



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

'This policy will be implemented in a way which honours the vision that every FCJ school is a community of persons - students, staff, governors - bound together in mutual respect and ready to rely on each other in fulfilling their privileged task as educators in a Catholic school.'

Contents

Important Contacts.....	5
1. Aims	6
2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance	7
2.1 Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.....	8
2.1.1 Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA).....	8
2.1.2 Equality Act 2010	8
2.1.3 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).....	8
2.1.4 Implementing These Duties	8
3. Definitions.....	9
4. Equality Statement	10
5. Roles and Responsibilities.....	10
5.1 All Staff	10
5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).....	11
5.3 Governing Body.....	12
5.4 Headmistress.....	12
5.5 Site Security.....	12
5.6 Screening.....	13
5.7 Behaviour and Use of Reasonable Force.....	13
5.7.1 Additional Considerations for Vulnerable Pupils	14
6. Confidentiality	14
6.1 Use of Images.....	14
7. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action	15
7.1 Significant Harm	15
7.2 Dealing with Disclosures	15
7.3 Pastoral Concerns	15
7.3.1 Rationale	15
7.3.2 What is a Pastoral Concern?	15
7.3.3 Responding to Pastoral Concerns	16
7.3.4 When Pastoral Concerns Become Safeguarding Concerns	16
7.3.5 Supporting Pupils and Families	16
7.4 FGM and Breast Ironing	17
7.4.1 Referral to LA Children's Services	17

7.4.2 Liaison with Merseyside Police	18
7.4.3 Assessment	18
7.5 Mental Health	18
7.6 Online Safety	19
7.6.1 Rationale and Context.....	19
7.6.2 Roles and Responsibilities	19
7.6.3 Filtering and Monitoring	20
7.6.4 Education and Training	20
7.6.5 Responding to Online Safety Incidents	20
7.6.6 Remote Learning and Devices	21
7.6.7 Artificial Intelligence	21
7.6.8 Review	21
7.7 Family Help.....	21
7.8 Referral.....	22
7.9 Extremism	22
7.10 Concerns or allegations about staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors	25
7.10.1 Definition of a Low-Level Concern	25
7.10.2 Aims of the Low-Level Concerns Process	25
7.10.3 Reporting Low-Level Concerns.....	25
7.10.4 Responding to Low-Level Concerns	26
7.10.5 Recording and retention of low-level concerns	26
7.10.6 Transparency and culture of openness	26
7.11 Child-on-Child Abuse, Including Harassment and Violence	29
7.12 Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence	29
7.12.1 Sexual Violence	30
7.12.2 Harmful Sexual Behaviours	30
7.12.3 Responding to the Making or Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes	30
7.12.4 Initial Review Meeting	30
7.12.5 Further Review by the DSL	31
7.12.6 Parent and Carer Engagement	31
7.12.7 Referring to the Police	31
7.12.8 Recording Incidents.....	31
7.12.9 Curriculum Coverage: Making and Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes.....	31
8. Notifying Parents and Carers	32
9. Vulnerable pupils	32
9.1 SEN and Disability	32
9.2 Children with Medical Conditions	32
9.3 Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children.....	32
9.3.1 The Care Plan	33
9.3.2 The Placement Plan.....	33

9.3.3 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)	33
9.3.4 Looked After Children (LAC) Review Meetings	33
9.3.5 Safeguarding Children who are Looked After	34
9.3.6 What Works in Safeguarding Young People in Care	34
10. Mobile Phones and Cameras	34
11. Complaints and Concerns about School Safeguarding Policies and Procedures	34
11.1 Complaints Against Staff	34
11.2 Other Complaints	34
11.3 Whistleblowing	35
12. Alternative Provision	35
13. Record Keeping	36
14. Training	36
14.1 All Staff	36
14.2 The DSL and Deputies	36
14.3 Governors	37
14.4 Recruitment – Interview Panels	37
14.5 Staff who have Contact with Pupils and Families	37
15. Monitoring Arrangements	37
16. Links with Other Policies	37
Appendix A: Types of Abuse	38
Appendix B: Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks – Policy and Procedures	39
New Staff	39
Agency and Third-Party Staff	40
Contractors	40
Trainee Teachers	40
Volunteers	41
Governors	41
Staff Working in Alternative Provision Settings	41
Adults who Supervise Pupils on Work Experience	41
Pupils Staying with Host Families	42
Appendix C: Allegations Against Staff, Supply Staff, Volunteers, Trainee Teachers and Contractors	43
Suspension	43
Definitions for Outcomes of Allegation Investigations used in this Appendix	44
Procedure for Dealing with Allegations	44
Timescales	45
Specific Actions	45
Supply Workers	46
Confidentiality	46
Record Keeping	46
References	47

Learning Lessons	47
Appendix D: Specific Safeguarding Issues.....	48
Children Absent from Education	48
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	48
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).....	49
County Lines.....	50
Modern Slavery and Trafficking	50
Contextual Safeguarding and Extra-Familial Harm	51
Serious Violence and Weapons.....	51
Domestic Abuse	52
Operation Encompass and Police Notifications	52
Child-to-Parent or Caregiver Abuse	53
Pupils who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.....	53
Children Questioning Their Gender and Requests for Support with Social Transition	53
Fabricated or Induced Illness/Perplexing Presentation	54
Private Fostering	54
Private foster carers might be:.....	55
Examples of private foster care arrangements:.....	55
Reporting an arrangement:.....	55
Homelessness	55
Family Members in Prison.....	55
Young People and the Court System.....	56
Harmful Practices	56
FGM.....	56
Forced Marriage.....	57
Preventing Radicalisation.....	57
Cybercrime and Cyber Choices	58
Checking the Identity and Suitability of Visitors	58
Appendix E: Missing Child Procedure	59
1. Purpose	59
2. Introduction	59
3. Steps to Keep Young People Safe.....	59
Appendix F: Escalation Procedures.....	62
Appendix G: Safeguarding and Child Protection – Staff Quick Reference Guide.....	63
1. Key school safeguarding contacts	63
2. If a pupil discloses abuse or you become concerned.....	63
3. Distinguishing pastoral and safeguarding concerns.....	63
Pastoral concerns.....	63
Safeguarding concerns.....	64
4. Reporting and recording concerns.....	64

5. Initial response	65
6. Making a direct referral	65
7. Concerns about adults	66
7.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold	66
7.2 Low-level concerns.....	66
8. Child-on-child abuse.....	66
9. Sexual violence and sexual harassment	66
10. Making and sharing nudes and semi-nudes.....	67
11. Online safety	67
12. Prevent and Channel.....	67
13. Female genital mutilation	67
14. Mental health.....	68
15. Confidentiality and information sharing	68
16. Key local and national contacts.....	68
17. Remember.....	69
Appendix H: Training Log	70
Useful Links.....	72

Important Contacts

Role/Organisation	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mr Philip Jones (Assistant Headteacher)	0151 677 7696
Deputy DSL	Mr Paul McAleese (Deputy Headteacher) Mrs Andrea Gaunt (Headmistress) Miss Paula Etheridge (SENCO)	0151 677 7696 0151 677 7696 0151 677 7696
Chair of Governors	Mrs Patricia Young	0151 677 7696
Link Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection	Mrs Micha Woodworth	0151 677 7696
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Kevin Dykes	safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk
Head of Service Quality and Safeguarding Children	Lynn Campbell	0151 666 4442
Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Education	Nicola Griffiths	nicolagriffiths2@wirral.gov.uk
Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager	Gareth Kidd	0151 666 4314
Director of Children's Services	Elizabeth Hartley	0151 606 2000
Family Help	Wirral Family Help Service	Current Request for Service route through Wirral Council/WSCP
Wirral Integrated Front Door	Children's Social Care	0151 606 2008 (Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm) 0151 677 6557 (out of hours)
CPOMS	All staff	https://uptonhall.cpoms.net
StaffSafe	Headmistress, DSL and Administrators	https://staffsafe.net
Classroom Cloud	Accessed by DSL	https://portal-uksouth.classroom.cloud/signin
DfE Counter-Extremism Helpline		020 7340 7264
Family Crime Investigation Unit		0151 777 2685
Prevent Single Point of Contact	Andrea Mears	Andrea.Mears@merseyside.police.uk
Prevent Team (Merseyside Police)	Prevent Team	0151 777 8506
Police (Safer Schools Police Officer)	PC Matt Titley	101 (non-emergency) 999 (emergency)
Link Social Worker in School (SWiS)	Rhys Powell Wilde	rhyspowellwilde@wirral.gov.uk

1. Aims

In accordance with our Mission Statement, as part of the FCJ family and as a Catholic and Christian Community we have in place a whole school policy which seeks to uphold the safety and security of all our pupils. This policy document provides the basis for good practice within the school for Child Protection work.

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote young people's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

Upton Hall School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all adults working in or on behalf of the school and is an overarching document which demonstrates how everyone working in our school, shares an objective to help keep young people safe from harm and abuse. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our pupils and Sixth Form students. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order to allow us to support our pupils and we recognise that the safety and welfare of each pupil is of paramount importance.

