



Abu Bakr Al-Ihsaan Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the trustees on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Trustees on 1st September 2025.

It is due for review on 1st September 2026 (or sooner if required).

Head Teacher:	Rumela Begum	01/09/2025
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Chair of Trustees:	Mohammad Zia-Ul Qasimi	01/09/2025
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Our School

Introduction

Abu Bakr Al-Ihsaan Academy exists to provide an inspirational education for children within a safe, secure and supportive Islamic environment. We aim to empower pupils to develop into articulate, confident and resilient young Muslims, equipped with the knowledge, wisdom and compassion to make a positive and purposeful contribution to our ever-changing world.

At Abu Bakr Al-Ihsaan Academy we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils; this means ensuring they are safe by:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;
- ensuring their physical, emotional and social needs are met;
- contributing to the prevention of all types of abuse, racism (including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc), victimisation, bullying (including prejudiced based bullying, discriminatory bullying and cyber-bullying), exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours and anything else which may risk the wellbeing and safeguarding of our pupils.

This policy provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues, and the action which must be taken if there are concerns about the safety or well-being of any child. This policy also makes explicit our commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child and has the child's best interest at the centre.

Our school is aware of and assesses the risks/issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of our pupils by neighbourhood alerts, police data, community feedback, PCSO's and local media. We are aware of indicators of

abuse and neglect, and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online.

We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in our school and where political issues are brought to the attention of the pupils; reasonably practicable steps are taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

We ensure children's wishes, feelings and voice are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We provide a safe school culture where all pupils and staff feel respected and feel safe. The school environment is such that pupils feel they can share their concerns and worries and that they will be listened to and taken seriously at all times. Pupils are provided with pastoral support and referrals to external agencies are also made where it is required. We facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding meaning that we ensure safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We ensure that ultimately, all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Our school takes into consideration the presenting needs of the pupils at the school therefore ensure that all support provided or any workshops, assemblies and external visitors address those needs.

As a school we find there is a presenting need amongst our pupils in regards to self-harm, low self-esteem, and risks online. All pupils who present these needs or any other will be provided with tailored support by our school's pastoral team and where we feel further support is required, we will make referrals to relevant external agencies to ensure that our pupils are safe, well supported and are able to overcome any difficulties that are presented.

Our school follows the child protection procedures as defined by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/>) and the multi-agency threshold guidance **Walsall Families First**. We work with partners to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, supply staff, contractors and visitors to our school as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our belief is that **"it could happen here"** and **"we have the best interest of the children"** as our priority.

Our belief that **“it could happen here”** for all aspects of safeguarding and bullying supports us to address any underlying bias in order to achieve equality for all children and adults within our school.

It is vital that we ensure children’s wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We strive for a culture where children can **confidently** report abuse, know their concerns will be treated **seriously**, and know they can safely express their views and give feedback.

We are 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. We know children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This does not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns about a child. Our staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people in our school that helps facilitate communication.

Staff understand and embed this school ethos by signing a declaration that they have read and understood the schools safeguarding policies and procedures and will adhere to them at all times.

Pupils are able to communicate and express their views via the safeguarding email abgs.safeguarding@abubakrschool.org.uk and the Wellbeing survey conducted fortnightly by the school.

In our school we acknowledge the negative experiences and distressing life events associated to Covid 19 and this can still affect the mental health of our pupils and their parents; we are well prepared to offer the right help at the right time.

This policy is shared with parents/carers via email and is available on our schools website <https://www.abubakrgirlschool.org/>

Our children and young people understand our responsibility to keep them safe. We share a child/young person version of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy with them.

All staff (this includes volunteers, supply staff and contractors) are aware of the safeguarding procedures in our school and these are explained to them as part of staff induction.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 is statutory guidance and is understood and followed by:

- Our board of trustees
- Our senior leadership teams
- All staff and volunteers including supply staff and contractors

In our school staff, volunteers, supply, contractors and visitors will:

- be familiar with and understand our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
- be subject to safer recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc
- be involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, child in need plans, child protection plans and early help assessments where necessary
- be alert to signs and indicators of abuse
- participate in reviews undertaken by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership as required

This policy will be read and referenced alongside other school safeguarding policy and guidance:

- Safer recruitment policy
- Behaviour policy
- Online safety policy (including remote learning)
- Anti-bullying policy
- Attendance and children absent from education
- Staff code of conduct/Staff behaviour policy
- Reporting low-level concern policy
- Intimate care policy
- Reasonable force policy and guidance
- Use of mobile phones policy
- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanction policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Radicalisation and Extremism guidance for schools
- SEND policy
- Equality policy
- Positive handling policy
- Filtering and Monitoring Policy/processes
- Home visiting policy/Guidance

Named staff in our school

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mrs. Gita Patel
Head teacher	Mrs Rumela Begum
Chair of Trustees	Mr. Mohammad Zia-ul-Qasimi
Safeguarding Trustee	Mr. Mohammad Zia-ul-Qasimi
Deputy DSL	Mrs. Nasira Nadeem
Special Educational Needs Coordinator	Mrs. Gita Patel
Single Point of Contact (Preventing Radicalisation) (SPOC)	Mrs. Gita Patel
Looked After Children Designated Teacher	Mrs. Gita Patel
Designated Lead for online Safety (responsible to DSL)	Mrs Nasira Nadeem
Senior Lead for Mental Health	Mrs. Gita Patel

Roles and responsibilities

Role of the designated safeguarding lead

The trustees have appointed Gita Patel as the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead as they are the appropriate **senior member** of staff with the authority to perform the role and form part of the school's leadership team. The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection with the deputy designated safeguarding lead taking responsibility for online safety.

The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns, in exceptional circumstances this could involve contact electronically, via Teams, Zoom or Skype. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. You should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Gita Patel has responsibilities as follows:-

- take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection including Online safety (with assistance from the deputy DSL)
- be available for staff and pupils to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- refer cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required
- support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care.
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff

- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaise with the head teacher to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult in accordance to the guidance PACE Code C 2019.
- as required, liaise with the “case manager” and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), and Senior Mental Health Leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- be aware of pupils who have a social worker
- work with the head teacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school. This includes:
 - ensuring that the school knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort
 - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory

social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

- Ensure child protection files are kept up to date
- To ensure that information is kept confidential and is stored securely
- Ensure that concerns and referrals are kept in a separate child protection file for each child

Records should:

- Be clear and hold a comprehensive summary of the concern
- contain details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- have a clear summary of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- Ensure that the files are only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice
- Ensure the 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 where children leave school (including in year transfer)
- Ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- Ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this
- Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and leadership staff.

- Ensure to undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training will be updated at least every two years.
- Ensure that they and any deputies undertake Prevent awareness training. The training should provide them with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the process, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care so they:
 - understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements
 - have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
 - understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
 - are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
 - understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
 - understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
 - are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school
 - can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online

- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and
 - encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.
- In addition to the formal training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- Ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes
- Support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them
- Understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.
- Know the details of the virtual school head and their responsibilities.

- Be confident in their knowledge of what local specialist support is available to support children involved in SVSH including victims and perpetrators and know how to access that support.
- Be aware of the role of schools when dealing with or suspecting forced marriages.
- Review policies and procedures regularly to ensure any patterns or trends of particular behaviour around SVSH are addressed.
- Where patterns and trends in reports of SVSH indicate an issue in the wider community or local area, you must share this information with the safeguarding partners.
- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring.
- Oversee online filtering and monitoring systems and act on issues identified or raised, and receive recommendations on how to meet them from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-technology-for-your-school>.
- Monitor all aspects of filtering and monitoring systems. Ensuring they use an educational provider, it meets the risk profile of the school and they are aware that this is working effectively e.g. [Walsall Council Online monitoring service](#)
- Meet the DFE [filtering and monitoring technical standards](#)
- Consider meeting the [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK](#), including undertaking Cyber security training for all staff, including governors, trustees. To improve cyber resilience Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education-GOV.UK [Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK](#), and [Walsall Council Schools Cybersecurity support](#)

If the designated safeguarding lead is not available you must refer your concerns to someone else who is named as a deputy for this role – Nasira Nadeem

All 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

The responsibility of the board of trustees and proprietors

Our board of trustees are the accountable body for ensuring the safety of the school.

Our board of trustees will ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

Our trustees will ensure that the school or college has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.

Our board of trustees will ensure we have in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and/or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Our board of trustees will ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Our school will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated 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.

Our board of trustees will ensure that our safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority. This includes the requirement under Section 175/Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 which placed a duty on:-

- The governing bodies of schools to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in place
- The local authority to monitor compliance of maintained schools

Our board of trustees recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and all staff have the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements.

Our board of trustees will ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online, child-on-child sexual abuse (sexual violence and sexual harassment) through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children.

Our board of trustees will ensure there are procedures in place to handle low-level concerns and allegations against teachers, Head teacher, volunteers and other staff including supply staff and contractors.

Our board of trustees will ensure that all staff members complete safeguarding, child protection and online training at induction. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from Walsall Safeguarding Partnership. Our board of trustees will ensure that, as part of the requirement for staff to undergo regular updated safeguarding training, that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

Our board of trustees will review policies/procedures annually. If there is a need to update safeguarding policies to ensure they are kept up-to-date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and/or to include lessons learnt locally or nationally then school leaders, our DSL and board of trustees may update safeguarding policies more regularly.

