Alvechurch C of E Middle School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

September 2023

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the governing body and was. Last reviewed on Date: September 2023 Ratified: October 2023 Next Review Date: September 2024

Signature……. (Chair of Governors)

Print Name: Lysandre Notley

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Section 1 Child Protection and Safeguarding Leads and Key Dates

Governors' Committee Responsible: Curriculum and Standards

Governor Lead: Louise Wilde

Designated Safeguarding Lead of Staff: Vanessa Rancins

Prevent Lead: Vanessa Rancins

Child Exploitation GET SAFE lead: Vanessa Rancins

Status & Review Cycle: Statutory Annual

Next Review Date: September 2024

Section 2 Safeguarding Statement

At Alvechurch C of E Middle school we strongly believe that Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
Safeguarding includes the establishment and implementation of procedures to protect children from deliberate harm, however, safeguarding also encompasses all aspects of pupils' health, safety and mental well-being.

As a church school, we have a demonstrable culture where all members of the school community, whatever their background, disability, ethnicity, gender, identity, learning difficulty, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation are welcomed and treated with dignity and respect as people created in the image of God.

Alvechurch C of E Middle School is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all children in school and all our staff, governors and volunteers have Child Protection training.

Key Personnel:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Vanessa Rancins

email: vrancins@alvechurch.worcs.sch.uk

Telephone: 0121 455 1033

The deputy DSL(s):

Peter Hipkiss

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Danielle Shipley

email: dshipley@alvechurch.worcs.sch.uk

Telephone: 0121 455 1033

The nominated safeguarding governor:

Louise Wilde

email: lwilde@alvechurch.worcs.sch.uk

Telephone: 0121 507 4353

The Headteacher:

David Snell

email: dsnell@alvechurch.worcs.sch.uk

Telephone: 0121 455 1033

The Chair of Governors:

Lysandre Notley

email: lnotley@alvechurch.worcs.sch.uk

Telephone: 0121 455 1033

Other named staff and contacts:

- Designated Teacher for Children in Care Sam Harrison
- Online Safety Co-ordinator David Snell
- Safeguarding in Education Adviser, WCF Denise Hannibal
- Local Authority Designated Officer/Position of Trust Jon Hancock
- jhancock22@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk
- Chanel Chair Paul Kinsella, Advanced Public Health Practitioner
- Family Front Door: **01905 822666** (core working hours)

  Out of hours or at weekends: **01905 768020**

Section 3 Introduction

Alvechurch C of E Middle School recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support pupils in School. The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety, health, and well-being by creating an honest, open, caring, and supportive environment. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance.

Alvechurch C of E Middle School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy draws upon duties conferred by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, The Children and Families Act 2014, S175 of the 2020 Education Act, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (for independent schools), the Non-maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 (for non-maintained special schools) and the guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the DfE's statutory Guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023

This policy is also based on the following legislation*:*

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B (11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- Where a school has charitable status, Charity Commission guidance on charity and trustee duties to safeguard children is available at Charity Commission Guidance
- NSPCC's whistleblowing advice line dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by our school. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285).
- Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk NSPCC – When to call the Police

Part 1 Safeguarding Information for all staff

1.0 What School and College Staff Need to Know

All staff are aware of systems within our school, which support safeguarding, and these are explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes the:

- AMS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Behaviour Policy- Behaviour guidance updated
- Staff Behaviour Policy (sometimes called a Code of Conduct).
- Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (including the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies).
- Copies of Policies and a copy of Part one and Annex B (or Annex A in Keeping Children Safe if appropriate) of this document is provided to staff at induction.
- **All our** staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition**, all** staff will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- **All our** staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction.
- **All our** staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.
- **All our** staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (Children in Need) and Section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- **All our staff** should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
- **All our** staff know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff know how to manage 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 children's social care. Staff never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- **All our** staff are able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Our staff are aware of:

West Midlands procedures:

Within the West Midlands, there are twelve local areas that collaborate with regards to child safeguarding procedures. With the introduction of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*, each local area's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are led by the statutory safeguarding partners/organisations: local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and the police.

These child protection and safeguarding procedures are for nine participating areas and are effective from 31st March 2017.

Background

A project proposal was successfully submitted to DfE on behalf of the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Partnerships to develop regional safeguarding procedures. It was felt that it would be sensible to move to a more regional approach to multi-agency working around safeguarding, especially in light of the fact that so many partner organisations (including Police, Probation, Health and many others) span an area that crosses local authority boundaries.

Introduction

WCF Levels of Need threshold

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) requires the safeguarding partners to publish a threshold document which sets out the local criteria for action when an early help response and the criteria for making a referral to local authority children's social care. Effective Early Help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help. A setting can undertake an assessment of the need for early help and provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

We, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of all children The terms 'Early Help' and 'Early Intervention' are often used interchangeably, and this can cause confusion.

The Department for Education and Ofsted both use the term 'Early Help' and this has also been adopted by Worcestershire. The term refers to the support which is needed for children and families at the first sign of additional unmet needs, at any point in the child's life from pre-birth through to 18 years. Providing the right help at the earliest opportunity can help to solve problems before they become more pressing and complex and avert the need for statutory intervention later on in their life. This document is intended to assist professionals to make decisions about how to respond to the needs of the children, young people and families they are in contact or working with. It is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive or is a definitive way to open or close a gateway to a particular service or range of services. Every child and family are unique, and their needs should be considered on a case-by-case basis and decisions made using professional judgement, supported by this guidance.

1.11 Abuse and neglect

All our staff are aware of indicators of abuse and neglect. As part of our safeguarding training, staff know what signs to look for to identify early signs of abuse and neglect and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation to safeguard children who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they always speak to the designated safeguarding lead, or a deputy.
All our staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

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

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

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child 11 opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or 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, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to

facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

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

All our staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and sharing nudes and semi-nudes' images and or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Our staff are also aware of the following safeguarding issues:

1.12 Online safety

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

1.13 Online safety policy

In our school we have a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology. We understand the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e., 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. We have carefully considered how this is managed on our premises and reflect this in our Online Safety Policy.

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

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non- consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

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

As an education setting, we are directly responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Our filtering and Monitoring system is Senso.