We aim to ensure that:

- young people within our school feel safe at all times.
- our FCJ ethos promotes high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem in all of our pupils and Sixth Form students.
- all members of our school community are safe and are able to put the welfare of pupils first without concern that there will be any negative consequences attached to their actions.
- we promote and nurture positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- all adults who have contact with young people in school have been properly vetted and cleared as suitable to work and support young people in our care.
- all adults who have contact with young people in school have been trained to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

When a safeguarding issue arises, staff of Upton Hall School will work in accordance with the principles outlined in the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership Safeguarding Procedures, these include:

- Child-centred: the child's welfare should be kept sharply in focus in all work with the child and family. The child should be spoken and listened to, and their wishes and feelings ascertained, taken into account (having regard to their age and understanding) and recorded when making decisions about the provision of services.
- Rooted in child development: those working with children should have a detailed understanding of child development and how the quality of the care they are receiving can have an impact on their health and development.
- Focused on outcomes for children: the purpose of all interventions should be to achieve the best possible outcomes for each child recognising each is unique. These outcomes should contribute to the key outcomes set out for all children set out in the Children Act 2004:
 - Stay safe
 - Be healthy
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic wellbeing
- Holistic in approach: meaning having an understanding of a child within the context of the child's family (parents or carers and the wider family) and of the educational setting, community and culture in which he or she is growing up.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity: all children should have the opportunity to achieve the best possible developmental outcomes, regardless of their gender, ability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, circumstances or age. Some vulnerable children may have been particularly disadvantaged in their access to important opportunities and their health and educational needs will require particular attention in order to optimise their current welfare as well as their long-term outcomes into adulthood
- Involving of children and families: it is important to listen to the child, develop a therapeutic relationship with the child and through this gain an understanding of his or her wishes and feelings. The importance of

developing a co-operative working relationship is emphasised, so that parents or carers feel respected and informed, they believe agency staff are being open and honest with them, and in turn they are confident about providing vital information about their child, themselves and their circumstances.

- Building on strengths as well as identifying difficulties: identifying both strengths and difficulties within the child, his or her family and the context in which they are living is important, as is considering how these factors are having an impact on the child's health and development.
- Integrated in approach: multi and inter-agency work to safeguard and promote children's welfare starts as soon as it has been identified that the child or the family members have additional needs
- A continuing process not an event: understanding what is happening to a vulnerable child within the context of his or her family and the local community, and taking appropriate action are continuing and interactive processes and not single events.
- Providing and reviewing services: action and services should be provided according to the identified needs of the child and family. The impact of service provision on a child's developmental progress should be reviewed at regular intervals.
- Informed by evidence: effective practice with children and families requires sound professional judgements which are underpinned by a rigorous evidence base, and draw on the practitioners' knowledge and experience. Decisions based on these judgements should be kept under review.

This policy is available publicly via the school website. Parents and carers are informed that safeguarding concerns may result in referrals to external agencies, in line with statutory duties and the school's commitment to promoting the welfare of every child.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been prepared with regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the Academy Trust Governance Guide. It is also based on HM Government's advice [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our three local safeguarding partners, who together form the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of young people.
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM .
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with young people.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to young people.
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

- Crime and Policing Act 2026

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth-form colleges) to make the necessary arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on non-maintained and independent schools, including free schools and academies.

Under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education colleges and independent schools, including free schools and academies, are required to co-operate with the local authority to improve the wellbeing of children in the local authority area.

The school will cooperate with the statutory safeguarding partners and provide information requested for the purpose of exercising their safeguarding functions, subject to the applicable legal framework.

All [procedures](#) can be found on the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

2.1 Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

Upton Hall School recognises that safeguarding is intrinsically linked to upholding the rights and freedoms of all children. We acknowledge our legal obligations under:

2.1.1 Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)

We understand that it is unlawful for any public authority, including a school, to act in a way that is incompatible with the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Children have, for example:

- The right to education (Protocol 1, Article 2)
- The right to be free from degrading treatment (Article 3)
- The right to respect for private and family life (Article 8)
- Our safeguarding and child protection procedures aim to ensure that no child in our care is subject to inhuman or degrading treatment, and that their right to be heard and respected is fully upheld.

2.1.2 Equality Act 2010

We are committed to protecting children from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of any protected characteristic (including age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

We will monitor and address any behaviour, whether staff-to-child or child-on-child, that could amount to discrimination, bullying or harassment (including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).

Where there is evidence that certain groups (e.g. girls, pupils from a particular ethnic group, or LGBTQ+ pupils) may be disproportionately subject to harassment or abuse, we will take proportionate measures (so-called “positive action”) to mitigate potential harm and meet pupils’ specific needs.

2.1.3 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

As a state-funded school, we acknowledge our legal obligation to have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- We recognise that safeguarding issues such as sexual violence, racist incidents or homophobic and transphobic bullying can be closely linked to discriminatory attitudes. To protect pupils effectively, we proactively track patterns of behaviour and will intervene early to challenge any form of discrimination or abuse.

2.1.4 Implementing These Duties

- Whole-School Culture: We integrate human rights and equality principles throughout our safeguarding training, policies and day-to-day practice, ensuring staff are aware of their duties and consistently model inclusive and respectful conduct.

- **Policy Monitoring:** We will routinely review this policy and related procedures (e.g., Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Code of Conduct) to ensure they promote and uphold the rights of all children, irrespective of their background or characteristics.
- **Record Keeping and Data:** Where relevant and proportionate, we monitor and evaluate safeguarding incidents and patterns (e.g. bullying or harassment cases) by protected characteristic in order to identify emerging concerns and evidence-based solutions.
- **Listening to Children:** We value the voice of the child and will ensure mechanisms for pupils to report concerns, whether about abuse, neglect or discrimination, are readily accessible and well publicised. We take any report seriously and respond in a timely, child-focused way.

This policy also has regard to the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, which amended aspects of the UK data protection framework. Data protection law does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding children. The school will share information lawfully, proportionately and without delay where this is necessary to protect a child.

By embedding these statutory obligations into our safeguarding framework, we demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that no child is disadvantaged, harassed or denied the ability to thrive and learn in a secure, respectful environment.

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people means:

- Protecting young people from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of young people's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all young people to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent young people suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a young person and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix A explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the young person's health or development. Appendix A defines neglect in more detail.

Making or sharing **nudes or semi-nudes** means the creation or distribution of nude or semi-nude images, videos or livestreams by children under the age of 18. This includes images created or manipulated using artificial intelligence. Incidents may be consensual or non-consensual, but all such incidents require a safeguarding response.

Community-based early help means support available through universal services, voluntary organisations and other community-based provision when a child or family begins to experience difficulties.

Family Help means targeted multi-agency support for children and families with multiple or more complex needs. It may include targeted early help and support for children in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

For the purposes of child protection legislation and this policy, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that SEND legislation and Education, Health and Care Plans may apply to young people up to the age of 25 does not extend the legal definition of a child for child protection purposes. Where the school supports a student aged 18 or over, it will consider relevant adult safeguarding duties alongside its wider duty of care.

The following three safeguarding partners are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by Chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local young people, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The Local Authority (LA)
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board

- Merseyside Police

4. Equality Statement

Some young people have an increased risk of abuse and additional barriers can exist for some young people with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We recognise that safeguarding issues such as sexual violence, sexual harassment, misogyny, misandry, racism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice may disproportionately affect particular groups.

We give special consideration to young people who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 9)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other personal circumstances.
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are currently or previously have been allocated a social worker

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

Safeguarding topics are taught across the curriculum, particularly through PSHE, RE and Computer Science. Topics include such themes as drugs, alcohol and substance abuse, sex and relationship education, road safety, and online safety issues.

The curriculum is designed so that safety issues within each subject are discussed and safe practices explained, such as using equipment properly in PE, Science and Design and Technology. Appropriate staffing levels will be maintained at all times when the curriculum is being delivered outside of the school site. Appropriate and agreed pupil/adult ratios are always maintained. The visit leader always undertakes a risk assessment for any visits or trips to ensure pupils are safeguarded and protected from harm before the event is finally authorised by the Headmistress, who is advised by the School Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

Visiting speakers, with correct clearance and/or constant supervision are always welcome into school so that they can impart specialist knowledge to the pupils.

5.1 All Staff

All staff will read and understand Part One of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, in full. Staff will revisit Part One at least annually and will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates throughout the year.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour for learning policy and the safeguarding response to young people who go missing from education.
- The Family Help process and their role in identifying emerging needs, providing or contributing to early support, liaising with the DSL and sharing information with other professionals.
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.

- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a young person tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including emotional and verbal abuse, domestic abuse, modern slavery, financial exploitation, serious violence, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.

Sections 7 and 13 and Appendix D of this policy provide further information about recognising, reporting and recording safeguarding concerns.

5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The DSL at Upton Hall School is **Mr Philip Jones (Assistant Headteacher)**. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection, online safety and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If any concerns arise outside of these hours, staff are instructed to call the Integrated Front Door, unless a child is in immediate danger, when they could call the Police.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies – **Mr Paul McAleese (Deputy Headteacher)**, **Mrs Andrea Gaunt (Headmistress)** and **Miss Paula Etheridge (SENCO)** – will act as cover. The Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL.