The nominated trustee for safeguarding in school is **Mohammad Zia-ul-Qasimi**. They are responsible for liaising with the head teacher and designated safeguarding lead over all matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils.

A member of the board of trustees (usually the Chair) is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the head teacher.

The role of designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Our board of trustees will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after children safe. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all our staff will have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

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.

Our Designated Teachers are aware that the Virtual school head manages pupil premium plus for looked after children. Our Designated Teacher works with the virtual school head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of our looked after children in school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan. Our Designated Teacher will also work with the virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children, and those in kinship care.

Our board of trustees has appointed a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after or previously looked after and ensure that this person has appropriate training. On commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers will also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

Curriculum

Our board of trustees ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through PD, RHSE, SMSC, British Values, online safety, assemblies, approved visitors etc. It is recognised that effective education is tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

We understand that as a school we play a crucial role in preventative education.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.

We have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These will be underpinned by the school behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled PD lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

Such a programme will be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities). This programme will tackle at an age-appropriate stages issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- the concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

Our school makes use of the DfE "one stop" page for teachers on GOV.UK, outlined within. [Teaching about relationships, sex and health](#). This includes teacher training modules on the RSHE topics and non-statutory implementation guidance.

We are familiar with the following resources to help us plan and teach about safeguarding:

- [teaching online safety in schools](#)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance [Education for a connected world](#)
- UKCIS guidance [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- The UKCIS [external visitors guidance](#) to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors;
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme [ThinkuKnow](#)
- Public Health England: [Every Mind Matters](#)
- [Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes](#) - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.

Using the resources above, our children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Staff are able to access the above resources through the school cloud system where all resource links will be filed. The school will review the measured impact on the curriculum regularly.

We will provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being. Relevant issues will be addressed through the curriculum, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, exploitation, sex and relationship education, consent, online safety, British Values, bullying and sexting. Issues will be addressed through other areas of the curriculum, for example, the morning programme, English, History, Science, PD and Art.

Our policies address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, physical handling, positive behaviour, online safety, SEND, disabilities and other vulnerabilities and are linked to ensure a whole school approach. Our safeguarding policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of our school, which will ensure that pupils are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.

Training

All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding Children and Young People training as provided by the LA.

All staff and volunteers will receive Induction Training – this is mandatory and will include:

- Our child protection policy (inclusive of procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
- The staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct);
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).
- Part one and Annex A - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (All staff who work directly with children in our school will read and sign acceptance of understanding)
- Safeguarding training as provided by the LA
- Online safety training
- Prevent
- Whistleblowing policy

Our designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) will attend training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All of our other staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Safer recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and trustees who are involved in the recruitment process.

All trustees 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 them that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and Walsall Council offers training in Safeguarding Children and Young People, Child Protection, safer recruitment and other topics relating to safeguarding children. Staff training is not only crucial in protecting children and young people, but also makes them aware of how they can protect

themselves against allegations. Further information about these courses can be accessed via the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website.

The statutory framework and legislative duties

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, our school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (section 175/157)
- Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection Procedures
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (DfE 2011)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility as follows:

Education and schools: All people working in education and schools contribute to the safeguarding and promoting of children's welfare. All schools and further education institutions have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consequently, staff in these establishments play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm and by educating children, about managing risks and improving their resilience through the curriculum. All schools and further education institutions should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people, and should be able to manage situations where there are child welfare concerns.

Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) – Code C 2019

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police officers who suspect them of an offence.

PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for the purposes of this Code and any other Code.

PACE also states that if at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.

The designated safeguarding (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any police officer who wishes to speak to a pupil about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded in the schools Welfare/CP folder.

If, having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns.

A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned¹ before questioned about an offence², or asked further questions if the answers they provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect's answers or silence, (i.e. failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution.

A police officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult's presence.

The appropriate adult' means, in the case of a child:

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority
3. failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
 - a. a police officer;
 - b. employed by the police;
 - c. under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or
 - d. a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions,

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-c-2019/pace-code-c-2019-accessible).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-c-2019/pace-code-c-2019-accessible>

Legislation and the Law

Governing bodies and proprietors are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Human Rights Act

It is unlawful for our school to act in a way that is incompatible with the Convention on Human Rights.

These rights include:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to an effective education

Equality Act 2010

Schools have obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act).

Our school will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Our school will take positive action, when deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils with a particular protected characteristic in order to meet their specific need, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people, including those with long term conditions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The PSED places a general duty on schools to have, in the exercise of their functions, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our school will focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil and student outcomes. Some pupils or students may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination.

Local and national responsibilities

Our school will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:-

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)(including part one summary for all staff and volunteers, and Annex B)

[Teaching online safety in School](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

[Walsall Safeguarding Partnership procedures](#)

[Walsall Safeguarding Adult Partnership procedures](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance-GOV.UK](#)

[Welcome to the Walsall Children's Services Procedures Manual](#)

[The Education Act 2002 s157/s175](#)

[What to do if you're Worried a Child is being Abused March 2015](#)

[Information sharing guidance for practitioners and managers July 2018.](#)

Sharing nude and semi nudes (UKCIS) 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008443/UKCIS_sharing_nudes_and_semi_nudes_advice_for_education_settings_Web_accessible_.pdf

General Data Protection Legislation (2018)

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/justice-and-fundamental-rights/dataprotection/2018reform-eu-data-protection-rules_en

Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

[The Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

Preventing and tackling bullying in schools 2018

Education inspection framework

Taking Action

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. 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.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

Children, includes everyone under the age of 18.

Our staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.

All our staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

We have a designated safeguarding lead (and trained deputies) who provide support to staff and volunteers to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as Local authority children's social care.

We are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from support at the earliest point.

Families First means we will work with children and families to provide support as early as possible, when an issue is identified at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare follows the referral processes. Our staff understand they be required to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

Dealing with concerns and disclosures

All staff are trained and aware that: -

- a child may disclose something that has upset or harmed them
- someone else might report something that a child has told them, or that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed
- a child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation
- a child's behaviour, including any observed changes to behaviour 'usual' for that child may suggest he or she is being abused
- the behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child may cause concern
- a child demonstrates worrying behaviour towards other children
- a child may display indicators of mental health

We know 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. We are aware that being professionally curious is not simply about asking the question. It is about the language used, creating a trusting relationship, a safe space in which to disclose and giving time to children and young people so they do not feel pressured, however this will not prevent staff from speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the

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

All staff and volunteers are alert to the potential need for early help/referral to the designated safeguarding lead 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 education, home or care.
- Is at risk of modern day slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- Talking about or spreading misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- has a family member in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation of Forced Marriage
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is a privately fostered child
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

We are aware that to consult with our designated safeguarding lead does not mean a referral has been made. This decision is mainly the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead for child protection who will contact the appropriate agency as and when required. However, all staff are aware that they can and should make referrals/consult with Walsall MASH.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) | NSPCC Learning

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college.

Our staff know that if they are unhappy with the response received from our designated safeguarding lead, all staff/volunteers have the right to contact Walsall local authority children's social care

Our staff will always discuss concerns with parents/carers unless to do so would:

- place the child at risk of significant harm or further risk of significant harm.
- place a vulnerable adult at risk of harm
- compromise and enquiries that need to be undertaken by Local authority children's social care or the police

Our school will endeavour to ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL STAFF LEAVE SCHOOL WITHOUT DISCUSSING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS WITH SOMEONE.

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that our actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

Procedures for when someone is concerned about a child or young person including families first

- all concerns for children and young people will be recorded on the standard proforma available in school **'Concern form'** or a **'Disclosure'** form.
- Proformas are available from each of the staffrooms, School office, the DSL office and it can be downloaded online within the school's One Drive.
- all concerns will be recorded as soon as possible (and within one hour)
- all concerns will be referred to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead in their absence
- all concerns of significant harm will be referred to the Local Authority Local authority children's social care (MASH) without delay
- all concerns shared with the designated safeguarding lead will be considered alongside Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time guidance
- All concerns of allegations in relation to staff including supply staff, contractors and volunteers' harmful behaviour will be referred to the headteacher (if the concern is in relation to the head teacher the chair of board of trustees should be informed without delay).
- All low-level concerns will be reported to the DSL and head teacher.

Remember records should include:

- ✓ a clear and comprehensive summary of your concern;
- ✓ details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- ✓ a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If you are in doubt about recording requirements, you should discuss this with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Principles for our school

"Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 we may share information without consent if, in our judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk."

In our school we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is likely to be more at risk than other pupils.

This may mean that they more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

In Walsall, in addition to their statutory duties, the role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.

In offering advice and information to workforces that have relationships with children with social workers, virtual school heads will identify and engage with key professionals, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children. This should include Designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, headteachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads and other local authority officers.

Non-statutory guidance on promoting the education of children with a social worker and kinship care arrangements contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of virtual school heads.

[Virtual School Head roles for children with a Social Worker](#)

What information will you need when making a referral

We will be asked to provide as much information as possible; such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents, other siblings, chronology of previous concerns. If we do not have all these details, we will still make the call.

Responses from parents

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all categories of abuse:-

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb);
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development;
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries;

- Frequent presentation of minor injuries;
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child;
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child;
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse;
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household.

