, their children or other family members, or if they appear to be suffering from psychotic delusions, this should always trigger a thorough assessment of risks to the children's safety;
- Related stresses such as poverty, poor housing, family separation and lack of social support can also increase the risk of children suffering harm;
- Young children rely on their parents and carers to give them the warm, nurturing

care they need for healthy development. Children are most at risk of harm when their mother's mental health problems begin in pregnancy or the first year of life, especially if they are long-lasting or severe;
- Teenagers also need strong parental guidance and support as they transition to adulthood;
- The stresses of parenting can make it even more difficult for a parent or
- carer to cope and this may impact on a child's welfare;
- If a parent or carer isn't accepting support offered by mental health services, failing to take prescribed medication or 'self-medicating' or attend appointments, this may affect their functioning and ability to cope and impact on their children's wellbeing or safety;
- Children may be more at risk of harm if the parent or carer experiencing difficulties is living alone with them without the support of another adult;
- Consider if any of the children had to take on caring responsibilities for their parent, carers or siblings.

Further Information & Resources
https://hubofhope.co.uk/services
Children's services
Rethink Mind Samaritans Sane
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services-children-families/baby-steps

Summary: Key Messages for Schools from Case Reviews
KCSIE 2025 makes clear that pupils need to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote pupils' welfare.

Things to AVOID
Research and serious case reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect;
- poor record keeping;
- failing to listen to the views of the pupil;
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve;
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies;
- sharing information too slowly; and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action

Things you SHOULD do

- ✓ Be professionally curious – explore fully small incidents or concerns;
- ✓ Recognise and act on cumulative harm and seek help early;
- ✓ Track and monitor for early assessment / intervention;
- ✓ Don't be desensitised to poverty and / or its impact;
- ✓ Practical support, e.g. breakfast clubs can help to address the manifestations of poverty and a chaotic lifestyle but they do not assure safety;
- ✓ Build relationships, pick-up on change;
- ✓ Explore the underlying issues that are limiting engagement and try to address them;
- ✓ A thorough chronology of all historic concerns and incidents, reviewed and monitored regularly, can help to identify cumulating risk and prompt early

intervention

- ✓ The role of men in a pupil's life, the wider family and community are often overlooked – both in terms of risk and as a protective or supportive resource;
- ✓ Proactively explore underlying factors and issues in cases of persisting self- harm or disturbing behaviour.

Some Practical Tips for DSLs: towards effective multi-agency working

☹ Don't bash people if they're doing their best;
☹ Don't say "*if there's a case review it's on your shoulders*";
☹ If you don't think it's safe / good / robust enough question, challenge and escalate!
☺ Do ensure that you are familiar with your local models, procedures and protocols and make direct reference to them;
☺ say what you have done already (and if necessary share chronologies so people see the full picture / counter start again syndrome);
☺ be clear about what you're asking for;
☺ use the 'right' local language and terminology;
☺ Focus on the health, development and impairment of children / young people
☺ Follow-it up and ask for feedback.

Most importantly, keep pupils and their lived experiences at the heart of everything you do. That means capturing their voices and advocating for them.
https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/