The school will maintain arrangements through which safeguarding concerns can continue to be received, triaged and monitored when the DSL is unavailable. The safeguarding team will have access to CPOMS and any confidential safeguarding mailbox used by the school. Cover arrangements will ensure that urgent concerns, referrals and communications from partner agencies are not delayed.

If the DSL and deputies are not available, concerns should be reported to any other member of the senior leadership team (SLT). In the exceptionally rare circumstance that no member of SLT is available, advice should be sought by phoning the Integrated Front Door (0151 606 2008).

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of young people.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Prevent/Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- Ensure that employees and governors are aware of, understand and can discharge their role and responsibilities under this policy.
- Attend any applicable training.

The DSL will also keep the Headmistress informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate. The DSL will also help to promote positive educational outcomes by sharing with staff information about welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that young people (including those with a social worker) are experiencing or have experienced. This will include ensuring staff know who these young people are, understand the barriers to learning which they may face, maintain high expectations and offer appropriate support and adjustments.

The DSL should be familiar with the full guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#).

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

The DSL is responsible for the oversight and analysis of safeguarding records (e.g. through CPOMS) to identify patterns and inform strategy.

The DSL is responsible for overseeing mental health concerns that constitute safeguarding issues, ensuring timely referrals and coordination with services such as CYPMHS, counselling, or other pathways through Branch. All staff should be aware that mental health issues can be both a cause and symptom of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

In line with Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance, the DSL will access regular safeguarding supervision to support reflective practice and sound decision-making in complex cases. Opportunities for supervision and debriefing will also be provided for staff working directly with children on child protection, child in need or Family Help plans, recognising the emotional impact and complexity of this work.

The DSL will decide which information from safeguarding and child protection records should be shared with staff, when it should be shared and how much information is necessary to protect and support the child.

The DSL will consider the risks and benefits of sharing or withholding information, record the reasoning behind significant information-sharing decisions and seek advice where necessary without delaying action required to protect a child.

5.3 Governing Body

The Governing Body will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the Headmistress to account for its implementation.

The Governing Body will appoint a link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full Governing Body.

The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Headmistress, where appropriate (see Appendix C).

The Governors shall ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe against online and offline threats. This includes ensuring that any children with additional needs have tailored provision.

The Governors will understand the local criteria for action and assessment and ensure that these are reflected in policies and procedures.

Safeguarding will be reviewed at least annually by the Governing Body. This will include the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring, safer recruitment practice, staff and governor training, child-on-child abuse, the use of alternative provision, safeguarding trends affecting particular groups and the effectiveness of arrangements for children to report concerns.

All governors will receive appropriate safeguarding and child-protection training at induction, updated regularly, and will read the parts of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 relevant to their role.

Section 14 has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

5.4 Headmistress

The Headmistress is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see Appendix C).

5.5 Site Security

Upton Hall School aims to provide a secure school site but recognises that the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all people on the site must adhere to the rules, which govern it. It is recognised that laxity can cause potential problems in safeguarding. Therefore, the school ensures that:

- Gates are locked at 08.30 and will be unlocked at 15.45 for ten minutes, and then locked again.
- Duty staff ensure that no unauthorised persons enter the school site.
- Doors are kept closed/locked to prevent intrusion, including the use of electronic access control.
- Visitors and staff may drive on the school site only outside of lesson changeovers.

- Visitors only enter through the main entrance. They must sign in at reception and be reminded to wear their visitor badge while on site.
- Pupils are only allowed home with adults/carers with parental responsibility or when confirmed permission has been received in advance.
- Should a young person leave the school premises without permission then staff must inform the DSL and the school attendance officer via email **immediately**. Parents and police will then be informed, as set out in the missing child procedure, outlined in Appendix E.
- There are robust procedures for lockdown and fire evacuation.

Safeguarding risks associated with the condition, use and security of the school premises will be considered through the school's risk management arrangements. This includes boundary security, entry and exit points, unused or isolated spaces, toilets and changing facilities and any areas where pupils may be less visible to staff. Where school premises are hired or let to an external organisation, the school will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are included in the hire or transfer-of-control agreement. A failure to comply with these arrangements may result in the agreement being terminated.

5.6 Screening

The Headmistress and authorised members of staff have statutory powers to search a pupil or their possessions, without consent, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil possesses a prohibited item. Reasonable force may be used only where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate. Full details are contained in the school's Behaviour Policy and Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures.

5.7 Behaviour and Use of Reasonable Force

The school's approach to behaviour management is underpinned by principles of dignity, compassion and fairness, with the aim of promoting positive relationships and de-escalating conflict wherever possible.

In exceptional circumstances, staff may need to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Causing significant damage to property
- Seriously disrupting the learning or safety of others

Reasonable force refers to using no more force than is necessary in order to achieve a legitimate outcome. It can include a range of actions, such as:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Standing in the way of a pupil
- Leading a pupil by the arm away from a situation
- In extreme cases, holding a pupil to prevent harm

Key principles:

- Any use of force must be proportionate to the risk presented and be in the best interests of the child.
- Staff must always try to use de-escalation strategies first.
- Force must never be used as a punishment.

Any use of reasonable force or restrictive intervention will be necessary, proportionate and for the minimum time required. It will never be used as a form of punishment. Staff will consider whether a child's SEND, medical condition, communication needs or experience of trauma may increase the risk associated with an intervention.

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder. This should always be a last resort, used proportionately, and in line with statutory guidance from the DfE and local authority protocols. Any use of reasonable force must take account of individual pupil needs, particularly for those with SEND or a history of trauma. Staff should refer to the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy for further guidance. Incidents involving reasonable force must be recorded and reported to the DSL, and parents should be informed as soon as reasonably possible.

The school has adopted the Team Teach approach and key staff have received appropriate training.

5.7.1 Additional Considerations for Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that the use of physical intervention may pose particular risks for pupils with:

- SEND or medical needs (including sensory or physical difficulties),
- Communication challenges or trauma histories, and
- Mental health needs or emotional regulation difficulties.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, staff must take extra care when considering the use of force with these pupils. Reasonable adjustments must be made to reflect pupils' individual needs and vulnerabilities. For pupils with EHCPs, medical plans, or behaviour support plans, staff will follow bespoke strategies for crisis management and regulation.

6. Confidentiality

The school's Data Privacy policy is available as a separate document and outlines how personal data may be shared. In respect of safeguarding, it is important to recognise that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of young people.
- The Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping young people safe.
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a young person at risk.
- Staff should never promise a young person that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the young person's best interests.
- The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy).
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record keeping in Section 13, and allegations of abuse against staff in Appendix C.

Staff should not assume that someone else will share information necessary to safeguard a child. Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of protecting children. Consent is not normally required to share personal information where a child is at risk, although the child and family should ordinarily be informed unless doing so could increase risk, interfere with an investigation or place another person at risk.

When deciding whether to share information, staff and the DSL will consider the purpose of sharing, the nature and sensitivity of the information, the potential consequences of sharing or not sharing and whether the information is accurate and up to date. Significant decisions and their rationale will be recorded.

6.1 Use of Images

At Upton Hall School we will:

- seek pupils' consent and parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website, X or Instagram accounts, or in newspapers or publications, for teaching and learning purposes, or for posterity)
- use only the pupil's first name with an image
- ensure that pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- ensure that pupils do not take photographs or video images of other students without their express permission and the permission of a member of staff.

There is a policy for remote learning that demonstrates an understanding of how to follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely.

7. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

7.1 Significant Harm

If a young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, or is in immediate danger, tell the DSL, or the deputy DSL if the DSL is not available, who will make a referral to children's social care and/or the police **immediately**. Anyone can make a referral.

The DSL will make a referral through telephoning the **Wirral Integrated Front Door**.

Mon - Fri, 9.00am - 5.00pm - **0151 606 2008**

Outside of these hours - **0151 677 6557**

Email - **IFD@wirral.gov.uk**

The DSL will then complete the referral through submission of an [e-MARF \(electronic multi-agency referral form\)](#), which should be completed within 24 hours of making a telephone referral.

7.2 Dealing with Disclosures

If a young person discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
- Understand that it must be hard for young person to disclose this to you and seek to build their trust.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.
- Tell the young person they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret. Staff must not promise confidentiality and should explain that information will be shared only with those who need it to help keep the child or another person safe.
- Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This may include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender-based violence, teenage relationship abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence and assaults, harmful sexual behaviour and the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes. Staff should recognise that young people are capable of abusing their peers.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the young person's own words and record this on CPOMS. Stick to the facts, and do not record your own judgments.
- Once recorded on CPOMS, check the date and time fields are accurate, and assign the incident to the DSL only. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to young children's social care and/or the police directly (see Section 7.1) and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

A pupil may disclose a safeguarding issue online via the 'SpeakUp' platform through the 'Thrive Hub'. This is emailed to the DSL to decide on next steps. This will also be recorded on CPOMS.

7.3 Pastoral Concerns

7.3.1 Rationale

Upton Hall School recognises that pastoral care and safeguarding are closely interlinked. Whilst not all pastoral concerns indicate abuse or immediate risk of harm, minor worries or "nagging concerns" about a child's wellbeing can, if left unaddressed, grow into more serious problems. Our staff must therefore remain vigilant and respond proactively to any changes or signs of distress in a pupil's life.