Staff will follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 24 hours. This will be done on a MARF (multi agency referral form). This can be downloaded from [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website](#)

Call the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Tel: 0300 555 2866 Monday–Thursday 8.45am–5.15pm, Friday 8.45am–4.45pm

Tel: 0300 555 2922 or 0300 555 2836 Emergency Response Team

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm call 999 in an emergency

Some of our pupils may not reside within Walsall local authority and we are aware that we should locate the number for the child's local authority's child protection referral team via <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

Key processes including Families First

Key Processes Family Help – Identifying and Understanding Needs

Our school is committed to following the key features of the Families First approach to enable us to understand and meet children's needs as early as possible, appreciating that it is essential to help parents and carers – it is by doing so they will be able to care for their children as best they can.

Our focus is on developing quality and consistency of relationships, undertaking work to understand needs and get the right help and plans in place, and building networks around families. And are committed to becoming part of Team around the family arrangements.

All our staff, including volunteers are aware of the Walsall Families First pathway, focusing on getting the right help and support in place at the right time as defined in Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time – Continuum of Need Guidance: -

<https://walsallsp.co.uk/children/professionals/professionals-working-with-children/right-help-right-time/>

Options will therefore include:

- managing any support for the child internally via our school own pastoral support processes or
- Family Help assessment or
- a referral for statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm.

All staff are prepared and trained to identify children (and parents) who may benefit from additional support from Family Help Universal needs (previous level 1), Extra Support needs (previously Level 2) Targeted Needs, (previously level 3) in addition to identifying risks of Multiple/Substantial Needs/Significant Harm (Previously level 4).

Prior to receiving Family Help, children and families will be supported through universal and early support family services such as Family Hubs, schools and education providers, GPs and universal health services as well as the voluntary and community services.

For early support from specialist services such as housing, social care, police and wider services when we require additional support from our multi agency colleagues, we will request a Locality Conversation, accessed: <https://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/family-hubs/walsall-family-hubs/families-first-children-partnership-page/our-family#main>

The support provided must also empower families to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. Our school has attended the Families First Training and follows the pathway as outlined. [Families First for Children - Instruction Manual \(Procedures and Processes\) Final.pdf](#)

If Family Help is appropriate our designated safeguarding lead/deputy will lead/contribute to the Family First Assessment, accessed: <https://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/family-hubs/walsall-family-hubs/families-first-children-partnership-page/our-family#main> liaising with external agencies and complete any required requests and/or assessments. Wider school staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals contribute to information gathering and take the role of Family Help Coordinator.

All children and families receiving additional support will be part of the ongoing review process with consideration given to any escalating needs/concerns which may require a referral to Children's Services for assessment for statutory services.

Child in Need

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and

promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquires under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process. [when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf \(npcc.police.uk\)](https://www.npcc.police.uk/guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf)

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

The role of the Local Authority

The local authority will make a decision, within one working day of a referral being made, about the type of response that is required and should let the referrer know the outcome, the referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.

If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, our school will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure our concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

When our staff members have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will decide what action to take. Where possible, there will be a conversation with the designated safeguarding lead to agree a course of action.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, our school will ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

Responding to a concern – The “6 R’s RESPONSE”

Receive Reassure React Record Refer Reflect

RECEIVE

- If a child wants to talk to you, never ask them to come back later. Ask them what they want to talk to you about and, if you are concerned about their welfare, give them the time to speak to you.
- Never promise confidentiality, inform the child that you are happy to talk to them but if they tell you anything that you believe may be putting them at harm that you will have to talk to someone.
- Listen carefully to the child. Do not stop a child who is freely recalling information.
- Where a child is visibly upset or has an obvious injury, it is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how an injury was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you to help clarify vague concerns and result in the right action being taken.

REASSURE

- Ensure that the child is aware that they have done the right thing in talking to you and that they have not done anything wrong.
- If you have any concerns that the child has been, or is at risk of harm, you must tell them that you will speak to someone to get help.

REACT

- If you need to clarify information, ask open-ended questions e.g. “*Is there anything you'd like to tell me?*”, “*Can you explain to me...*”, “*Can you describe to me...*”
- **Never** ask leading or suggestive questions e.g. “*Did he/she do anything that they shouldn't have done?*”
- **Never** ask ‘accusing’ questions e.g. “*Why didn't you tell someone earlier?*”
- **Never** criticise the alleged perpetrator, it may be someone that they will continue to live with.
- **Never** ask the pupil to repeat their disclosure for any other member of staff, it is your responsibility to share the information
- These four factors may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by children’s social care or Police.

RECORD

- Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the words that the child has used.
- Do not record your assumptions and interpretations, just what you heard and saw.
- Do not destroy original notes even if you later write things up more neatly and fully.
- Record the date, time and place of the disclosure.
- Sign any written records and identify your position in the school setting.

Do not ask a child to write and account or sign any of your documentation as this may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by children’s social care or Police.

REFER

- Immediately inform the Designated Senior Person for child protection (insert details) or in their absence the Deputy Designated Senior Person for child protection (insert details) who will be responsible for following the appropriate procedures. In the absence of anyone being available in school, contact the Local Authority

REFLECT

Ask yourself if you have done everything you can within your role.

Refer any remaining concerns to the designated teacher, e.g. any knowledge of siblings in the school, or previous contact with parents.

Dealing with disclosures can be difficult and disturbing; you should seek support for yourself via the support within your school or an alternative source but be aware of principles of confidentiality

DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SHARING

We understand that information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools are required to keep be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

We have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes as reflected in our Information Sharing policy and procedure; and privacy notices.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, this is **not** a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information **will not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

When children leave our school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college within 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 to have support in place for when the child arrives. The DSL will ensure the secure transit of the file, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained; this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file. If we are the receiving school, we will ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs, are aware as required.

Defining Abuse

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect and Exploitation

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 another child or children. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school. Our staff, especially the designated safeguarding lead will be considering the context of such incidents and/or behaviours. Such contextual safeguarding means our assessments of children will consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Additionally, Local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that we provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This allows any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

All staff are aware of safeguarding issues and aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk put children in danger.

Physical abuse: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape;
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt including a liner bruise;
- Bite marks;
- Round burn marks;
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks;

- An injury that is not consistent with the account given or the development/ability of the child;
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred;
- Bald patches;
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning;
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather;
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- Fear of medical help;
- Fear of changing for PE;
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance;
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers

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 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.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development;
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders;
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies;
- Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches;
- Self - harming, drug or solvent abuse;
- Fear of parents being contacted;
- Running away;
- Compulsive stealing;
- Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or

- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.
- High criticism, low warmth observed from the parents/carers

N.B.: Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment.

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.

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge;
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching;
- Reluctance to go home;
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness;
- Refusal to communicate;
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains;
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia;
- Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse;
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation;
- Unusual compliance;
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling;
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately;
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group;
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

We understand that staff need support when managing cases of sexual abuse and will access materials from CSA Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse which has free evidence-based practice resources to help professionals working with children and young people to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of child sexual abuse.

Supporting Practice in tackling child sexual abuse

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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Constant hunger;
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food;
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness;
- Frequently dirty or unkempt;
- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather;
- Poor school attendance or often late for school;
- Poor concentration;
- Affection or attention seeking behaviour;
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated;
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight;
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially;
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers

Further specific risks

All staff will have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education, references to misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Annex B Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2025 will be read and understood by all staff/volunteers outlining risk as below:-

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age-appropriate guides to support children 5-11years old young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and 12 -17 year olds Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service Get help with child arrangements - GOV.UK (justice.gov.uk). This may be useful for some parents and carers.

We will recognise these vulnerabilities and offer early help where necessary for the children, young people and their families to safeguard emotional wellbeing; we will access resources as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2025.

Children absent from education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Children absent 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. We have procedures in place in response to children absent from education which support identification of such abuse and also 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 being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents are reminded to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

Our school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils are absent from education (especially on repeat occasions)
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - leave school to be home educated (see below)
 - move away from the school's location
 - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards)
 - are permanently excluded

We know that many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We expect parent's decisions 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.

When a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from our school with a view to educating at home, we will work together with other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. We refer to [Elective Home Education guidance](#) to support our processes and decisions.

We will inform our Local Authority of all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll.

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

Our school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

Children with family members in prison

These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We will work with the children and their families as much as possible to mitigate the harm by offering early help and emotional wellbeing support where necessary and recognise additional risks such as witnessing arrests, trauma of prison visits, concerns regarding an offender's release and return home.

Child sexual exploitation (CCE and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may 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 or may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

(Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues).

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories);

- Sexual identity.

Our school refers to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership procedures to consider completion of the screening tool and/or NWG risk assessment. [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

Our Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager is **Lisa Bowen** who manages our Exploitation team, if you are worried about exploitation or missing concerns about a child please refer to MASH or the child's social worker.

You should also copy missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk in to any referrals.

Child criminal exploitation: county lines

Our staff/volunteers are aware that 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.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Our staff have been alerted to the fact 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, we are aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. We know that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Some of the following can be indicators of Child Criminal Exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who are regularly absent from school or education or do not take part in education.

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”.

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 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.

Further information

[County Lines Guidance](#)

[County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#) - The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council

Childhood mental health

All our staff 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.