We are in regular contact with parents and carers. These communications are used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems schools and colleges use to filter and monitor online use. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will ask to access and be clear who in our school, their child is going to be interacting with online.

We ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures including how online safety is reflected in other relevant policies. We consider online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role, and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and engaging with parents to raise an awareness in order to support their children.

1.14 Filters and monitoring

Our Governing Body is responsible and needs to ensure the limit of children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. Our governing body ensure our school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. We ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. We also consider the age range of our children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks.

1.15 Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

In our school, children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more

personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.

As part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools). The statutory guidance can be found here: Statutory guidance: relationships education relationships and sex education (RSE)and health education.

1.16 Safeguarding in the Curriculum

Children are taught about safeguarding in schools. The following areas are among those addressed in **PSHE/RSE** and in the wider curriculum.

- **Bullying/Cyber Bullying**
  KS2 PSHE Y5: Understanding bullying. Rumours and name-calling. Types of bullying. Inclusion/exclusion. Differences as conflict, difference as celebration. Empathy.
  Y6 PSHE: Prejudice and discrimination. Challenging stereotypes. Discrimination in school.
  KS3: Disrespect Nobody.
  Peer Anti-Bullying Ambassadors play a key part in working with peers and staff to stop bullying in school by raising awareness of bullying, promoting kindness and offering a safe place to talk. Anti-Bullying is also addressed through tutorial time and assemblies, with Cyber-bullying part of the Computing curriculum.

- **Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse**
  Y5: Smoking (including vaping) Alcohol, alcohol and anti-social behaviour.
  Y6: How substances affect the body. Managing my choices around substances.
  KS3: Healthy Lifestyles: Drugs, Alcohol.

- **Online Safety / Mobile technologies**
  The Computing Curriculum addresses Online Safety. It is an age-appropriate curriculum with progressively more mature content:
  Y5 Computing: E-Safety and Cyberbullying
  Y6 Computing: E-Safety, body image and social media
  Y7 Computing: E-Safety Cyberbullying and digital footsteps
  Y8 Computing: E-Safety; grooming and sexting.
  PSHE:
  Y5: Safer online communities. Rights and responsibilities online. Online gaming and gambling. Reducing screen time. Dangers of online grooming. SMARRT internet safety rules.
  Y6: Technology safety. Take responsibility with technology use.
  KS3 RSE: Child exploitation. Managing media.
  Weekly assemblies also promote e-safety at dedicated times throughout the year e.g., Safer Internet Day. A Pop up every time pupils log on to a computer in school signposts how and who to report concerns to.

- **Stranger Danger**
  Is an annual assembly theme – linked to fact that advice about stranger danger has changed massively given the rise of social media and online gaming. At KS2 resources from 'Clever Never Goes' are used in tutorials. Clever Never Goes moves the focus away from strangers and instead teaches children to recognise when someone (anyone) is asking them to go with them. We call this 'Go Spotting'. In doing so, the programme aims to give children practical safety skills which they can use as they get older and become more independent. At KS3 PSHE and tutorials focus on online grooming.

- **Fire and Water Safety**
  Assembly and tutorial theme together with road safety and dangers on railway lines (has been an issue locally) Y5 Water Safety s discrete lesson.

- **Child on Child**
  KS3 the RSHE curriculum teaches about Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Consent, social media and relationships. Drop down sessions focus on Relationship Abuse and make use of the Disrespect Nobody resources from NSPCC. KS2 PSHE also addresses friendship and forming healthy relationships. Power and Control, and Assertiveness.

- **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**
  KS3 drop down afternoons looking and gender stereotypes and sexualised language and behaviours using the NSPCC 'It's not ok' resources and Feminista UK. As part of the KS3 PD Curriculum: Lessons covering: Misogyny.Street harassment and Gender Based Violence

- **Road Safety**
  Assembly theme and communicated through school newsletter. As a result of pupil and all stakeholder views, decision made to close school gates at end of the school day to ensure the safety of our pupils.

- **Domestic Abuse**
  KS3 RSE: Healthy Relationships at KS3. (Murdered by my Boyfriend resource)
  KS2 PSHE: Respect and consent. Boyfriends/Girlfriends

- **Healthy Relationships / Consent**
  Please see resources above Child-on Child Abuse.

- **So called Honour Based Violence issues (HBV) e.g., Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
  KS3 RSE: Discrete lessons on FGM and Honour Based Killings

- **Child Exploitation of Children**

Drop down afternoons using CEOP and Think you Know resources as well as Alright Charlie and NSPCC's 'Send us a Pic'. Discrete topic of study in both KS2 PSHE and KS3 RSE Curriculum as is County Lines.

- **Extremism and Radicalisation (in line with the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)[1].**

- The RSHE curriculum covers British Values Education. The KS3 Citizenship curriculum makes covers the importance of voting and understanding the experience of immigration within the UK; ensuring that the subject is tackled effectivity and sensitively. It also addresses the issue of County Lines and knife crime. The Year 7 Citizenship curriculum includes: Multi-culturalism, Diversity, Empathy, Stereotyping. The Year 8 curriculum includes: Human Rights, Immigration, Government and Law. Whole school Collective Worship focuses on British Values.
- Assemblies are responsive to current news e.g. acts of terrorism in order to tackle prejudice. The RE Curriculum and visits to places of worship create opportunities for cultural awareness. School council focuses on democracy. Outside Providers are actively sought to deliver key messages on diversity and acceptance. For example, understanding LGBTQ+ equality. Display boards around school also celebrate diversity.

1.17 Children with special educational needs, disabilities, or health issues

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. We ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children

These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead V Rancins(or a Deputy) and the SENCO Danielle Shipley

WE consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

1.18 Private fostering - LA notification when identified

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of *school* staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.

We will then notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

See DfE statutory guidance Children Act 1989 Private fostering for comprehensive guidance on private fostering.
A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative care for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.
Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.
Most privately fostered children remain safe and well, but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases, so it is important that schools are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.
By law, a parent, private foster carer, or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Services as soon as possible. If we become aware of a privately fostering arrangement, we will check that Children's Services have been informed.