7.3.2 What is a Pastoral Concern?

A pastoral concern can be any emotional, social or personal issue that may affect a pupil's wellbeing or behaviour. Unlike clear-cut child protection incidents (e.g., disclosure of abuse), pastoral concerns often manifest gradually and can appear low-level. Examples might include:

- Emotional: Persistent sadness, sudden mood swings, tearfulness, withdrawal from peers, signs of anxiety or low self-esteem.
- Behavioural: Noticeable drop in engagement, aggressiveness, unusual risk-taking or attention-seeking behaviour, being unusually quiet or over-compliant.

- Social: Friendship difficulties, isolation or exclusion from peer groups, concerning changes in peer relationships, rumours of bullying.
- Physical/Presentation: Neglect of personal hygiene, uncharacteristic weight change, excessive tiredness, or non-specific physical complaints.
- Academic: Dramatic shift in academic performance, frequent non-completion of homework, lateness, or unexplained absences that may indicate deeper problems.

7.3.3 Responding to Pastoral Concerns

Initial Identification

Any staff member may notice a pastoral concern. Staff should record the concern on CPOMS as a pastoral concern.

If immediate pastoral support is warranted, the staff member should inform the pupil's form tutor, Head of Year, or the DSL.

Pastoral Support

The school's pastoral team will explore possible causes, speak to the pupil, and, where appropriate, contact parents/carers to build a fuller understanding of the situation.

Early interventions may include:

- Mentoring or counselling sessions
- Adjustments in class seating/activities
- Peer mediation (if conflict among pupils is contributing)
- Recommendations for external services (e.g., mental health resources)

Thresholds and Escalation

Low-level pastoral concerns can be warning signs of more serious issues e.g., emotional abuse, domestic conflict, self-harm risk, so staff must remain open-minded.

If, at any point, the concern appears to indicate actual or potential risk of harm, staff must escalate to the DSL or deputy DSL immediately, in line with Section 7.1 (Recognising Abuse and Taking Action).

Pastoral staff should maintain ongoing communication with the DSL, who will decide whether a referral to external agencies (children's social care, CAMHS, police) is needed.

Monitoring and Review

The pastoral team and DSL will review pastoral logs (e.g. CPOMS entries) to identify patterns or concerning trends, such as multiple low-level notes over time that, collectively, point to neglect, bullying or emotional abuse.

Pupils receiving pastoral support should have their progress and wellbeing regularly monitored and documented.

7.3.4 When Pastoral Concerns Become Safeguarding Concerns

Some pupils may initially present with low-level difficulties (e.g. withdrawn behaviour or frequent unexplained absences) that don't immediately suggest abuse or harm. However, over time, these might signal underlying problems such as parental neglect, emotional abuse or grooming.

Where staff observe a pattern or escalation, for example, repeated expression of self-harm thoughts, sudden fear of going home, or references to domestic arguments, the concern should be escalated to the DSL without delay.

All staff are reminded: "It could happen here". Even seemingly small pastoral concerns may be the tip of a deeper safeguarding risk. Early reporting is essential.

7.3.5 Supporting Pupils and Families

The school recognises that early dialogue with parents or carers and access to community-based early help or targeted Family Help services can often prevent minor issues from becoming more serious.

Where appropriate and safe, the pastoral team will engage parents in supportive conversation, signpost local services and explore strategies that address the pupil's difficulties.

The school will adopt a child-centred approach, respecting the child's wishes and feelings, and ensuring they understand that caring adults are ready to listen and help.

By proactively addressing pastoral concerns, Upton Hall School aims to cultivate an environment where all pupils feel supported, understood and safe. Staff at every level play a vital role in identifying the early signs of difficulty and ensuring these concerns do not escalate into serious safeguarding issues.

7.4 FGM and Breast Ironing

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) involves cutting and sometimes sewing the girl's genitalia, normally without anaesthetic, and can take place at any time from birth onwards. It is sometimes referred to as 'female circumcision' but this misnomer belies the invasive and irreversible nature of the procedure. It is now more correctly termed female genital mutilation. The procedure has a cultural, rather than religious, origin and is practised by disparate ethnic communities in many countries, including Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Yemen and Iraq.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in Appendix D.

Breast flattening, sometimes referred to as breast ironing, is the deliberate compression or manipulation of a girl's developing breasts, sometimes using heated or hard objects. It is a form of child abuse and may cause significant physical and psychological harm. Any concern that a child may have experienced, or may be at risk of, breast flattening must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence, not only to carry out FGM in England, Scotland and Wales on a girl who is a UK national or permanent resident but also to take a girl out of the UK to have FGM performed abroad, even to countries where FGM is still legal. Teachers have a statutory duty to report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. This applies where the girl discloses that FGM has been carried out or where the teacher observes physical signs that appear to show that it has been carried out. The teacher must also inform the DSL. In all other cases involving a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, the school's usual safeguarding procedures must be followed.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils. Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out, or discovers that a pupil aged 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FGM, must speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures.

7.4.1 Referral to LA Children's Services

If any agency becomes aware of a young person who may have been subjected to or is at risk of FGM they must make a referral to Children's Specialist Services by contacting the **Integrated Front Door (0151 606 2008)**.

Suspensions may arise in a number of ways that a young person is being prepared for FGM to take place abroad.

All professionals need to consider whether any other indicators exist that FGM may have or has already taken place, for example:

- Preparations are being made to take a long holiday - arranging vaccinations or planning an absence from school.
- The young person has changed in behaviour after a prolonged absence from school.
- The young person has health problems, particularly bladder or menstrual problems.

There may be older women in the family who have already had the procedure, and this may prompt concern as to the potential risk of harm to other female young people in the same family. Younger female siblings must also be considered. Any girl withdrawn from PSHE (Flourish) may be at risk as a result of her parents wishing to keep her uninformed about her body and rights.

On receipt of a referral, a strategy meeting must be convened as soon as practicable (and in any case within two working days), and should involve representatives from the police, Children's Specialist Services, education professionals, and health services.

The **Strategy Meeting** must first establish whether the parents or girl has had access to information about the harmful aspects of FGM and the law in the UK. If not, they should be given appropriate information regarding the law and harmful consequences of FGM.

Where a girl has already undergone FGM, a second strategy meeting should take place within ten working days of the referral. This meeting must evaluate the information collected in the enquiry and recommend whether a child protection conference is necessary to make a decision about whether the girl continues to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and needs further protection, and possibly to agree a child protection plan.

A girl who has already undergone FGM should not normally be subject to a child protection conference or be included on the child protection register unless additional child protection concerns exist. However, she should be offered counselling and medical help, and consideration should be given to any other female siblings at risk. Children's Specialist Services will liaise with the Paediatric services where it is believed that FGM has already taken place to ensure that a **Medical Assessment** takes place.

It should be remembered that this is a one-off act of abuse to a young person, although it will have lifelong consequences, and can be highly dangerous at the time of the procedure and directly afterwards.

7.4.2 Liaison with Merseyside Police

Children's Specialist Services will refer the matter to Merseyside Police Family Crime and Investigation Unit who will participate in the investigation and consult with the Forensic Medical Examiner.

7.4.3 Assessment

Children's Specialist Services in consultation with the Police will undertake a Section 47 Enquiry if it has reason to believe that a young person is likely to suffer or has suffered FGM.

Where a young person has been identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it may not always be appropriate to remove the young person from an otherwise loving family environment. Parents and carers may genuinely believe that it is in the girl's best interest to conform to their prevailing custom. The preferred outcome for the young person is that the family agree to halt the process. Therefore, the main emphasis of work in cases of actual or threatened FGM should be through education and persuasion.

Where a young person appears to be in immediate danger of mutilation, legal advice should be sought and consideration should be given, for example, to seeking an Emergency Protection Order or a Prohibited Steps Order, making it clear to the family that they will be breaking the law if they arrange for the young person to have the procedure.

7.5 Mental Health

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe young people 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.

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

Staff should be alert to changes in attendance, engagement, behaviour, presentation, relationships and educational progress that may indicate a child requires mental health support or is experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation.

If staff have a mental health concern about a young person that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken and reported to the DSL or a deputy.

Where a child requires mental-health support, the DSL or pastoral team will consider the full range of internal, community and specialist support available. A referral for mental health support does not replace a referral to Children's Social Care where there is a safeguarding concern.

The Department for Education has published advice and guidance on [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#), and [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#). In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people

including its guidance [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#). Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See [Better Health - every mind matters](#).

Ongoing staff training highlights mental health as part of safeguarding.

The DSL/Deputy DSL is fully briefed on any local referral routes for specialist mental health support (e.g. CYPMHS).

7.6 Online Safety

7.6.1 Rationale and Context

Our school is committed to responding to evolving digital risks, supporting the changes to the Online Safety Act (2023), which protects children and adults online and puts a range of new duties on social media companies and search services, giving them legal duties to protect their users from illegal content and content harmful to children.

We recognise that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that pupils are at risk of abuse and other harms both online and offline. The school's online safety provision aims to ensure that:

- Staff and pupils understand the risks associated with the online environment.
- There is a robust approach to filtering, monitoring and using technology safely.
- Pupils, staff and parents are empowered to report online safety concerns promptly.
- The school provides age-appropriate education and training on how to stay safe online.