We are clear in our school that only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Our staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

We understand that when children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (especially in the context of Covid 19), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. We know that early help is critical when supporting children and young people who are suffering trauma, depression, anxiety, low mood and other indicators of mental health.

If our staff have a mental health concern about a child they know that it is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken as with all other vulnerabilities. Records will be made and reported immediately to our Designated safeguarding lead and Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

In our school we offer additional support by having the DSL, DDSL, head teacher and senior leadership team trained in Level 2 Children's and Young Peoples Mental Health.

Our school promotes resilience as part of a whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, and this is tailored to our pupils' individual needs.

As a school we find there is a presenting need amongst our pupils in regards to self-harm, low self-esteem and anxiety. All pupils who present these needs or any other will be provided with tailored support by our school's pastoral team and where we feel further support is required, we will make referrals to relevant external agencies to ensure that our pupils are safe, well supported and are able to overcome any difficulties that are presented.

Further advice can be found via:

[Senior mental health lead training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/senior-mental-health-lead-training)

[Preventing and tackling Bullying](#)

[Mental Health and behaviour in Schools](#)

[Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#)

[Rise Above PHSE curriculum support](#)

[Every Interaction Matters](#)

[Wellbeing for Education recovery including bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma](#)

Children with special educational needs and disabilities or health issues

In our school we understand that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- There may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying including prejudiced based bullying than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenge
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so

We identify pupils who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by providing regular pastoral sessions to identify any emerging problems and providing these pupils with an opportunity to share their worries or concerns which they may not be able to do otherwise.

When working with children with disabilities staff are aware that additional possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, might be of concern on a non-mobile child
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment
- Poor toileting arrangements
- Lack of stimulation
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication
- Ill-fitting equipment. for example, callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting

- Misappropriation of a child's finances
- Inappropriate invasive procedures

Where there are reports of abuse involving children with SEND the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will work closely with the SENCO to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the child.

Equality Officer/Champion

We understand that risks can be compounded where children with protected characteristics lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open with. We therefore feel it is vital that we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers they face by allocating them with a safe space and a trusted adult (Equality officer) to whom they can speak out or share their concerns with.

The schools Equality Officer is **Gita Patel**

CHILDREN WHO ARE lesbian, gay, bisexual, OR Gender questioning

N.B. This section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published.

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

It recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can 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 a range of support is available to us to help counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse as below.

[RSE curriculum](#)

Domestic abuse

Our staff/volunteers understand 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.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

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.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when the 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 the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures.

Where appropriate, schools will make a referral to local authority children's social care if we are concerned about a child's welfare.

Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. **The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).**

Our school is signed up to Operation Encompass, the Walsall Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse – notifications to Schools. This protocol sets out plans for a multi-agency operation to notify schools when a pupil has experienced domestic abuse in their household, which will allow the school to provide appropriate early intervention and support in a timely manner. Our DSL will receive notifications and ensure the children receive the right help at the right time.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, **24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247**. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- [NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects](#)
- [Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children](#)
- [Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives](#)
- [Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support](#) (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- [Home : Operation Encompass](#) (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)

Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by our school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply.

When our governing body hire or rent out school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) they will ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe. When services or activities are provided by our trustees, under the direct supervision or management of our school staff, our arrangements for child protection will apply.

However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body this is not necessarily the case. Our trustees therefore seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with school on these matters where appropriate. In the event a Position of Trust (POT) is raised regards staff working at the organisation using the premises the school would follow their policy and procedures for reporting. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on our school roll.

Our trustees will also 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.

When pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, our school will ensure that the proprietors of the activity/venue operate safe practices to maintain the safety of our children/young people and liaise with investigating agencies in the locality relevant to where the concern has taken place.

Alternative Provision

In the event that our pupils attend alternative education provision we understand that this cohort of pupils often have complex needs. We ensure that the management committee or trustees of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that the pupils may be vulnerable to. We obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that our school would otherwise perform in respect of our own staff as defined in part five.

This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform our school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (ie, staff changes), so that our school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

The DfE provide two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners/our school of Alternative Provision will have regard:

- [Alternative provision - DfE Statutory Guidance](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - DfE Statutory Guidance](#)

Our school gives full regard to the guidance as above to ensure ongoing safeguarding of our pupils.

Homelessness

Our staff/volunteers 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 deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

We are aware that indicators may be:

- household debt
- rent arrears
- domestic abuse
- anti-social behaviour
- the family being asked to leave a property

We recognise in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a level of intervention and support.

Further explanation is found at Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets [Homeless reduction factsheet](#)

Honour based abuse (forced marriage, female genital mutilation and breast ironing)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called honour based abuse are serious (regardless of the motivation) and will be handled and reported as such.

If our staff/volunteers have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they will speak to our designated safeguarding lead (or deputies). We understand that if FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers** that requires a different approach as below.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff will not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

We know that where a teacher (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there is a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police. We know teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless our teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) have good reason not to, they will still consider and discuss any such case with our schools designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and involve Local authority children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases i.e. where teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) do 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 (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) will follow our safeguarding procedures and those set out in our local authority procedures.

[Mandatory reporting of FGM factsheet](#)

Forced Marriage

The legal age at which a marriage can take place is now 18 and applies to non binding, unofficial marriages as well as legal marriages. 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 to coerce a person into marriage. We can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (pages 75-80 of which focus on the role of schools) and, multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at [Guidance for forced marriage](#)

[The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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.

School staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: **020 7008 0151** or email fm@fcdof.gov.uk.

Preventing radicalisation

Preventing radicalisation Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024. New definition of extremism (2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Our staff are aware that children can be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of our schools safeguarding approach.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where our staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they will discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern. Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have. The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments. Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Recognising Extremism

Possible indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

Outward appearance

- Becoming increasingly argumentative

- Refusing to listen to different points of view
- Unwilling to engage with students who are different
- Becoming abusive to students who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Online behaviour

- Changing online identity
- Having more than one online identity
- Spending a lot of time online or on the phone
- Accessing extremist online content
- Joining or trying to join an extremist organisation
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles

Our school trustees, head teacher, Single Point of Contact and the designated safeguarding lead will assess the level of risk within our school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. We have risk assessments that include consideration of the school's RE curriculum, SEND policy, assembly policy, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of pupils by gender and SEN, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

Channel

Our school's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

[Channel guidance](#)

Our school refers to Educate Against Hate, a website launched by the Her Majesty's Government has been developed to support and equip school and college leaders, teachers, and parents with information, tools and resources (including on the promotion of fundamental British values) to help recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. [Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation](#)

If a member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the SPOC and to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (if this is not the same person). Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office. [Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel \(PMAP\) guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Additional training is available through The Safeguarding and Prevent - The Education and Training Foundation (et-foundation.co.uk) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty. [Safeguarding and Prevent - The Education and Training Foundation \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](#)

Niall Markham is the Walsall Prevent Coordinator. niall.markham@walsall.gov.uk

Private fostering arrangements

Our staff are aware that a private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of

the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child.

It is the duty of local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered within their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, but our responsibility to be aware and refer children who may be privately fostered.

If our school makes arrangements for children to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related then we will consider whether the arrangement where children stay with UK families could amount to "private fostering"

All staff in our school will inform the designated safeguarding lead (or their deputies) of any children that fall into the category of private fostering.

Reasonable force

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for our staff 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.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions we will consider the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these children.

Our procedures are clear that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes a report immediately and share the report with the designated safeguarding lead (or their deputies) to ensure that:

- The child was not harmed
- That first aid has been considered
- That the parents/carers of the child or young person have been informed
- That reasonable force was the best and most proportionate response to the situation

Further information

[Use of Reasonable Use in Schools](#)

Serious violence

There are a number of 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.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

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

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the [Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy](#).

We are aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence.

Our schools works with our local VRU, either directly or via their education Core Member, to better ingrain partnership working to tackle serious violence across local areas and ensure a joined up approach to young people across the risk spectrum.

Advice for schools is provided in the Home Office's [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#) guidance. [The Youth Endowment Fund \(YEF\)](#) Toolkit sets out the evidence for what works in preventing young people from becoming involved in violence.

Further information

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)

Young carers

We understand that a young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem.

Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister. They do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning, or helping someone to get dressed and move around.

Some children give a lot of physical help to a brother or sister who is disabled or ill. Along with doing things to help your brother or sister, you may also be giving emotional support to both your sibling and your parents. Information is available via <https://gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-children-and-young-people/young-carers>.

We know that some of the risks associated with being a young carer are risk of truancy, under-achievement, isolation, mental and physical ill health, poverty and stress.

We will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures if we are concerned and complete the Young Carers screening and assessing tool using our local procedures found at <http://www.mywalsall.org/walsallearlyhelp/providers-youngcarers/>

Information is available via <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-children-and-young-people/young-carers>

We know that some of the risks associated with being a young carer are risk of truancy, under-achievement, isolation, mental and physical ill health, poverty and stress.

We will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures if we are concerned and contact the **Early Help Senior Project Officer Young Carers,** Joanne.Phillips@walsall.gov.uk and can complete the Young Carers screening and assessing tool using our local procedures; found at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-children-and-young-people/young-carers#assess>

Online safety

We know pupils increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

The Designated safeguarding lead has responsibility for ensuring all online access is appropriately, filtered, monitored, risk assessed, reviewed and updated as necessary.