1.19 Children Looked After and Previously Children Looked After

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse and/or neglect. Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

In particular, we ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the Child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. We also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of. authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

1.20 Statutory Children's Social Care Assessments and Services

Concerns about a child's welfare should be referred to Local Authority Children's Social Care. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, *our school* will make a referral to Children's Social Care and if appropriate the Police, immediately. Referrals will follow the local referral process. Children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, our school will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. Additional information is available here Contextualised Safeguarding.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. 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 child.
- 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.

1.21 Mental Health

We are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Our trained staff (Lead by Sarah Plumb as our Designated Mental Health Lead and our Well-Being Team) are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

Our staff have access to a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies. More information can be found in the mental health and behaviour in schools guidance,Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience among children.

If we have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following our child protection policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy as well as logging on CPOMs.

1.3.0 Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

1.3.1 Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

Sometimes children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead may hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This will be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Findings from the Children in Need review 'Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection' contains further information; the conclusion of the review, 'Help, protection, education' sets out action Government is taking to support this.

1.3.2 What school and college staff look out for

Any child may benefit from Early Help, but all our staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan).
- Has a mental health need;
- Is a young carer;
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- Has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- Has returned home to their family from care;

- Is at risk of honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- Is a privately fostered child; and
- Is persistently absent from education.

1.3.3 Children Who are absent from Education and Children Missing from Education

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

Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. It is important the school's response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Children at risk of missing in education are set out below:

Children of compulsory school age who are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (4 weeks)

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system
- They are removed by their parents
- Behaviour and/or attendance difficulties
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion, illness or bullying
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Problems at home

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education.

Our school duties, regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points can be found in the department's statutory guidance:

Worcestershire children first children missing from education guidance

Statutory guidance children missing in education

Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools **must** provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.

General information and advice for schools found in the
Government's Missing Children and Adults Strategy.
Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings

1.3.4 Elective Home Educated

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. At our school we expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, we know this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations2006 were amended, we must inform our Worcestershire Children First all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible.

1.3.5 Domestic Abuse

Ending Domestic abuse Save Lives

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 sex or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

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.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

If we identify a victim of domestic abuse being high risk. We will consider a referral to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). The purpose of MARAC is to share information and establish a multi-agency action plan to support the victim and to make links with other public protection procedures, particularly safeguarding children, vulnerable adults and the management of offenders. We will continue to provide help and support in order to safeguard children. This will usually be led by the designated safeguarding lead. MARAC does not replace a referral to children social care.

Worcestershire children first Domestic abuse guidance

1.3.6 Homelessness

We understand that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) 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 should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

1.3.7 Children with Family Members in Prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

1.3.8 Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other

family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

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

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important we provide practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. As a school/college we provide outdoor-safety lessons run by our teachers or by local police staff. Lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.clevernevergoes.org.

1.4.0 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

1.4.1 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.
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 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.
It is important to note 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.

1.4.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as

masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may 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 child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.
CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.
CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. 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.

1.4.3 County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

As a school we are aware of the local context and risk posed to our children of local County Line networks, given the proximity of Birmingham to our school community. It is a discrete part of our Personal Development Curriculum

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

We may identify a child may be at risk of exploitation the Designate Safeguarding Lead will work with and support and consider completion of a GET SAFE risk assessment which will be referred to Worcestershire Children First GET SAFE team for further assessment and support. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also consider referral to Worcestershire Children First Family Front Door as part of our schools and local safeguarding procedures. More information can be found: Get Safe - keeping children and young people safe from criminal exploitation

1.4.4 Operation Encompass

We receive Operation Encompass Notifications) Operation Encompass is to highlight that a Domestic Abuse Incident has taken place and the police have been called. We will be keeping an eye on changed behaviour and logging anything out of the ordinary. Operation Encompass is working well in Worcestershire Schools and Worcestershire Children First have successfully send DA notifications to schools. All this is great news for children and their families. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform Worcestershire Children First, who then inform the school (usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This is so we have up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. School will keep a log of all OE notifications.

1.4.5 Honour-Based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

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

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) and log on CPOMs. As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers.

1.4.6 FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

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

applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information

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

What should schools do?

We will contact the Family Front Door when we have a concern about a child, we will contact Family Front Door if the concerns are based on concrete indicators – i.e. the young person says this is going to happen to them, or disclosure that it has happened to them or to an older sister – schools should make a child protection referral and inform the Police as required by the mandatory reporting duty. Schools should not:

- Contact the parents before seeking advice from Children's Social Care.
- Make any attempt to mediate between the child/young person and parents.

It is important to keep in mind that the parents may not see FGM or Breast Ironing as a form of abuse; however, they may be under a great deal of pressure from their community and or family to subject their daughters to it.

The 'one chance' rule

In the same way that we talk about the 'one chance rule' in respect of young people coming forward with fears that they may be forced into marriage, young people disclosing fears that they are going to be sent abroad for FGM are taking the 'one chance', of seeking help.

It is essential that we take such concerns seriously and act without delay. Never underestimate the determination of parents who have decided that it is right for their daughter to undergo FGM. Attempts to mediate may place the child/young person at greater risk, and the family may feel so threatened at the news of their child's disclosure that they bring forward their plans or take action to silence her.

1.4.7 Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Staff in our school

understand we could potentially play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit has published statutory guidance and Multi-agency guidelines, of which focus on the role of schools and colleges. Our staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fco.gov.uk. In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

The right to choose: gov guidance on forced marriage
2023 Forced Marriage Guidance

1.5.0 Preventing Radicalisation

We know Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from harm. As part of our whole safeguarding approach, we include and consider the following.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

As defined in the Government's Counter Extremism Strategy https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy.

As defined in the Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales.

As defined in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

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

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

1.5.1 The Prevent Duty

We understand that Schools and colleges, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty is part of our schools wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders are familiar with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales,

1.5.2 Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from our school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages

Guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty. All Alvechurch Staff received this training June 2023.
- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention. AMS DSLs and Deputy DSLs trained June 2023.
- Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

Educate Against Hate is a government website designed to support schoolteachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help school staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

For advice specific to further education, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness

e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals.

The ETF Online Learning environment provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, support staff and governors/Board members outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

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 child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective home education sets out the role and responsibilities of LAs and their powers to engage with parents in relation to EHE. Although this is primarily aimed at LAs, schools should also be familiar with this Worcestershire children first home education.