The school considers online safety through four interrelated areas:

- content: exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, for example racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation and conspiracy theories.
- contact: harmful interaction with other users or generative AI applications
- conduct: online behaviour that causes or increases the likelihood of harm, for example explicit images created using AI.
- commerce: risks such as gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and financial scams

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- IT Acceptable Use policies.
- Staff Code of Conduct, addressing the use of social media and electronic communications.
- Anti-Bullying and Behaviour for Learning policies (including cyberbullying and harassment).

7.6.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Oversees that the school has appropriate policies and procedures related to online safety, filtering and monitoring, in line with KCSIE 2026.
- Ensures regular reviews of the effectiveness of the school's filtering and monitoring systems.

Headmistress

- Ensures that adequate staffing, resources and training are in place to maintain robust online safety practices.
- Ensures that all staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe online.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Takes lead responsibility for online safety, with a working knowledge of the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements.
- Receives alerts from the school's monitoring software (Classroom Cloud) and responds to any concerns in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Liaises with external partners (e.g. local authority, police, and online safety organisations) where online risks or crimes are suspected.

All Staff

- Maintain an appropriate level of professional curiosity about pupils' online activities.

- Report any suspicious or concerning activity or behaviour immediately to the DSL.
- Adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct, ensuring boundaries are not blurred when communicating online with pupils.

7.6.3 Filtering and Monitoring

In line with KCSIE 2026, the Governing Body ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements are in place to safeguard children from harmful content online. This includes regular review of IT protocols, AI-related risks and remote learning provisions.

These systems are regularly checked to ensure they remain fit for purpose and respond effectively to emerging threats, in line with the [DfE filtering and monitoring standards](#).

The DSL (or a deputy) monitors logs and alerts generated by the software and responds in line with safeguarding procedures if any child is at risk.

The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring will be reviewed at least once in every academic year. The review will be led by the DSL and IT staff.

The review will include checks that filtering operates appropriately on all internet-connected devices and in all relevant school locations. A written record of the checks, findings and agreed actions will be retained. Relevant staff will understand the systems in place and how concerns identified through monitoring should be escalated.

7.6.4 Education and Training

Pupils

- Receive age-appropriate teaching about online safety through the curriculum, Flourish, RE, Computing lessons and pastoral sessions.
- Topics include safe online communication, cyberbullying, privacy settings, sharing nudes and semi-nudes, grooming and radicalisation. Topics will also include age verification to access pornography, deepfake pornography, cyberflashing, epilepsy trolling and encouraging serious self-harm.
- Pupils are guided on where and how to seek help if they feel uncomfortable or threatened online.

Staff

- Undertake regular (at least annually) online safety training to ensure they are aware of current risks, digital trends and how best to respond to concerns.
- Staff are trained to recognise the indicators of child-on-child online abuse, the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and online grooming, and how these overlap with other safeguarding concerns (e.g. CSE, radicalisation).

Parents/Carers

- The school offers advice and guidance to parents/carers on keeping their children safe online, including recommended parental controls, privacy settings and managing social media use.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns relating to online safety and to work in partnership with the school to address incidents.

7.6.5 Responding to Online Safety Incidents

Any staff member who suspects or is alerted to an online safety incident must document the concerns and report them to the DSL or deputy DSL immediately (see Section 7.1 for referral procedures).

Where a pupil is found to have excessively or persistently accessed harmful or inappropriate content, the DSL will discuss this with them and their parents/carers to explore the underlying reasons and provide pastoral or external support if necessary.

For incidents involving potential or actual criminal activity (e.g. child sexual abuse material, grooming, hate crimes), the DSL will immediately liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care as required.

Pupils who commit child-on-child online abuse will be managed under the behaviour and anti-bullying policies, in addition to any safeguarding and/or criminal pathways.

7.6.6 Remote Learning and Devices

When delivering remote learning (e.g. in cases of health-related absence or other contingencies), the school will ensure that safeguarding measures continue to apply online.

Staff and pupils must adhere to the school's Remote Learning Policy, which outlines expectations for respectful communication, data protection and child protection during online lessons. The [DfE guidance on remote learning](#) will be implemented.

The use of personal devices by staff and pupils is governed by the relevant acceptable use agreements and staff must ensure that no child is put at risk when using personal equipment or online platforms.

School-issued devices are filtered and monitored by a filtering firewall system and monitoring platform.

Pupils are explicitly taught about how to stay safe when off-site, including on their own personal devices. This takes place in Computing and Flourish lessons, as well as through other means such as the static wallpaper on all school devices.

7.6.7 Artificial Intelligence

The school recognises that generative AI may create safeguarding, data protection, ethical and intellectual property risks. Any school-approved use of generative AI will be risk assessed and supported by appropriate supervision, filtering and monitoring.

Pupils will be taught that AI applications may simulate human interaction, produce inaccurate or harmful content and be used to create manipulated sexual or abusive images. The creation, possession or sharing of AI-generated nude or semi-nude images of identifiable children will be treated as a safeguarding matter.

Staff must use only approved systems and must not enter confidential pupil, safeguarding or special category personal data into generative AI tools unless specifically authorised under the school's data protection arrangements. The guidance below supports the assessment of risk:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-education>
- Resources for schools and education settings - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-ai-in-education-settings-support-materials>

7.6.8 Review

The Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the DSL, will regularly review online safety provisions.

The policy and practices will be updated in response to emerging technologies, evolving threats and updates to national guidance (including KCSIE 2026).

Governing Body oversight ensures that the effectiveness of the school's approach to online safety is monitored and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

7.7 Family Help

Staff should identify children and families who may benefit from help as soon as difficulties emerge. Support may initially be provided through the school's pastoral and inclusion arrangements, universal services or community-based early help.

KCSIE 2026 distinguishes between universal services and community-based early help, targeted early help delivered through Family Help and statutory support provided under the Children Act 1989. The level of support offered will be informed by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership threshold framework and the individual needs of the child and family.

Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Family Help for a child who:

- has SEND, a disability or specific health needs
- is a young carer
- is experiencing persistent or repeated absence from education
- is frequently missing from home
- is at risk of criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation or county lines

- is at risk of modern slavery or trafficking
- is living with domestic abuse, parental mental ill health or substance misuse
- is affected by parental imprisonment, homelessness or temporary accommodation
- is privately fostered
- is at risk of radicalisation or so-called honour-based abuse
- is experiencing other circumstances that may adversely affect their safety, welfare or development

Where Family Help may be appropriate, the DSL will consider the child's needs against the current WSCP threshold framework and discuss the proposed support with the child and their parents or carers. Family Help ordinarily requires the informed consent and participation of the family.

The DSL will liaise with relevant services and may initiate or contribute to a multi-agency assessment. A member of school staff may be asked to contribute to the assessment or act as the lead practitioner where this is appropriate to their role, skills and relationship with the family.

Requests for targeted Family Help will be made using Wirral's current Request for Service process. Where advice is required, the DSL may contact the Integrated Front Door on 0151 606 2008.

The DSL will ensure that:

- the child's wishes and feelings are sought, considered and recorded
- the family's consent and participation are clearly recorded
- agreed actions, responsible professionals and review dates are documented
- the progress of the child and the effectiveness of support are regularly reviewed
- relevant information is shared lawfully and proportionately
- concerns are escalated where support is not improving the child's circumstances

If consent to Family Help is withheld, the DSL will consider whether support can be offered through universal or community-based services. Where there is reason to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, lack of consent will not prevent a referral to Children's Social Care.

Where a child's needs increase, circumstances do not improve or the threshold for statutory intervention may be met, the DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care through the Integrated Front Door. If there is disagreement about thresholds or the response of another agency, the DSL will follow the WSCP multi-agency escalation procedure.

7.8 Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see Section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL will follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the young person's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the young person's situation improves.

Where there are disagreements with external agencies about thresholds, decision-making or safeguarding responses, the DSL will initiate the WSCP Multi-Agency Escalation Procedure. Wirral escalation procedures can be found in the [multi-agency escalation procedure section of the WSCP website](#), and in Appendix F. The DSL will follow the current WSCP multi-agency escalation procedure and submit any required documentation through the contact route specified by WSCP. A complete record of the concern, professional disagreement, actions taken and response received will be retained on CPOMS.

7.9 Extremism

If a young person is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a deputy DSL or a member of the senior leadership team if no DSL or deputy DSL is available. Seek advice from the Integrated Front Door (0151 606 2008).

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team via the Integrated Front Door.

Channel is a voluntary and confidential multi-agency programme that provides support at an early stage to people identified as susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are initially assessed by the police and may be passed to a Channel panel to determine whether support is required.

Where the DSL makes a Prevent referral, the school will provide relevant, necessary and proportionate information to support the police assessment. If further information or a new concern comes to light whilst the referral is being assessed, this will also be passed to the police without delay.

Consent is not required to make a safeguarding or Prevent referral where there is an appropriate lawful basis for sharing information. However, the individual's consent is required before support is provided through the voluntary Channel programme.

A representative of the school may be asked to attend a Channel panel and contribute to the assessment and support plan. The DSL will record the referral, information shared, decisions made and any continuing support provided by the school.