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

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

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults

Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

If you feel your pupils or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Where children are being asked to learn online at home the DfE has provided advice to support schools and colleges do so safely.

When our pupils use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. However, many pupils are able to access the internet using their own data plan. To minimise inappropriate use, as a school we educate pupils on reporting/talking to a trusted adult about issues that they are unsure about and educate them on age restrictions for apps, games and movies. Letters are also shared on the website regarding online safety messages and the school holds an online safety workshop for parents.

As a school we find there is a presenting need amongst our pupils in regards online risks. All pupils who present these needs will be provided with tailored support by our school's pastoral team and where we feel further support is required, we will

work with parents and external agencies to ensure that our pupils are safe, well supported and are able to overcome any difficulties that are presented.

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

Whilst considering our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, our governing body will do all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process, our trustees ensure our school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They ensure that our 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. Our trustees are committed to consider the age range of our children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks. Staff are also aware that they need to fully and actively monitor the use of technology both in the classroom and any tasks set at home.

The use of mobile devices in schools

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.

At Abu Bakr Al-Ihsaan Academy pupils must hand in their mobile phones at the school reception on arrival to school and only be collected at the end of the day.

Pupils are not allowed to bring any other smart device into school unless they have prior permission such as laptops/iPads for Child Development, IT or Computer Science.

If pupils are found with mobile phones or any smart device in their possession or found using their phones or smart devices on school site, the phone/smart device will be confiscated and the school's behaviour and sanctions policy will apply.

Child-on-child abuse

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. Staff must understand, that even if there are no reports in the 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 the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) immediately. It is crucial that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature.

Staff **must** ensure they do **not** downplay certain behaviours as this 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 children (also known as teenage relationship abuse);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of 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).

Any form of child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and should **never** be tolerated or dismissed as **“banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”**. The school has a **zero-tolerance approach** to any form of abuse. The school recognises that different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. This could for example include girls being sexually touched / assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence, however any form of peer-on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

In our school we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other pupils.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school’s Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying policy and Online Safety policy.

Allegations may be made against students by others in school which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this pupil

All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND, certain health conditions and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Our staff will record and report all issues of child-on-child abuse to our designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and ensure the best action is taken to safeguard children and young people in our school. Our curriculum endorses child-on-child abuse is not acceptable and our actions are supported by associated safeguarding policy and procedures in our school (Anti Bullying, Pupil Behaviour, Online Safety, Acceptable Use and broader child protection procedures).

Children and young people who abuse others will be responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others within the school community through a multi-agency risk assessment. We ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will be considered separately from the needs of their victims. Risk assessments will be recorded (paper or electronic) and will be kept under review. At all times we will be actively considering the risks posed to all our pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. Our risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform our approach to supporting and protecting our pupils and students and updating our own risk assessment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children/child-on-child abuse

All of our staff and volunteers are aware that 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**. We know this abuse may be driven by wider societal factors beyond our school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language and adapt our curriculum as below to overcome this wherever we can.

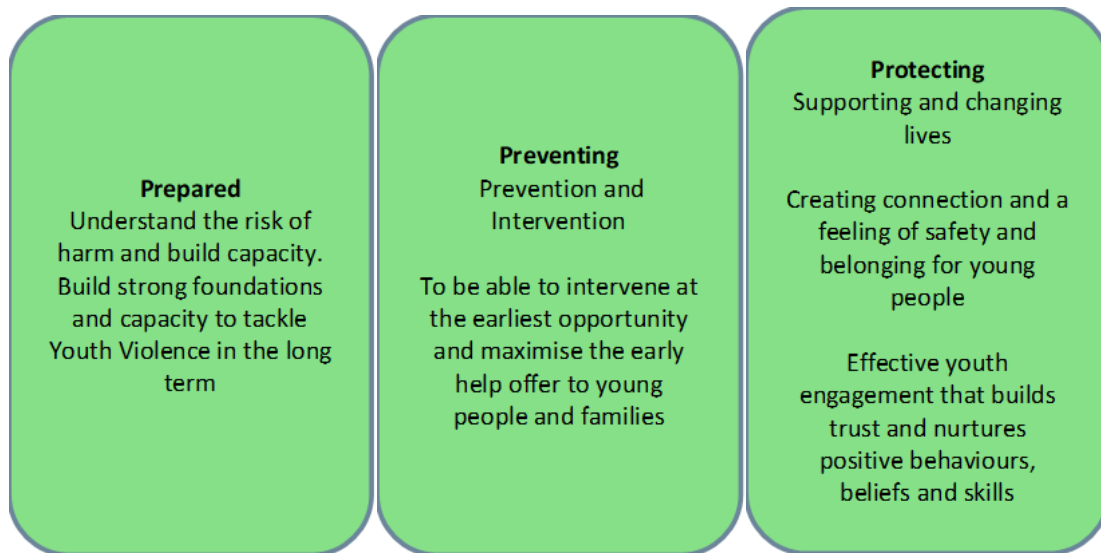
We make it clear that there is a **zero-tolerance approach** to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is **never acceptable**, and it will **not be tolerated** and it will never be passed off as “**banter**”, “**just having a laugh**”, “**part of growing up**” or “**boys being boys**”.

We recognise, acknowledge, and understand the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

We will be challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

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.

It is vital that we deliver a curriculum that is balanced in supporting children and young people to understand what child-on-child sexual abuse is, and this needs to be delivered to all key stages to ensure that we are:-



All staff in our school are regularly provided with updated and appropriate safeguarding training that enables them to understand:

- Their role in preventing child-on-child abuse
- How to identify the indicators of abuse
- What to do if they have a concern about a child
- How to respond to a report of abuse
- How to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)
- Where to go if they need support
- That children can abuse other children inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:
 - Abusive, harassing and misogynistic/misandrist messages
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content
- That they need to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**'
- That even if there are no reports in school, **it doesn't mean it's not happening**
- The importance of challenging inappropriate, physical (potentially criminal in nature) and abusive behaviour

- That girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers
- To keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation;
- Abuse may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of our school

We teach our pupils:

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources
- they will be taken seriously
- never be given
- they will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment
- They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report

The curriculum includes teaching about:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- The concepts of, and laws relating to-sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support and,
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are unacceptable
- What respectful behaviour looks like

We promote an open, honest and respectful culture in our setting through PHSEE, RSHE curriculum and assemblies. Support and guidance on child-on-child abuse Sexual violence and harassment is displayed across the school.

Sexual violence

We are aware of sexual violence and that children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school.

Sexual violence is defined as:

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. (We are aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Consent is defined as:

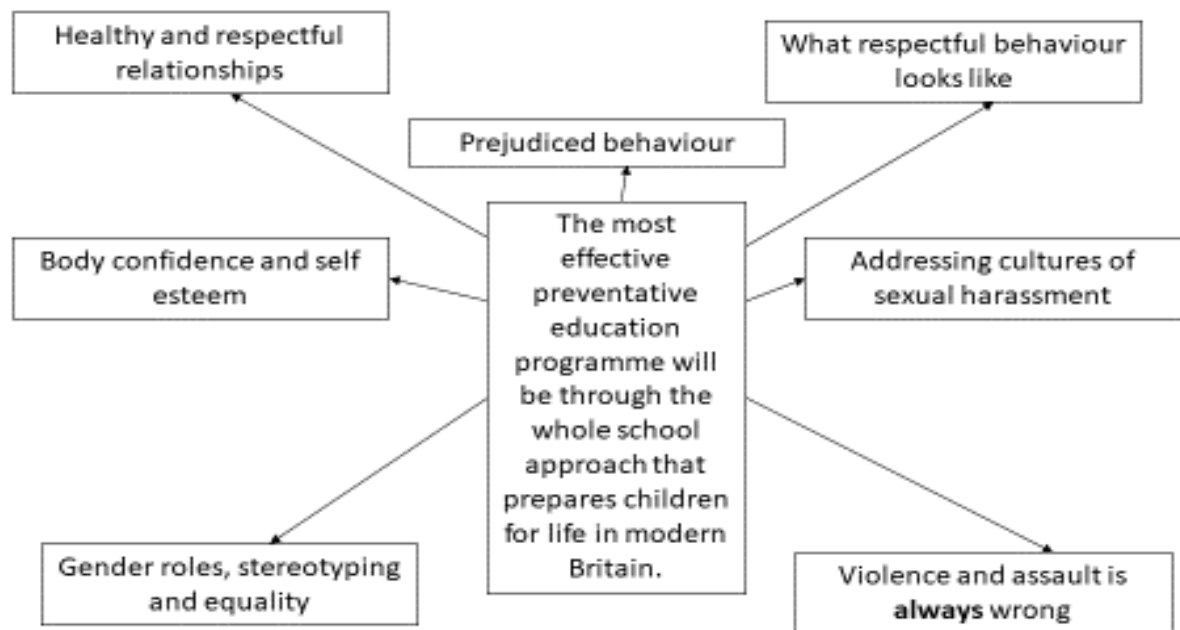
Having the freedom and capacity to choose.

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.

Sexual consent

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

Consent and the Curriculum



Sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. 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 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 (we consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim)
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- upskirting (is a criminal offence)

- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos
- sharing of unwanted explicit content is an offence
- sexualised online bullying
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats and
- coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

We consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB):

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected, to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage.

HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB will be considered in a child protection context and Walsall Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need guidance will be referred to.

When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma.

Our school will ensure that these children are offered appropriate support.
<https://shorespace.org.uk/>

Online:

Sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection to face to face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. These include the potential for the incident to take place across a number of social media platforms and services, and for things to move from platform to platform online. It also includes the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than a school's local community (e.g. for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools/colleges) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator(s)) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities. There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online.

Dedicated NSPCC helpline 0800 136 663

The helpline will provide both children and adults who are potential victims of sexual abuse in schools with the appropriate support and advice. This includes how to contact the police and report crimes if they wish. The helpline will also provide support to parents and professionals too.

Pupils will be made aware of all safeguarding procedures and how to report any abuse, child-on-child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment through various methods to ensure procedures and processes to report, are promoted, understood and enable pupils to confidently report abuse knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. Some of the methods being:

- Assemblies/workshops/lessons
- Displays
- Safeguarding information

Our schools' procedures for responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

Our starting point regarding any report will 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, and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

- All reports will be taken seriously and be dealt with effectively.
- Support will be provided to both victim and the perpetrator and any other children or young people that have been affected.

- We will keep clear and accurate records of all reports on all forms of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence and harassment and these will be kept securely.
- We will recognise the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- We will deal with each report on a case-by-case basis and will be dealt with in accordance to any of the categories below:

Manage internally

- In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or require referrals to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising our behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded.

Families First

Families First

- We may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from additional support from Families First, providing support as soon as an issue emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early support is more effective in responding to issues early to help minimise the likelihood of the concerns escalating, thereby promoting the welfare of children and families. Families First can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.
- Families First and the ability to manage an issue internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: school may manage internally and seek support from Families First for both the victim and perpetrator(s).
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded.

Referrals to local authority children's social care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger we will make a referral to the local authority children's social care.
- At the point of referral to Local authority children's social care we will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision will be made with the support of local authority children's social care.

- If a referral is made to the local authority 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 we will work alongside, and cooperate 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.
- We will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a local authority children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in school. It is important for our school to work closely with local authority children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.
- In some cases, the local authority children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. We will be prepared to refer again if we believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm, referring to the escalation policy if still not in agreement with the decision.
<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Walsall%20Downloads/Walsall%20Resolution%20and%20Escalation%20FINAL.docx>

If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, we will consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.

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

Referrals to Police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting principle is that we will refer on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach in these cases.

Referrals to the police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to local authority children's social care. Our designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will liaise closely with the local police.

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 we will consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise.

Particular regard will be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim and the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness. We will 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).

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, we will update the risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children in school and, (if we have not already done so) consider any suitable action in line with our behaviour policy.

This process will include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remain(s) in school and the victim is still a registered pupil, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think 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 in our school. We will ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

If the case is classed as "no further action" by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will 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. We will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. We understand the alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

We may make a referral to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) which 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 to one of their Child Protection Advisors will occur.

Procedures for online abuse

Our procedures for dealing with the concerns are:

- We will **never** view, download or share the imagery, or ask a child to share or download as we are aware this is illegal
- If we have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), we will report this to the Designated safeguarding lead (or their deputies)
- We will **not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
- We will **not** ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead and/or our statutory partners
- We will **not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers unless advised by the designated safeguarding lead and/or our statutory partners to do so.
- We will **not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- We **will** explain to them that they need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the designated safeguarding lead

We will recognise the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interest of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.

Our school will only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.

The victim may ask the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies.

Advice should be sought from the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will consider the following:

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

Ultimately, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

Where the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support will be offered.

Additional information on confidentiality and information sharing is available at [Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing Advice](#) and [NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners](#).

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, we will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved. We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. If required we will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

[Gillick competence - Fraser guidelines](#)

Working with all partners:

We acknowledge that we should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered, as part of our local arrangements.

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership publishes its local threshold document which includes the process for the local early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided, our DSLs (and their deputies) are familiar with this document.

Risk assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence our designated safeguarding lead will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there may have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator(s)
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) in school especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harm
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk assessments will be recorded and be kept under review. At all times we will be actively considering the risks posed to all pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

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 also be required.

Our risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform our approach to supporting and protecting our pupils and updating our own risk assessment.

The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions such as teaching timetables, break times and travelling to and from school.

Victims

Children who have experienced sexual violence display a very wide range of responses to their experience, including in some cases clear signs of trauma, physical and emotional responses, or no overt signs at all. We will remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting those signs and show sensitivity to the needs of the child (e.g. about attendance in lessons) irrespective of how overt the child's distress is.

We understand that 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 our duty and responsibilities to protect other children.

The victim will be provided with support and reassured that they will be kept safe and taken seriously at all times.

We know 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 school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Perpetrators

It is important that the perpetrator(s) is/are also given the correct support to try to stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

We will ensure the perpetrator will also be provided with appropriate support. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. We will be very clear as to what its approach is. (See Behaviour and sanctions policy).

We understand that school is a protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and will ensure that continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, before any final decisions are made. If an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), then the new educational institution will be made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff.

We ensure that we explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Guidance is listed below to support our procedures, including LGFL 'Undressed' providing us with 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

[Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools.](#)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (statutory guidance for schools and colleges)

[Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education](#) (statutory guidance for schools)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (statutory guidance for schools and
[Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and PRUs](#) (statutory guidance for schools)

[Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools)

[Children Missing Education](#) (advice for schools)

[Cyberbullying](#) (advice for schools)

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)

[Equality Act 2010](#) and [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (advice for schools)

[Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance](#) (advice for further and higher education providers)

[Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)

[Rise Above](#) (advice by Public Health England for schools)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools)

[Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#) (advice for schools)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children Sept 2021](#)

[Teaching about relationships sex and health](#) (guidance for schools)

[UKCIS sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for dealing with concerns](#)

[HSB toolkit](#)

[Undressed](#) resources from LGFL

Safer recruitment practice

And managing allegations against staff

Our safer recruitment processes

As part of our culture of a commitment to safeguarding our governing body and senior leaders have adopted robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in our school.

Key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

Our recruitment and selection process

Our adverts make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken and make clear our commitment to safeguarding by:

- outlining the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification
- whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. Which means that when an individual is applying for certain jobs and activities certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found in the [DBS filtering guidance](#)

Where a role in our school involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children, we will include a statement in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children,

We will provide a copy of our school's child protection policy and practices, and policy on employment of ex-offenders in the application pack or refer to a link on our school website.

We require applicants to provide:

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number

- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
- details of referees/references
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

Our school does not accept copies of curriculum vitae in place of an application form. Where they are provided this must be alongside an application form.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to [Ministry of Justice guidance](#) on the disclosure of criminal records. (i.e if they have a criminal history, whether they are included on the barred list, whether they are prohibited from teaching, whether they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school, information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted, if they are known to the police and Local authority children's social care have they been disqualified from providing childcare and any relevant overseas information).

The information will only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information will not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

Our procedures are clear that applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate will physically sign a hard copy of the application at point of interview.

When shortlisting at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise, we consider any inconsistencies, look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them. We explore all potential concerns and as part of the shortlisting process and inform candidates that should they be shortlisted we will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

We seek references for all potential candidates (including volunteers) to allow us to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions. Wherever possible we request references before interview, this allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding:

- we do not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- we do not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- we ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference will be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations)
- we obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- we secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer
- we always verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- we ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- we contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- we compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- we establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post
- we ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

We ensure the information confirms whether we are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding allegations but do not include information about allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

Our interview questions will always include:

- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this

Our interviews will always be used to explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing will include applicants:

- implication that adults and children are equal
- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- inappropriate idealisation of children
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children
- indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Our school believes children and young people should be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils is common and recognised as good practice in our school.

All information considered in decision making will be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

Our school's pre-appointment vetting checks, regulated activity and recording information

Such checks will help us identify whether a person may be unsuitable to work with children (and in some cases is legally prohibited from working with children and/or working as a teacher). They are seen as the part of a wider safeguarding regime in our school, which will carry on following appointment.

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. Our school:

- verifies a candidate's identity because it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Wherever possible and as part of best practice we check the name on their birth certificate. We use [government guidance for these checks](#).
- obtains (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity with children). When using the DBS update service we still obtain the original physical certificate

- obtains a separate children's barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available
- verifies the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (as defined in Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003)
- verifies the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then we follow advice on the [right to work website](#)
- checks if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, and make any further checks considered appropriate
- verifies professional qualifications, as appropriate. The school uses Check a teacher's record-GOV.Uk to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS), and the completion of teacher induction or probation
- ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State

When obtaining an enhanced DBS; if an applicant is moving from a previous post which ended not more than three months before the person's appointment within our school, we will follow guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

We use <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-the-childrens-barred-list> to ensure that the right level of DBS and barring checks are completed in our school. Once complete we will be able to compare any information disclosed on the certificate with any information shared by the applicant during the recruitment process. When assessing any disclosure information on a DBS certificate we will take into consideration the explanation from the applicant, including:

- the seriousness and relevance to the post applied for
- how long ago the offence occurred
- whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents
- the circumstances around the incident
- whether the individual accepted responsibility for their actions

We will also consider the incident in the context of the Check a teacher's record-GOV.UK guidance, if the applicant is applying for a teaching post.