1.5.3 Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels public organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them.

Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. Further information (including on absolute and qualified rights) can be found at Human Rights | Equality and Human Rights Commission Human Rights

Guidance to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act can be found at Equality Act 2010.

1.6.0 What school staff will do if they have concerns about a child

All our staff who are working with children, maintain an attitude of **'***it could happen here'* where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, we act on them immediately. If staff have a concern, we follow this safeguarding policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and log accurately and in a timely way on CPOMs.

Options will then include:

- Managing any support for the child internally via our school's own pastoral support processes.
- Undertaking an early help assessment; or
- Making a referral to statutory services, or example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.

We will adhere to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Safeguarding Worcestershire www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk

Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the West Mercia Consortium inter-agency procedures and the WSCP Levels of Need Guidance.
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our school. Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the Deputy Designated Lead. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

All concerns about a child or young person are to be reported without delay and recorded on CPOMs. The DSL will consider what action to take and have appropriate discussions with parents/carers prior to referral to children's social care or another agency unless, to do so would place the child at risk of harm or compromise an investigation.

All referrals will be made in line with local procedures as detailed on the Worcester Children First Website.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child is to call 999 and make referral is made to Children's Services immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSL and/or the Head teacher. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

Staff follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Services, or the Police if:

- The situation is an emergency and the Designated Senior Person, their Deputy and the Head Teacher are all unavailable.
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.

Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors. If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point, they should contact Children's Services directly with their concerns.

1.6.1 Early Help

Any child may benefit from Early Help, our staff, are experienced and appropriately trained to early identify the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- Has a mental health need.

- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage.
- Is a privately fostered child; and
- Is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Our Early Help Offer is accessible on our school website, as part of our Early Help Offer/Supporting Families, we support children and young people by completing an Early Help Assessment.

Worcestershire Children First Early Help information page

1.6.2 Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

There are many children who have additional needs or whose living arrangements may mean that they are more vulnerable to harm, for example children with special educational needs, disabled children, children in public care or privately fostered children. It is essential that the school knows who shares parental responsibility for children and has effective relationships with partner agencies in relation to these children (for example, Virtual School for Children in Care).

Our school will ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge and guidance so that they are aware of the additional challenges faced by these children and the impact of their additional vulnerabilities. These can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's disability without further exploration; no single point of contact for the school as a child has a number of care-givers and involved professionals; assumptions that state approved care-givers are providing safe care for the child; communication needs of a child which can lead to over reliance on parental accounts and interpretations.

1.7.0 Protecting Children

- Our school will be doing all we reasonably can, to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, our Governing Body and Directors, will ensure that Alvechurch Middle School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. Senso is our current filtering and monitoring system. Alerts

are sent to the DSL and deputy DSL and a weekly report is generated. This will be shared with Directors.

- To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published filtering and monitoring standards which set out that schools and colleges should:
    - Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
    - Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
    - Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
    - Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs
- We will safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn. We will take into consideration the age range of pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks.
- The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools/colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like: UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring.
- Guidance on e-security is available from the National Education Network. Support for schools is available via the: schools' buying strategy with specific advice on procurement here: buying for schools.
- *Our school's* approach to online safety, will include a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school/college. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via 3G, 4G and 5G in particular and we carefully consider how this is managed on their premises.

1.8.0 Relationships and Sex Education

Our school curriculum ensures that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online; recognising the need that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Our school recognises the important link between RSE and Safeguarding and Child Protection. In school, relevant topics will be included within Relationships Education (for all primary pupils), and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all primary and secondary pupils). In teaching these subjects our school has regard to the statutory guidance, which was made compulsory from September 2020. The statutory guidance can be found here: Statutory guidance: .RSE Guidance

The following resources may be helpful:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection command: is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report made to one of its Child Protection Advisors

- The NSPCC provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff and will be especially useful for the DSL (and their deputies)

- Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisations such as Rape Crisis or The Survivors Trust

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance has developed Online: Schools and colleges should recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation. Online concerns can be especially complicated, and support is available from:

  The UK Safer Internet Centre provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues

- Internet Watch Foundation: If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

- Childline/IWF Report Remove is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online

- UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice: Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).

- Thinkuknow from NCA-CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online

- LGFL 'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.

- Public Health England: Rise Above Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) which will be compulsory from September 2021. Schools have flexibility to decide how they discharge their duties effectively within the first year of

compulsory teaching and are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects.

1.8.1 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that at Alvechurch Middle School we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

1.8.2Child on Child Abuse

All our staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as Child-on-Child Abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of Child-on-Child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All our staff understand, that even if there are no reports in their schools it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding Child-on-Child abuse, they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

All our staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boy being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child 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)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; 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).

All our staff are clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regards to Child-on-Child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All our staff will be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

All our staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as 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. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

1.8.3 Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

Our school will respond to reports of Child-on-Child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

For detailed information on what sexual violence and sexual harassment constitutes, important context to be aware of, related legal responsibilities for schools and colleges, advice on a whole school or college approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and more detailed advice on responding to reports.

1.8.4 Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Alvechurch Middle School will carefully consider any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. We will support victims to be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with Alvechurch Middle School's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.

At our school, we recognise the term '**victim**' to refer to those who have been subjected to abuse. But we recognise that not every victim will view themselves as such, also we use the term '**alleged perpetrator(s)**' and where appropriate '**perpetrator(s)**.' Though they caution the use of this term as in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the children involved.
- The developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature).

1.8.5 Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim. However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim, and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator(s) is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with Children's Social Care and the Police, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. We also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school or college transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated, reflecting the considerations. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

1.8.6 Options to manage the report

Alvechurch Middle School will consider every report on a case-by-case basis When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not us from taking immediate action to safeguard children, where required. There are four likely scenarios to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

1.8.7 Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s)

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- Our school may have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, we need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, we will safeguard and support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions.
- We will consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- We will Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from Children's Social Care, specialist sexual violence services and the Police.
- If an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), we will inform the new educational institution of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well

as transferring the child protection file. Information sharing advice referenced at will help support this process.

- The National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) provides support for professionals involved in work with, or related to, sexual offending.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

We understand the importance that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. We know that evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is sexual violence and sexual harassment? It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent? 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, e.g.to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

1.8.8 Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of Child-on-Child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos.

- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and up skirting.

1.8.9 Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

1.9.0 Use of School or College Premises for Non-School Activities

As a BAM privately owned site, outside lettings are not typically organised by school. We will ensure that **if** we hire out our school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations and service providers to run community

or extra-curricular activities) we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

When services or activities are provided by our school under the direct supervision or management, the arrangements for child protection will apply.
Where an external body is providing community or extra-curricular activities, we will ensure and seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place.

We will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

1.10.0 Alternative Provision

Alvechurch Middle School is aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to.

The Department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

- Alternative provision - DfE Statutory Guidance
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

1.11.0 Other Relevant Policies

The Governing Body's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond compliance with child protection procedures. The safeguarding duty is relevant for the discharge of all functions and activities. This policy needs to be considered in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Management
- Child on Child abuse
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Racist Incidents (Monitored through Epraise and forms part of report to Directors
- Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying)
- Physical Interventions/Restraint (DfE Guidance “Use of Reasonable Force” and “Screening, Searching and Confiscation”)
- Special Educational Needs
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Trips and Visits
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Relationships
- Complaints Procedure
- Safe and Appropriate Use of Images

- Equal Opportunities
- Toileting/Intimate Care
- Online Safety
- Supporting Pupils/Students with Medical Conditions
- Looked After Children
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Whistleblowing

1.12.0 Information Sharing

At Alvechurch Middle School we recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. We have ensured arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within our school/college and with WCF Children's Social Care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

Our 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 children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority Children's Social Care.

We are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

This includes:

- We are confident of the processing conditions which allow us to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and is treated as 'special category personal data'.
- Understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- For schools, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. Example: In a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met they must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt schools should seek independent legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of Keeping Children Safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

When children transfer from our school the safeguarding records are also transferred via CPOMs or sent securely. Safeguarding records will be transferred separately from other records and best practice is to pass these directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the receiving education setting, with any necessary discussion or explanation and to obtain a signed and dated record of the transfer. In the event of a child moving out of area and a physical handover not being possible then the most secure method should be found to send the confidential records to a named Designated Safeguarding Lead. Files requested by other agencies e.g. Police, will be copied.

1.13.0 Records, Monitoring and Transfer

All our staff are clear about the need to record, and report concerns about a child or children within the school. Staff know to include the child's words as far as possible and should be timed, dated, and signed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Where children leave our school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and **within 5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the **first 5 days** of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained, this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file.
The receiving schools and colleges will ensure key staff such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO's) or the named persons with oversight for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required.

Records relating to actual or alleged abuse or neglect are stored apart from normal pupil or staff records. Normal records sometimes have markers to show that there is sensitive material stored elsewhere. This is to protect individuals from accidental access to sensitive material by those who do not need to know.

Child protection records are stored securely, with access confined to specific staff, e.g. Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Head Teacher.

Child protection records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints or concerns about any individuals (e.g., child who repeatedly goes missing) and ensuring these are acted upon. Each stand - alone file should have a chronology of significant events.

A record of any allegations (proven) made against staff is kept in a confidential file by the Headteacher David Snell.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in detail your own method of recording i.e. CPOMS Information is be kept confidential and stored securely. How do you keep your files are concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child?

Records should include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.

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

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

Part 2 The Management of safeguarding

2.1.0 Management of Safeguarding

This policy applies to all our staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors to our school. Child protection is the responsibility of all our staff. We will ensure that we will comply with our duties under all relevant legislation We will ensure this policy and our procedures are effective and always comply with the law, this includes training for all staff.

We will ensure that all our parents and working partners are aware of this policy by mentioning it in our school prospectus, displaying appropriate information in our reception and on the school website and by raising awareness at meetings with our parents/carers.

In our school our Governing Body/Directors will ensure we facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. Ultimately, all our systems, processes and policies will operate with the best interests of the child/children at their heart. Where there is a safeguarding concern, our Governing Body/Directors and school leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are sought and considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

Raising concerns/complaints. We respond robustly when concerns are raised or complaints made (from children, adults including parent/carers) as we recognise that this promotes a safer environment, and we seek to learn from complaints and comments. The school will take action and seek to resolve the concerns in a timely way, keeping people informed as to progress wherever possible. The school's complaints procedures are available in policy section on school website**.**

2.1.1 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher of Alvechurch Middle School will ensure that:

- The Safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are effectively implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
- Allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff or adult working at school may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person are notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer in a timely manner.

- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285).
- All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns and that if all else fails to report these directly to Children's Social Care (Children's Services) or the Police.

2.1.2 School Governors/Directors

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" September 2023 our Governing Body will ensure that:

- Child protection/safeguarding policy, procedures and training are in place which are always effective and comply with the law. The policy is made available publicly.
- We will ensure that **all** governors and directors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in our school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.
- The policy will be reviewed at least annually or more often, for example in the event of new guidance or a significant incident.
- Governors in maintained school have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS.
- We carry out a section 128 check for school governors, because a person subject to one is disqualified from being a governor.
- We check if a person we recruit as a governor is barred because of being subject to a section 128 direction.
- We operate safer recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Furthermore, the Head Teacher, a nominated Governor and other staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers/ people in a position of trust.
- There is a senior member of our leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (the "Designated Safeguarding Lead") and there is always cover for this role (at least one deputy) with appropriate arrangements for before/after school and out of term activities.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes effective Local authority training (in addition to basic child protection training) and this is refreshed every two years. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals (at least annually) via safeguarding e-briefings etc.
- The Head Teacher, and all other staff and volunteers who work with children (including early years practitioners within settings on the school site), undertake appropriate training which is regularly updated (at least every year); and that new staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities (including this policy and

Part 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023). Training should include FGM/Prevent/Child Exploitation.

- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in these arrangements brought to the attention of the Governing Body and will be rectified without delay.
- The Chair of Governors Lysandre Notley (or, in the absence of a Chair, the Vice Chair Gwen Onyons deals with any allegations of abuse made against the Head Teacher, with advice and guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually including a behaviour "code of conduct" for staff and volunteers in line with guidance: https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/guidance-for-safer-working-practice-2022.pdf
- Information is provided to the Local Authority (on behalf of the WSCP) when requested, for example through the Annual Safeguarding Return (e.g. section 175 audit)
- Our school Governing Body and Proprietors ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. This as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There is an individual member of the Governing Body Louise Wilde who will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the school, liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and provide information and reports to the Governing Body.
- Our school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2018 including providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help for children who require this. Early Help may be offered directly through our school Early Help provision or via referral to an external support agency. Safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WCSP).
- GDPR- Our Governing Body/Proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK-GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information we hold safe and secure in .Data protection : Toolkit for schools – GOV.UK
- Alvechurch Middle School complies with all legislative safeguarding duties, including the duty to report suspected or known cases of FGM and the duty to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism. In conjunction with the Head and DSL they should assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk

In our school we will:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities (specifically through PHSE/ ICT/RSE, which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse (including online) and to know where to get help.
- Ensure every effort if made to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers and colleagues from other agencies.
- Operate safer recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks

are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children including identity, right to work, enhanced DBS criminal record and barred list (and overseas where needed), references, and prohibition from teaching or managing in schools "s128" For senior leaders in Academies/Independent schools and for Governors in maintained schools (Since September 2018)

- As Education Safeguarding Practitioners we will liaise with the three safeguarding partners in line with Working Together 2018.
- Criminal history and suitability to work with children information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted.
- As part of the shortlisting processes, we will consider conducting an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

2.1.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from our school is on our leadership team, as the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Our Designated Safeguarding Lead has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This DSL role is explicit in their job description

We also have two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads who have been trained the same as our DSL. Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with our Designated Safeguarding Lead. This responsibility will not be delegated.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies will liaise with the safeguarding partners, and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to safeguard children will help our Designated Safeguarding Lead understand when they should consider calling the Police and what to expect when they do.

During term time, our Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Where appropriate our Designated Safeguarding Lead will arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies have undertaken training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role.

In addition to our formal training as set out above, their knowledge and skills will be updated (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

2.1.4 Multi-Agency Working

In our school we have a pivotal role to play in Multi-agency Safeguarding arrangements. Our Governing Bodies/Proprietors ensure that we will contribute to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance ***Working Together to Safeguard Children***

In our school our Leaders/Governing Body/Directors understand our Local Safeguarding arrangements and work with partners from Worcestershire Childrens Safeguarding partnership WSCP to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. The Worcestershire Children First WCF Head Teacher Safeguarding Steering Group HTSG, who is represented by all phases of education are part of our WSCP and make all schools/colleges aware and follow the local arrangements for local protocol and assessment policies and procedures. We are also prepared to supply information as requested by the safeguarding partners.
Worcestershire Children First (worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

Our school works with WCF Social Care, the Police, Health Services, and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

In our school we allow access for Children's Social Care from the host Local Authority (according to where the child lives) and, where appropriate, from a placing Local Authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47assessment.

Part 3. Safer Recruitment

3.1.1 Safer Recruitment and DBS checks – Policy and Procedures

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

The SCR will be monitored and checked by the DSL/HT/Safeguarding Governor on a regular basis, throughout the academic year: Example half termly, the DSL/HT/Gov will need to have access the WCF – SCR training.

Appointing new
When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity in line with best practice identified in KSCIE 23 by checking the name on their birth certificate
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity.
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate

- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher or for those staff carrying out teaching work.
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent.
- Secretary of State section 128 direction A section 128 direction prohibits or restricts an unsuitable individual from participating in the management of an independent school, including academies and free schools. An individual who is subject to a section 128 direction is unable to:
    - take up a management position in an independent school, academy, or in a free school as an employee.
    - be a trustee of an academy or free school trust; a governor or member of a proprietor body of an independent school; or
    - be a governor on any governing body in an independent school, academy or free school that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities.
- Ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.
- Staff and volunteers who provide early years or later years childcare and any managers of such childcare are covered by the disqualification regulations of the Childcare Act 2006 and are required to declare relevant information - see statutory guidance: Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (August 2018).
- In addition, as part of our shortlisting process we will consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview. We will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks. o

We will seek references on short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children.
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children.
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not.

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult.

Agency and third-party staff

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

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity.
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.
Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.
We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

Trainee/student teachers
Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.
Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

Volunteers (a reminder that DBS for checks on volunteers are free)

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for all volunteers who are not in regulated activity, but who have an opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis, for example, supervised volunteers
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK
Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools or colleges. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

Governance
• All members of the governance will have an enhanced DBS check without Barred List information and Section 128 check. They will have an enhanced DBS check with Barred List information if working in regulated activity.

Where the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. that no action or inaction occurred but the present risk that it was significant.

Where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

If there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009 Where the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. that no action or inaction occurred but the present risk that it could was significant)

- Where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence
- If there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009
- If the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left the school.

If the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not i.e. Where the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. that no action or inaction occurred but the present risk that it could was significant).

Part 4 Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors

4.1.0 Procedures for Managing Concerns

We have processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concerns about staff members (including supply staff and volunteers).

If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

This should be referred to the headteacher or principal;

- Where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors.

We will comply with guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones. Pupils' allegations or concerns about staff conduct will be taken seriously and followed up in a transparent and timely way.

We will follow where it is alleged that anyone working in the school that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers and volunteers 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.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching we may refer to the Police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the Police.

Members of staff, supply staff and volunteers who are currently working in any school or college regardless of whether the school or college is where the alleged abuse took place. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching will be referred to the Police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the Police.

We have a duty of care to their employees. We will ensure we provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide them with a named contact if they are suspended. Where we are not the employer of an individual, we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately and that we liaise with relevant parties (this includes supply teachers and volunteers. We will manage any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in our school very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation

4.2.1 Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors

We have our own procedures for dealing with allegations against a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor. These procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance and have regard to this guidance. It is important that policies and procedures make clear to whom allegations should be reported and that this should be done without delay. A “case manager” will lead any investigation. This will be either the Head Teacher, or, where the Head Teacher is the subject of an allegation, the Chair of Governors.

4.2.2 Concerns and or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

Our Low-Level Concerns Policy has processes to deal with any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold.