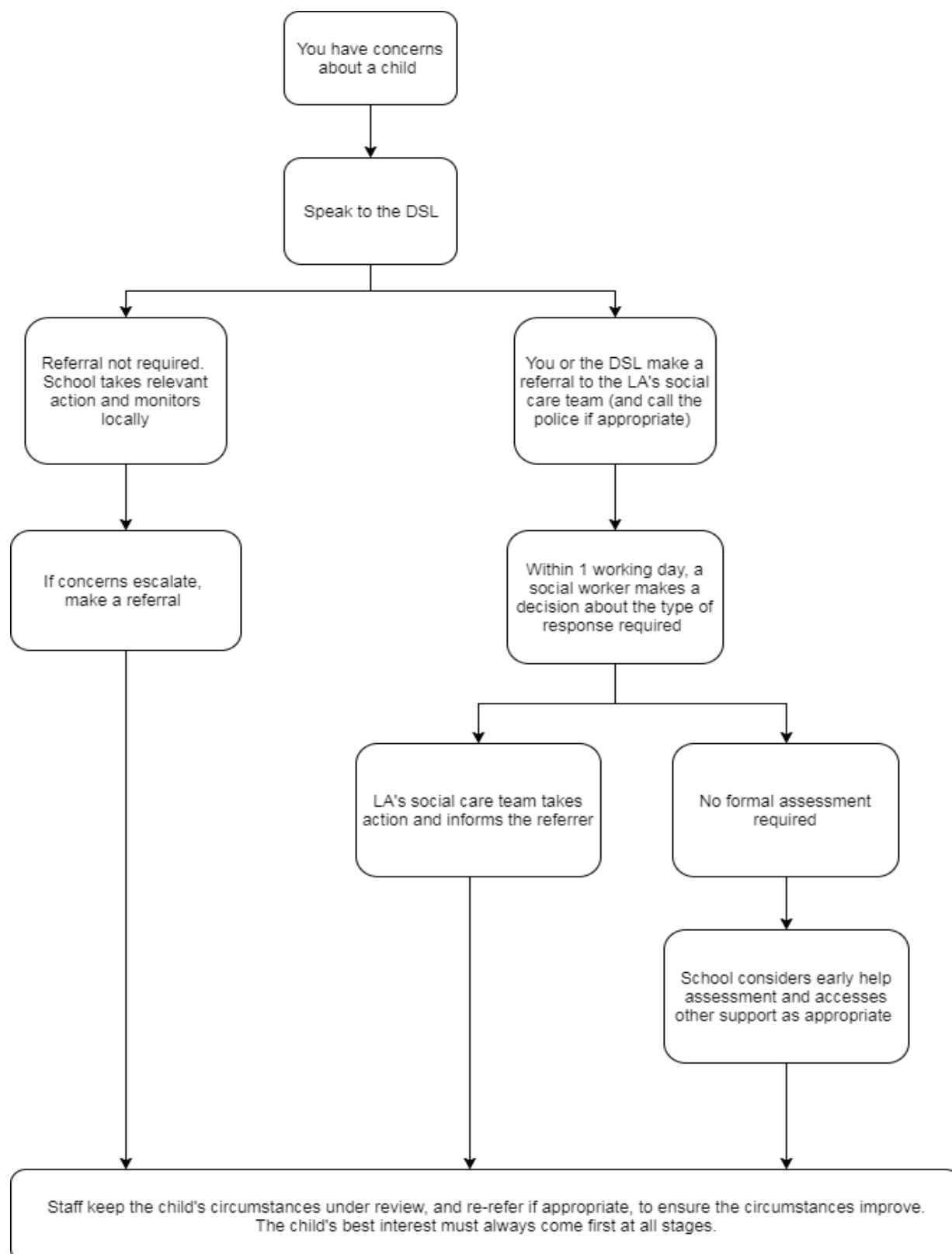
The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a young person's welfare (as opposed to believing a young person is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)

(Note – If the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay appropriate action. See sections 5.2 and 7.1.)



7.10 Concerns or allegations about staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer, or an allegation is made about a member of staff or volunteer posing a risk of harm to young people, speak to the Headmistress. If the concerns/allegations are about the Headmistress, speak to the Chair of Governors.

The Headmistress/Chair of Governors will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix C, if appropriate.

Where a concern or allegation may meet the harm threshold, the Headmistress or Chair of Governors (or a delegated senior member of staff) will discuss the allegation with the LADO as soon as possible and within one working day. Where there is uncertainty about whether the threshold is met, advice will be sought from the LADO. The LADO for Wirral is Kevin Dykes. He can be contacted via email safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk or by phone 0151 666 4442.

Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they feel they may have acted in a way that could be misinterpreted or have breached professional boundaries.

7.10.1 Definition of a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school, including trainee teachers may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct (including inappropriate conduct outside of work), and
- Does not meet the “harm threshold” (i.e. does not indicate a risk of significant harm to a child or warrant an immediate referral to the LADO).

Such concerns often cause a sense of unease or a “nagging doubt”, and can include conduct that is seemingly minor yet, when left unaddressed, could lead to an erosion of professional boundaries or a culture where more serious misconduct or abuse could go unchallenged.

Examples might include:

- Being over-friendly with pupils (e.g. having personal social media contact, meeting socially outside of school unless approved by the school).
- Having “banter” or using inappropriate language with children that could be seen to cross professional boundaries.
- Favouritism or singling out a child or group of children for special attention.
- Failing to maintain appropriate physical boundaries (e.g., not adhering to safe-touch guidelines).

7.10.2 Aims of the Low-Level Concerns Process

- Protect children by fostering a culture of vigilance.
- Maintain professional standards and uphold the Staff Code of Conduct and Teacher Standards where appropriate.
- Identify patterns of behaviour early, so that staff receive support or corrective action before concerns escalate.
- Encourage openness and the confidence to speak out, ensuring staff feel comfortable reporting concerns of any magnitude.

7.10.3 Reporting Low-Level Concerns

1. Self-reporting: Staff are encouraged to self-report, for instance, where they feel they have made a slip in conduct or sense that their behaviour may have been misinterpreted.
2. Reporting about others: Any member of staff, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher who has a low-level concern about another adult’s conduct should share it as soon as possible with the Headmistress (or Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Headmistress).
3. Recording: The person reporting should provide a factual account of what happened, noting the date, time and context. Where the conduct in question is a potential breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, examples or evidence (if any) should be included.
4. Staff must never assume that someone else will take action. Timely reporting of seemingly minor issues helps maintain the highest safeguarding standards.

7.10.4 Responding to Low-Level Concerns

1. The Headmistress (or senior leader/designated manager) will review the reported concern, including speaking to any witnesses if necessary.
2. If, upon review, the concern appears to meet the harm threshold, it will be managed as a formal allegation in line with the procedures in Section 7.10 above and referred to the LADO (or police/children's social care, if required).
3. If it does not meet the harm threshold, the Headmistress will handle the matter proportionately and confidentially at an appropriate management level.
4. This may involve additional supervision, training, reflective conversation or guidance to the person about whom the concern is raised.
5. Any patterns or recurring issues identified in the individual's record may indicate the need for further investigation or action.

7.10.5 Recording and retention of low-level concerns

All low-level concerns must be recorded in writing, with the details of the concern, the context and the outcome.

Records will be stored securely on the secure online platform StaffSafe and, where they do not meet the harm threshold, will typically be retained for as long as the staff member remains in the school's employment (or as advised by current safeguarding retention guidelines).

The school will regularly review any low-level concerns to detect potential patterns of concerning behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, the school will consider a referral to the LADO and/or the initiation of disciplinary proceedings.