When using the Update Service, we will:

- obtain consent from the individual to carry out an online check to view the status of an existing standard or enhanced DBS check;
- confirm the DBS certificate matches the individual's identity
- examine the original certificate to ensure that it is valid for our school

- ensure that the level of the check is appropriate to the job they are applying for

Our school's procedures for prohibitions, directions, sanctions and restrictions

A person who is prohibited will not be appointed to a role that involves teaching work (as defined in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012). We are aware that a number of individuals are still subject to disciplinary sanctions, which were imposed by the GTCE (prior to its abolition in 2012). We will access details to the Check a teacher's record – GOV.UK where GTCE checks can be made. We have a DfE Sign-in account to log onto the service.

We complete checks under section 128 direction to check if someone is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a Trustee of a maintained school.

From 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system no longer maintains a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states.

We maintain a single central record of pre-appointment checks; this is checked for accuracy by senior members of staff and a nominated Trustee. We keep evidence of all safer recruitment checks. Our single central record includes all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff, (even if they work for one day, all members of the governing body and volunteers. We also record safer recruitment checks for contractors where necessary.

For agency and third party supply staff we include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, the date this confirmation was received and whether details of any enhanced DBS certificate have been provided in respect of the member of staff.

The details of an individual will be removed from the single central record once they no longer work at our school. We know that we do not have to keep copies of DBS certificates in order to fulfil the duty of maintaining the single central record. If we choose to retain a copy of DBS checks we will comply with requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, by recording a valid reason for doing so and that it will not be kept for longer than six months. When the information is destroyed we may keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result and the recruitment decision taken if they choose to. A copy of the other documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file.

Our school has procedures in place to check section 128 directions, meaning a person subject to a section 128 direction is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a Trustee of a maintained school. Board of trustees in our school are required to have an enhanced DBS check. It is the responsibility of our governing body to apply for the certificate for any Board of trustees who do not already have one. As governance is not a regulated activity relating to children, Board of trustees do not need a children's barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

Our school has procedures to check any individual that has applied for a management position in the following categories is not subject to a section 128 direction.

- take up a management position in school
- be a trustee a Trustee or member of a proprietor body
- be a Trustee on any governing body in school that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities.

We have procedures in place to undertake the necessary childcare disqualification checks for staff who work with children aged 5 and under, including reception classes, but also apply to those working in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, such as breakfast clubs and after school care. We refer to [Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018](#) for clarity of checks.

Our schools' procedures for other checks that may be necessary for staff, volunteers and others

In our school individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK undergo the same checks as all other staff. 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, we make any further checks we think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the EU we 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. To consider suitability of the applicant where available we:

- obtain criminal records checks for overseas applicants
- obtain a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

We are aware and consider that not all countries provide criminal record information, and where they do, the nature and detail of the information provided varies from country to country. We are mindful that the criteria for disclosing offences in other countries often have a different threshold than those in the UK.

To support us in this process we refer to [Recruiting teachers from overseas guidance](#)

When employing third part or agency/supply staff we obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisation, that they have carried out the checks on an individual who will be working in our school. In respect of the enhanced DBS check, we ensure that written notification confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business. Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work in a school, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, we obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency. We always check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

We ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at our school, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity relating to children will require an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including children's barred list information) will be required. Under no circumstances will a contractor on whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity relating to children. We check the identity of contractors on arrival at our school.

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by our school, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. If the trainee teachers are engaging in regulated activity relating to children (which in most cases by the nature of the work, they will be), an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information) will be obtained. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. We obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that we would otherwise be required to perform, and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

Walsall Local Authority provides a letter of comfort which provides assurance to schools that all necessary checks have been undertaken for Children's Services and Health staff (including Social Workers, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, SEND Case Workers, Early Help Officers, CAMHS workers and other roles that involved working directly with children, young people and their families). This ensures that we can be assured that

key staff meeting with children and families, in our school have had the appropriate DBS check. We will request evidence of their Walsall Council/Health ID/photo card, and we understand that such staff are not required to present their DBS certificate to our school.

We know that whilst external organisations can provide a varied and useful range of information, resources and speakers that can help our school and enrich children's education, careful consideration is given to the suitability of any external organisations.

In our school under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. We complete risk assessments for volunteers and these consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
- what we know about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability; and

whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and if it is, what level is appropriate, bearing in mind DBS checks for volunteers are free.

Details of the risk assessment will always be recorded.

Ongoing vigilance in our school

Senior leaders, DSL's and our governing body ensures we have processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. This includes regular safeguarding training/briefings, audits of our safeguarding recording systems, promotion and challenge of staffs understanding of our safeguarding ethos supported by safeguarding policies.

Our senior leaders have created the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where it is appropriate, outside of the workplace, which may have implications for the safeguarding of children. This can assist us to support staff, where there is a need, and help them manage children's safety and welfare, potentially providing them with information that will help them consider whether there are further measures or changes to procedures that need to be put in place to safeguard children in their care.

Our school is alert to the requirements of referring an individual to the DBS if we believe they have:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults which should result in them being unable to perform regulated activity
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence

Our school is alert to the duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency because of an individual's serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first.

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

Despite our commitment to safer recruitment processes we are aware there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously.

In these circumstances all allegations against other members of staff or volunteers will be referred to the head teacher. In their absence, to a member of staff from the Senior Leadership Team. If your concern is about the Headteacher you need to speak to the Chair of Trustees. Information sharing should not be barrier but in the unlikely event that you cannot access the people above please discuss your concerns with the Local Authority Designated Officer (01922) 654040, 07432 422205 or email lado@walsall.gov.uk

If a concern has reached the harm threshold:

The following procedure will be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or

- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Whilst we are not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. When using a supply agency, we will inform the agency of our process for managing allegations but also take account of the agency's policies and their duty to refer to the DBS as personnel suppliers. This will include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting and whether the individual was in the school or college at the time of the allegation, and whether there were any witnesses and if there is any CCTV footage.

The LADO will discuss the matter with the head teacher to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the local authority children's social care is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

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

Where it is 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. As an employer, we will not leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person will be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within school and provided with their contact details.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be:

- formally told about the allegation as soon as possible. The head teacher/trustee will consult the LADO and where involved local authority children's social care and/or the police on what information can be disclosed
- kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member
- made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers in schools whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002.

Where the initial discussion leads to no further action, our head teacher/trustee and the LADO will:

- record the decision and justification for it
- agree on what information will be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom

Some allegations will require immediate referral to children's services and the police, but common sense and judgement will be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO will immediately refer the matter to the local authority children's social care and ask for a strategy discussion/meeting to be convened.

Where the safety of other children is in question as a result of the allegation, consideration will be given to invoking the Complex (Organised or Multiple) Abuse Procedure (this can be found on the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/>)

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by local authority children's social care. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the LADO will be informed of all allegations that come to our attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult police and local authority children's social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where a referral is made directly to local authority children's social care, they will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police and the head teacher.

Where such allegations are made consideration will be given to the following three strands:

1. The police investigation of a possible criminal offence
2. Enquiries and assessment by local authority children's social care as to whether the child is in need of protection or in need of services
3. Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

The definitions that will be used when we determine the outcome of an allegation are set out below:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will 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 local authority children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our behaviour policy.

Where the allegation concluded to be either, unfounded, false, malicious or unsubstantiated the case manager (and if they have been involved the LADO) will consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if improvements can be made.

Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false will be removed from personnel records, unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information. However, for all other allegations, i.e. substantiated, unfounded and unsubstantiated it is important that the following information is kept on the file of the person accused:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation

- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome i.e substantiated, unfounded or unsubstantiated
- a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by local authority children's social care or the police, and
- a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

Where an adult makes an allegation to our school that they were abused as a child, the individual will be advised/supported to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, will be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with local authority children's social care and the police.

Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Supply teachers and all contracted staff

In some circumstances we will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by us, where our disciplinary procedures do not fully apply because agencies will have their own policies and procedures; for example, supply teachers or contracted staff 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 our school 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 senior leaders and/or governing body will work with supply agency or agencies.

We will decide in partnership with the LADO, whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out investigation.

Agencies are expected to be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social care. We will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children, 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 us, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body when working in school. They will be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support.

An allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency or agencies are taken into account during the investigation.

When using a supply agency, we will inform the agency of our process for managing allegations but also take account of the agency's policies and their duty to refer to the DBS as personnel suppliers. This will include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about policies.

Low-level concern

If a concern has not reached the harm threshold:

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 our schools or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding 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 (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. By creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. When implemented correctly, this will enforce our open and transparent culture; enable us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early, minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of our school.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered 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
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating pupils

It is crucial that any such concerns, are shared responsibly with DSL Rayhana Patel and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Our DSL will inform the headteacher of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern.

Our headteacher will be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in our school the headteacher may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. The record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns will also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Our records for such level of concern will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This allows for records to be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Please see the school low-level concern policy for more details.

Our training helps staff understand that 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.

Our record keeping around employment records will be informed by the Employment Information/ICO, which provides practical advice on record retention.

Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers are able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our school. Concerns are taken very seriously by the senior leadership team.