Low Level concerns

We ensure that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of our school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:

- Encourage an open and transparent culture
- Enable schools to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- Minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

What is a low-level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern 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 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 children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child 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.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent, or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings

4.2.3 The initial response to an allegation

Where we identify a child that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, we will contact Children's Social Care services and as appropriate the Police immediately as per the processes explained in Part one of this guidance.
We will consider when an allegation is made:

Looking after the welfare of the child - the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk, referring cases of suspected abuse to the Local Authority Children's Social Care.

Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation - the case manager should discuss with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, we will:

- Apply common sense and judgement.
- Deal with allegations quickly, fairly, and consistently; and
- Provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

We will ensure all staff understand the Local Authority arrangements for managing allegations, including the contact details and what information the LADO will require when an allegation is made. Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future Police investigation. For example:

- Was the individual in the school at the time of the allegations?
- Did the individual, or could they have, come into contact with the child?
- Are there any witnesses? and,
- Was there any CCTV footage?

In our school we are familiar with what initial information the LADO will require. This information can be found in local policy and procedural guidance provided by the LADO service.

When to inform the individual of the allegation should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, with guidance as required from the LADO, and if appropriate Children Social Care and the Police.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the Police and/or Children's Social Care Services will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children.

If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should take into account that teachers and other staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour. Where it is clear that an investigation by the Police or Children's Social Care services is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial

evaluation decides that is the case, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the case manager.

4.2.4 Supply teachers

In some circumstances we will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply; for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business.

Whilst we are not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will we decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Our Governing Body will discuss with the supply agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, Police and/or Children's Social Services. We will take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by our school, are under the supervision, direction and control of our Governing Body when working in the *school.* They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the school during the investigation.

When using a supply agency, we will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

4.2.5 Governors

If an allegation is made against a Governor, we will follow their own local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, we will follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

4.2.6 Suspension

Suspension is not an automatic response when an allegation is reported. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. The case manager must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school, or until the allegation is resolved. It should be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at our school, is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from their personnel adviser and the LADO, as well as the Police and Children's Social Care where they have been involved.

Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the member of staff's 's family, they should discuss these concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a risk assessment of the situation. It may be necessary for the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make a referral to Children's Social Services.

When we are made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order, in respect of an individual who works at our school, we will take immediate action to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order. This means that pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual must not carry out teaching work. Our school has clear policy on pay arrangements whilst the person is suspended or where there is an interim prohibition order in place.

In many cases, an inquiry can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. The employer will decide on whether the individual should continue to work at our school based on consultation with the LADO who will provide relevant information we receive from the Police or Children's Social Care on whether they have any objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation of the case. The case manager should be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension.

Based on advice from the school or college's HR provider and/or a risk analysis drawn up with the LADO, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

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

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension, this will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager will consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, malicious, or false.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the case manager should record the rationale and justification for such a course of action. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.

Children's Social Care services or the Police may give their view to the LADO, but they cannot require the case manager to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although the case manager should give appropriate weight to their advice. The power to suspend is vested in our Governing Body who are the employers. However, where a strategy discussion, or initial assessment, concludes that there should be enquiries by the Children's Social Care Services,

and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass Police and Children's Social Care services for views about whether the accused member of staff should be suspended from contact with children. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment about whether the person poses a risk of harm to children.

We have processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concerns about staff members (including supply staff and volunteers).
If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

This should be referred to the headteacher or principal;

- Where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors.

We will comply with guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones. Pupils' allegations or concerns about staff conduct will be taken seriously and followed up in a transparent and timely way.

We will follow where it is alleged that anyone working in the school that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers and volunteers 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.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

4.2.7 Managing Professional Disagreements

On occasions there will be disagreements between professionals as to how concerns are handled, and these can impact on effective working relationships. We will support staff to promote positive partnerships within our school and with other agencies and will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns and disagreements if appropriate and use the WSCP escalation procedures if necessary.

4.2.8 The Use of 'reasonable force' in Schools and Colleges

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in our school to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

- Departmental advice for schools is available Use of reasonable force in schools guidance

Annex A Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

This part of the statutory guidance is about how schools and colleges should respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and or online.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. As set out in Part one of this guidance, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

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.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. As set out in Part one of this guidance, schools and colleges should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college, including intimate personal relationships.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. But it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

You should read Part Five KSCIE 2023. It contains further detailed information on:

- What sexual violence and sexual harassment constitutes,
- Important context to be aware of, including what is consent, power imbalances, and developmental stages,
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), including that a child displaying HSB maybe an indication that they are a victim of abuse themselves,
- Related legal responsibilities for schools and colleges,
- Advice on a whole school or college approach to preventing Child on Child sexual violence and sexual harassment, and
- More detailed advice on responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, including safeguarding, and supporting both the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s).

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Systems are in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

Schools and colleges not recognising, acknowledging, or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying some behaviours related to abuse can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning, effective training and effective policies will provide schools and colleges with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports. Governing Bodies and Proprietors should ensure that the school or college contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children.**

This part of the guidance does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed guidance on what to do in any or every particular case. The guidance provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for schools and colleges to consider in their decision-making process.

Ultimately, any decisions are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as Children's Social Care and the Police as required.

The immediate response to a report

Responding to the report

It is important to note that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have **any** concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.
The school's initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school or college responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

It is essential that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised.

As per Part one of this guidance, all staff should be trained to manage a report. Local policies (and training) will dictate exactly how reports should be managed. However, effective safeguarding practice includes:

- if possible, managing reports with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy). However, this might not always be possible.

- where the report includes an online element, being aware of searching screening and confiscation advice (for schools) and UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.

The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection.

- Not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or children's social care) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to; recognising that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be **anyone** on the school or college staff. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child; recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse;
- Keeping in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation;
- Listening carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was;
- Considering the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second member of staff is present). However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking. Either way, **it is essential a written record is made**;
- Only recording the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Schools and colleges should be aware that notes

of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care and/or part of a criminal investigation; and
- Informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

Risk assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support.
- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.