7.10.6 Transparency and culture of openness

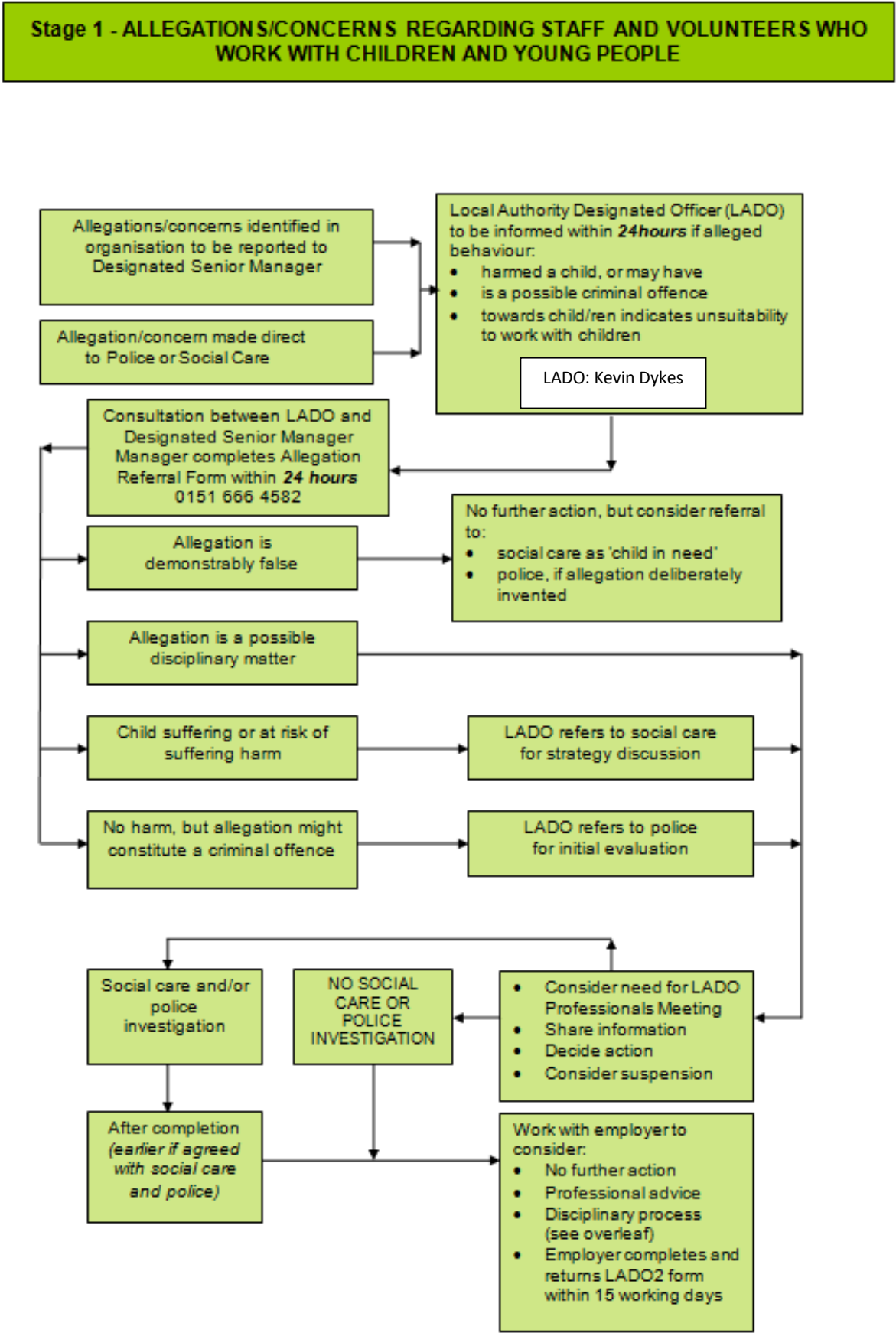
The school fosters a culture of honesty, openness and transparency.

All staff should be aware that raising low-level concerns protects pupils from harm and helps maintain professional standards.

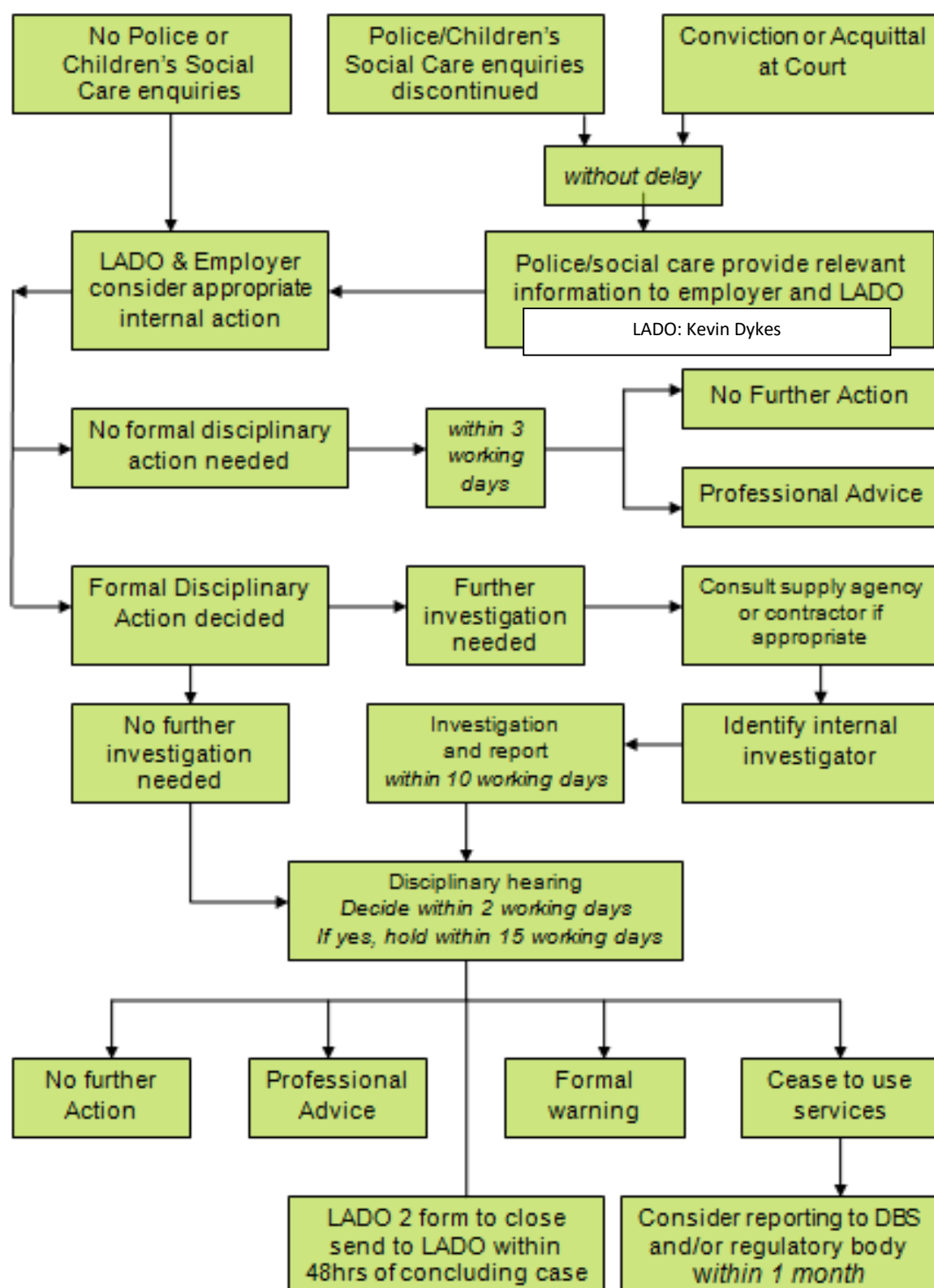
Staff who raise low-level concerns in good faith will not face reprisal.

If staff have any doubts or questions about whether an incident or behaviour constitutes a "low-level concern" or a more serious matter, they should consult the Headmistress immediately for guidance.

Figure 2: Wirral procedures for allegations made against staff and volunteers.



Stage 2 - ALLEGATIONS/CONCERNS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS - DISCIPLINARY/SUITABILITY PROCESS



7.11 Child-on-Child Abuse, Including Harassment and Violence

All staff must recognise that children are capable of abusing other children, including online. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for the child who has experienced the abuse and may also indicate that the child alleged to have caused harm has unmet or safeguarding needs.

Child-on-child abuse is preventable. The school adopts a zero-tolerance approach: abuse will never be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. Even where no incidents have been reported, staff must remain alert to the possibility that abuse is occurring and is not being disclosed.

The school recognises that some forms of child-on-child abuse are more likely to be experienced by girls. However, abuse may occur between children of any sex, age or background and all reports will be taken seriously.

Most cases will be dealt with under the school’s Behaviour for Learning policy, but this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour involves:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying
- abuse in intimate relationships between children
- physical abuse and threats involving weapons
- harmful sexual behaviour
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- misogyny and misandry
- consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated images
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- upskirting
- initiation or hazing violence and rituals

Pupils may report concerns to any member of staff, through SpeakUp on the Thrive Hub or through the school’s pastoral and safeguarding systems. Reporting routes will be regularly promoted and made accessible to pupils with SEND or communication needs.

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation on CPOMS and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it.
- The DSL will assess the immediate risk, consider the wishes and needs of the child, determine whether a referral to Children’s Social Care or the police is required and record the decision and rationale.
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all young people involved (including the victim(s), the young people against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.
- The DSL will contact the children and young people mental health services (CYPMHS), if appropriate.

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images.
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent.
- Ensuring pupils know they can discuss any concerns or worries that they may have by speaking to their form tutor, head of year or a member of the senior leadership team.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the young person is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

Staff should refer to the [WSCP 7-minute briefing](#) for a concise summary of approaches to child-on-child abuse.

7.12 Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

Sexual behaviour exists on a continuum from developmentally expected behaviour through inappropriate and problematic behaviour to abusive and violent behaviour. Staff must intervene early and should not wait for behaviour to escalate before taking safeguarding action.

7.12.1 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence and harassment may or may not happen simultaneously and can occur both on and offline. They can happen between individuals or groups of pupils and will not be tolerated in any form. Those with SEND or those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or who are questioning their gender may be particularly susceptible to such behaviours.

Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 sets out how schools should respond to reports of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence. All reports will be taken seriously, recorded and responded to in a timely, child-centred and proportionate manner.

The school will consider the needs and wishes of the child who has experienced harm, the needs of the child alleged to have caused harm and the safety of other pupils. Appropriate risk assessments and support plans will be implemented and regularly reviewed.