If there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in our school staff can refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public including:

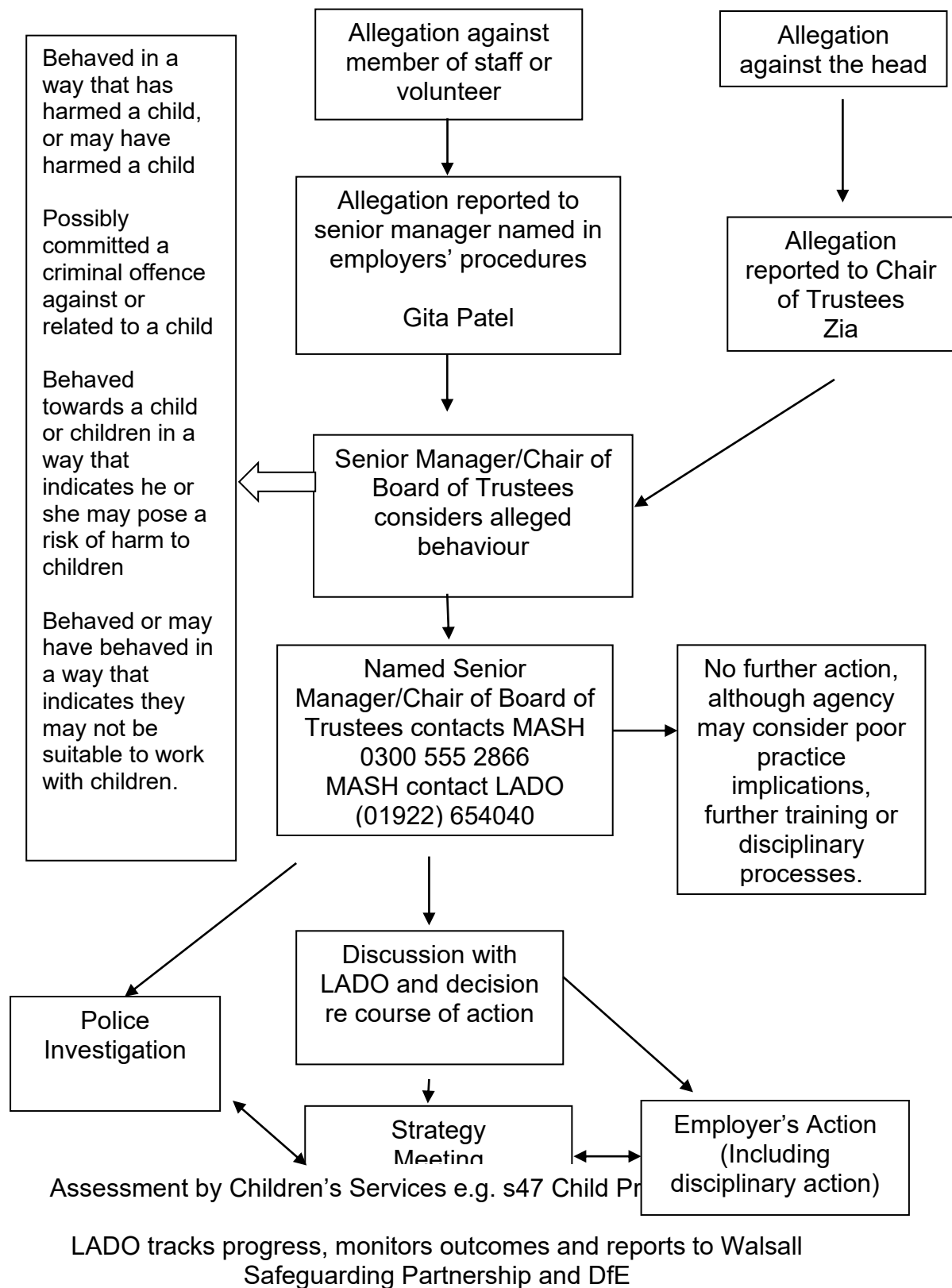
- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- a legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.

Staff can call: 0800 800 5000 from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> and <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Managing Allegations Against Staff (including supply staff and contractors) and Volunteers



Appendix 1

The seven golden rules to sharing information

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Appendix 2 - CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES - Additional advice and support

Abuse or Safeguarding issue	Link to Guidance/Advice	Source
Abuse	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused-2
	Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help
	Faith based abuse: National Action Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief
	Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disrespect-nobody-campaign
	CSA Centre, supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse.	https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/film-series/ Resources for education settings/CSA Centre
	NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework	https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework
	The Lucy Faithfull Foundation also run shorespace.org.uk which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support to prevent harmful sexual behaviours.	https://shorespace.org.uk/
	Contextual Safeguarding Network – self-	https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/toolkits/beyond-referrals/

	assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB and levers for addressing HSB in schools.	
	Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people
Bullying	Preventing bullying including cyberbullying	DfE advice https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
Children and the courts	Advice for 5-11-year olds witnesses in criminal courts	MoJ advice Young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
	Advice for 12-17 year old witnesses in criminal courts	MoJ advice 12 -17 year olds Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Children missing from education, home or care	Children missing education	DfE statutory guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education
	Child missing from home or care	DfE statutory guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care
	Missing children and adults' strategy	Home Office strategy https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy
Children with family members in prison	National Information Centre on Children of Offenders	Barnardo's in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advice https://www.nicco.org.uk/
Child	County Lines:	Home Office guidance

exploitation	toolkit for professionals	https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit
	Care of unaccompanied migrant children and victims of modern day slavery.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children
	Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked	DfE and HO guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-guarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance
	Child exploitation disruption toolkit	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit
	Preventing child sexual exploitation	Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation/the children's society
Children with a social worker	Role of Virtual School	DfE guidance
Drugs	Drugs-advice for schools	DfE and ACPO advice
	Drug strategy 2017	Home Office strategy
	Information and advice on drugs	Talk to Frank website
	ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug (& alcohol) prevention	Website developed by Mentor UK
"Honour Based Abuse" (so called)	Female genital mutilation: information and resources	Home Office
	Faith based Abuse: National	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-

	Action Plan	faith-or-belief
	Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
	Forced marriage: information and practice guidelines The Right to Choose	Foreign Commonwealth Office and Home Office https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack
Health and Well-being	Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children	DfE, Department for Health and Home Office
	Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience	Public Health England resources
	Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school	DfE statutory guidance
	Mental health and behaviour	DfE advice
	AskTheAwkward- help talk with your children about online relationships.	https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/ask-the-awkward/
Homelessness	Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions	HCLG
Online	Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children Teaching online	UK Council for Child Internet Safety DfE – statutory guidance

	safety in school Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes Technical standards for schools for Cybersecurity Filtering and monitoring	DfE advice DfE advice DfE advice
Private fostering	Private fostering: local authorities	DfE - statutory guidance
Police Powers	PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) CODE C
Public Health England	Rise Above: secondary school mental health lessons and support	Public Health
Radicalisation	Prevent duty guidance	Home Office guidance
	Prevent duty advice for schools	DfE advice
	Educate Against Hate Website	DfE and Home Office
Violence	Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges	Home Office advice
	Tackling violence against women and girls strategy	DfE July 2021
	Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims	Home Office guidance
	Sexual violence and sexual	DfE advice Sept 2021

	harassment between children in schools and colleges	(now incorporated into KCSIE 2024)
	Serious violence strategy	Home Office Strategy

Appendix 3 - Host families - homestay during exchange visits

Schools often make arrangements for children to take part in exchange visits, either to other parts of the UK or abroad. Exchanges can benefit learning across a range of subjects. In particular, foreign visits can enrich the languages curriculum and provide exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and expertise in the use of other languages.

We have a duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare. This extends to considering their safety and how best to minimise risk of harm to those children during any exchange visit the school or college arranges, and when organising for the care and accommodation of a child with a host family (known as homestays) as part of the exchange.

When arranging a homestay we will consider the suitability of the adults in the respective families who will be responsible for the visiting child during the stay.

In circumstances where we arrange for a visiting child to be provided with care and accommodation in the UK (including where they engage a company to make those arrangements) in the home of a family to which the child is not related the responsible adults will be engaging in regulated activity for the period of the stay. In such cases and where the school or college has the power to terminate such a homestay the school or college would be the regulated activity provider.

A regulated activity provider commits a criminal offence if it knows, or has reason to believe that, an individual is barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from engaging in regulated activity but allows that individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

Where the child's parent(s) or a student themselves arranges their own homestay, this would be a private arrangement therefore the school or college would not be the regulated activity provider.

Appendix 4: Important contacts

Title	Name	Contact details
DSL	Gita Patel	Gpatel@abubakrschool.org.uk
Deputy DSL & Online Safeguarding Lead	Nasira Nadeem	Nnadeem@abubakrschool.org.uk
Head teacher	Rumela Begum	Rbegum@abubakrschool.org.uk
Nominated trustee for safeguarding	Mohammad Zia-ul-Qasimi	mziaulqasimi@abubakrschool.org.uk
Walsall MASH	Any advisor	0300 555 2866
Emergency response Team	Any advisor	0300 555 2922 or 0300 555 2836
LADO	Belinda Crawshaw	(01922) 654040, 07432 422205 or email lado@walsall.gov.uk
Walsall Families First	Joanna Tolley Partnership Officer South and Central Locality	Walsall Council 07927 582723 01922 654488 www.walsall.gov.uk
NSPCC	Report Abuse in Education	0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
Whistle blowing helpline	NSPCC	0800 800 5000