Risk assessments should be recorded (written or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) should ensure they are engaging with Children's Social Care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. The above school risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the school's or college's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and students and updating their own risk assessment.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

What to consider

As set out above, sexual violence and sexual abuse can happen anywhere, and all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here.** Schools and colleges should be aware of and respond appropriately to **all** reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or sexual harassment both online and offline, including those that have happened outside of the school/college. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school's or college's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be

given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children;

- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed.
- The ages of the children involved;
- The developmental stages of the children involved;
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature);
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff should act in the best interests of the child. In all cases, schools and colleges should follow general safeguarding principles as set out throughout this guidance. **Immediate** consideration should be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) (and any other children involved/impacted).

The starting point regarding any report should always be that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It is especially important not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment 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 children.

Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim, and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator(s) is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) **should** be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school or college should

also **carefully** consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school or college, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated, reflecting the considerations set out at paragraph 483 in KCSIE 23. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school or college will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

Options to manage the report

It is important that schools and colleges consider every report on a case-by-case basis as per paragraph 483 in KCSIE 23. When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police, then, as a general rule, the school or college should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school or college taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required.

There are four likely scenarios for schools and colleges to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. It will be important in all scenarios that decisions and actions are regularly reviewed and that relevant policies are updated to reflect lessons learnt. It is particularly important to look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, the school or college should decide on a course of action. Consideration should be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again. The four scenarios are:

1. Manage internally

- In some cases of **sexual harassment**, for example, one-off incidents, the school or college may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals need to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

2. Early help

- In line with 1 above, the school or college may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from Early Help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. It is particularly important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) know what the Early Help process is and how and where to access support. More information on Early Help is set out in Part one of this guidance with full details of the early help process in Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Multi-agency early help will work best when placed alongside strong school or college policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.
- Early Help and the option to manage a report internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: a school could manage internally and seek early help for both the victim and perpetrator(s).
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

3. Referrals to children's social care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, schools and colleges should make a referral to local Children's Social Care.
- At the point of referral to Children's Social Care, schools and colleges will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing apparent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of Children's Social Care.
- If a referral is made, Children's Social Care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.
- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school (especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy) should be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.
- Schools and colleges should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school or college takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. The risk assessment as per paragraphs 480-482 in KCSIE 23, will help inform any decision. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator(s), any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school or college should be **immediate**.

- In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school (generally led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy) should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is **a zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- **All concerns**, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

4. Reporting to the Police

- **Any report** to the Police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care (as above).
- It is important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and their deputies) are clear about the local process for referrals and follow that process.
- Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this should be passed on to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. The following advice may help schools and colleges decide when to engage the Police and what to expect of them when they do: When to call the Police.
- Where a report has been made to the Police, the school or college should consult the Police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.
- At this stage, schools and colleges will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.
- All Police forces in England have specialist units that investigate child abuse. The names and structures of these units are matters for local forces. It will be important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and their deputies) are aware of their local arrangements.
- In some cases, it may become clear very quickly that the Police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, it is important that the school or college continue to engage with specialist support for the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) as required.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), it will be important for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) to work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the Police investigation.

- If schools or colleges have questions about the investigation, they should ask the Police. The Police will help and support the school or college as much as they can (within the constraints of any legal restrictions).
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

Considering bail conditions

- The Police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of Police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.
- Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People Released Under (RUI) can have no conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.
- Whatever arrangements are in place; the school or college will need to consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within their institution.
- Particular regard should be given to: the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim within the institution; the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness; the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).
- Careful liaison with the police investigators should help to develop a balanced setoff arrangement.

Managing any delays in the criminal process

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. Schools and colleges **should not wait** for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children in the school or college.

The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school or college should update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all the children at the school or college and, if it has not already, consider any suitable action in line with their behaviour policy. This process should include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remains in the same school or college as the victim, the school or college should be very clear as to their expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school or college thinks are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator(s)'timetable.

- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school or college. It will be important that the school or college ensure both the victim and perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as "No Further Action" (NFA) by the Police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the school or college should continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. Schools and colleges should discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

As set out in paragraph 68 of Part one of KCSIE 23, **all** concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed.
If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider whether the child and/or the person 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 Children's Social Care maybe appropriate.
If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school or college, should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Ongoing response

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

- The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. 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, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school or college is a safe space for them.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. Schools and colleges should beware 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).

- The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.
- Schools should be aware that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Children and young people that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- Childline provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.
- Internet Watch Foundation works internationally to remove child sexual abuse online images and videos and offers a place for the public to report them anonymously.
- Childline / IWF: Remove a nude image shared online *Report Remove* is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online, to see if they can be removed from the internet.

Victims may not talk about the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, schools and colleges should ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or Designated Safeguarding Lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's (as far as reasonably possible). Schools and colleges should respect and support this choice.

A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While schools and colleges should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, schools and colleges should provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

It may be necessary for schools and colleges to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. Schools and colleges should be prepared for this and should work with Children's Social Care and other agencies as required.
It is therefore important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead knows how and where to seek support.

It is important that the school does everything it reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.
Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school or college, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school or college should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

It is important that if the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate their parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

Ongoing Considerations: Victim and alleged perpetrator(s) sharing classes

Once the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) has decided what the next steps will be in terms of progressing the report, they should carefully consider again the question of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) sharing classes and sharing space at school. This will inevitably involve complex and difficult professional decisions, including considering their duty to safeguard children and their duty to educate them.

It is important each report is considered on a case-by-case basis and risk assessments are updated as appropriate. As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, the best interests of the child should come first. In all cases, school should follow general safeguarding principles as per this guidance.

Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during before and after school-based activities) and on transport to and from school where appropriate. This is in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s). As per paragraph 450 KCSIE 23 close liaison with the Police is essential.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school should take suitable action, if they have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator(s) to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school should, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator(s) is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator(s) in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

In all cases, school should record and be able to justify their decision-making.
Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the Police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the Police and the case is not progressed or are reported

to the Police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator(s). Appropriate support should be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, school should record and be able to justify their decision-making.

All of the above should be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s) and children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, they need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s), the nature of the allegations and frequency of allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made. Itis important that if an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file. Information sharing advice referenced at paragraphs 115-123 of KCSIE 23 will help support this process.
- Stop it now - professionals looking for advice provides support for professionals in child sexual abuse prevention, so that they’re well equipped to keep children safe.