There is a bespoke helpline for young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. The NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education can be contacted by phoning 0800 136 663 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

7.12.2 Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Harmful sexual behaviour may include sexualised language, unwanted sexual comments, sexual harassment, coercion, online sexual abuse, image-based abuse, sexual assault and sexual violence. Misogyny can form part of this progression and apparently low-level incidents may indicate or contribute to an unsafe culture. For more information, see [NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#).

7.12.3 Responding to the Making or Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Technology-assisted harmful sexual behaviour may include sexual harassment through digital platforms, sexual coercion, sextortion, grooming, image-based sexual abuse, cyberflashing and the creation or distribution of manipulated or AI-generated sexual images. These incidents will be treated as safeguarding concerns and considered alongside any potential criminal offence.

The following approach is based on guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety for [all staff](#) and for [DSLs and senior leaders](#).

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If a member of staff becomes aware of the making or sharing of a nude or semi-nude image, video or livestream involving a child, including an image created or manipulated using AI, they must report it to the DSL immediately.

All incidents require a safeguarding response, whether the sharing was apparently consensual or non-consensual. The nature and proportionality of the response will depend on the circumstances and assessed risk.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL.
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it.
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility).
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

7.12.4 Initial Review Meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s).
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care.

- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed).
- What further information is required to decide on the best response.
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown).
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services.
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment.
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- Whether to contact parents/carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents should be involved).

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs).
- What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent.
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13.
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Headmistress and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

7.12.5 Further Review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review.

He will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

7.12.6 Parent and Carer Engagement

Staff must consult the DSL before discussing a safeguarding concern with parents or carers. Parents will normally be involved at an early stage, but they will not be contacted where doing so could place a child or another person at greater risk, prejudice a police or social care investigation or undermine the child's safety. The reason for delaying or withholding parental contact will be recorded.

7.12.7 Referring to the Police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialling **101** or through the Merseyside Police website. If a pupil is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm, the police will be contacted through dialling **999**.

7.12.8 Recording Incidents

All incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded on CPOMS. The record keeping arrangements set out in Section 13 of this policy also apply to recording incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

7.12.9 Curriculum Coverage: Making and Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding making and sharing nudes and semi-nudes as part of our Flourish, RE and Computer Science curricula. Teaching covers the following in relation to making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

Pupils are taught how the school will respond if an incident involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes occurs.

8. Notifying Parents and Carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a young person with the young person's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the young person, we will discuss this with the Local Authority Children's Social Care Team via the Integrated Front Door before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other young people, we will normally notify the parents of all the young people involved.

9. Vulnerable pupils

The DSL will liaise with the Virtual School Head and local authority to promote educational outcomes for children with a social worker.

9.1 SEN and Disability

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the young person's disability without further exploration.
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils.
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Children with SEND may experience a higher risk of abuse or exploitation online and may be more vulnerable to grooming or manipulation.
- Some children may have difficulty distinguishing fact from fiction in online content or understanding the consequences of repeating online content or behaviour.

Reports involving a child with SEND will be considered in liaison with the DSL and SENCO. Appropriate communication support and additional pastoral attention will be provided.

Staff will be mindful of these challenges and use their knowledge of individual pupils to identify potential concerns and escalate these concerns where appropriate to do so.

9.2 Children with Medical Conditions

A medical condition does not in itself require a safeguarding referral. However, staff must consider safeguarding action where a child's condition increases their vulnerability to neglect, abuse or exploitation. This may include repeated failure to provide essential medication, failure to share critical medical information or patterns of conduct that place the child at risk.

Concerns will be reported to the DSL and considered alongside the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

9.3 Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is **Philip Jones (Assistant Headteacher)**.

The term 'looked after' refers to young people who are under 18 and have been provided with care and accommodation by family services. There are three main ways that young people and young people under eighteen years of age become looked after:

1. With parental agreement – this is under Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989: this may include short breaks.

2. Under a care order from a family court, Section 31 of the Children's Act 1989: when a care order is made, family services acquire parental responsibility and become a legal parent alongside the parent/guardian.
3. If a court orders the young person to be remanded into Local Authority accommodation.

Young people may only need to be looked after for a short period of time and then return to their family, but sometimes the arrangement is more permanent. An assessment of needs, which will include the views of the young person and the parents, will be carried out to determine the best course of action for the young person.

After the assessment of the young person and their circumstances has been completed, LA Children's Services will agree with the family and young person the arrangements for their care.

They are set out in two documents: a care plan and a placement plan.

9.3.1 The Care Plan

The care plan explains what LA Children's Services are going to do to support the young person's needs in relation to their health, education, religion, culture, hobbies and people they want to spend time with. The care plan is reviewed on a regular basis through regular review meetings chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.

9.3.2 The Placement Plan

The placement plan sets out where and with whom the young person will live, looking at any specific arrangements about the placements including travel, and any restrictions that might be placed on the young person while placed with the foster carer for example people they cannot see. The placement plan is completed within five days of a young person being looked after.

9.3.3 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Family Services have a duty to appoint an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The IRO is employed by Family Services but they work independently of them in the sense that they do not have any direct management or budget holding responsibility of the case.

The role of the IRO is to:

- Chair the review meetings.
- Meet with the young person on their own to seek their wishes and feelings.
- Monitor the care the young person is receiving.
- Try to resolve any disputes about the review or the young person's care plan.

9.3.4 Looked After Children (LAC) Review Meetings

When a young person is looked after, their situation is regularly reviewed at Looked After Children (LAC) review meetings.

The purpose of these meetings is to:

- look at the young person's care plan,
- make sure that the right arrangements are in place for the young person whilst they are looked after,
- discuss any changes since the last review, and
- consider whether decisions made at the last meeting were acted on.

The first Looked After Children's Review meeting must be held within twenty-eight days of a young person being looked after. The second is held within the next three months and the third and later reviews are held every six months. LAC review meetings are chaired by an IRO.

The meetings are normally attended by:

- parents/others with parental responsibility for the young person
- the social worker
- the young person
- an advocate or independent visitor
- the foster carer
- the foster carer's supervising social worker
- other professionals may be there too, but it shouldn't be so many that it overwhelms the young person.

9.3.5 Safeguarding Children who are Looked After

Children may enter care for all sorts of reasons. But most enter because they have been abused or neglected. These experiences can leave young people with complex emotional and mental health needs. And this can increase their vulnerability to abuse.

Many young people also move repeatedly in and out of care, or between placements. This can prevent them from forming stable relationships with the adults who could help protect them.

9.3.6 What Works in Safeguarding Young People in Care

No two young people in care are the same. Each young person has their own characteristics and individual needs. But all young people need strong, caring and trusting relationships with those who care for them.

Through talking to looked after young people and young people the NSPCC has identified six ways the care for young people and the care system can be improved:

- ensure young people's voices are heard
- strengthen the social care work force and improving practice
- promote the right to advocacy
- improve emotional support
- support transitions in and out of care
- improve public understanding of the care system

10. Mobile Phones and Cameras

The school operates as a mobile phone-free environment. Pupils must not have access to or use a mobile phone during the school day, including lessons, movement time, break and lunchtime, except where an individual exemption has been agreed. The school's Yondr arrangements and the consequences of breaching the policy are set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will not use them on school premises as per the Information and Communication Systems policy. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

11. Complaints and Concerns about School Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

11.1 Complaints Against Staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see Appendix C).

11.2 Other Complaints

Parents and other complainants are encouraged to raise any safeguarding concerns or complaints directly with the DSL so the matter can be resolved as quickly and informally as possible. To contact the DSL, complainants should contact Reception (0151 677 7696) or use the relevant year group email address. Complainants should not divulge any information when using these contact methods and should simply request contact from the DSL.

Our aim is to acknowledge this initial contact within the next 24 hours and following this an appointment will be made for a phone call or meeting with the DSL to take place as soon as possible and by no later than five term time working days after the school's acknowledgment.

The DSL will take the concern or complaint seriously and seek to provide the necessary information. This might require an adjournment of the initial meeting or phone call so that further information can be gathered and then the meeting will be resumed or, if more convenient to the parent, the conversation may be completed with a phone call.

This meeting/conversation will be logged by the DSL through the use of CPOMS, to indicate the nature of the concern/complaint, the steps that have been taken to provide a resolution and that the matter has been resolved, if this is the outcome.

If the matter cannot be resolved, the parents/complainants should complete form Annexe A of the School Complaints Procedure so that the Headmistress is able to work to resolve the complaint. Parents or other complainants are usually expected to lodge the written complaint within three months of the expression of initial concern. Although this period will be extended if there are special circumstances.

The Headmistress will seek to:

- Establish the facts i.e. who is involved, what has happened and how has the complaint been addressed to date.
- Clarify the precise nature of the complaint and what is unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant to clarify what they feel needs to be done to resolve the issue(s).
- Interview those concerned to establish all points of view.
- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning to ensure that the facts emerge.
- Keep a record of all interviews.

The Headmistress will be responsible for ensuring that a written report of their findings is made to the complainant and that a full record of any investigation, including the original written complaint and the written report is kept on file. This record is confidential to the parent, staff involved in the investigation and the Headmistress.

The Written Report will be accompanied by a letter that explains that if the parent does not feel that the matter has been resolved, a further meeting will be arranged with the Headmistress. This letter, containing the report, will be sent no later than 10 term time working days following the stage one meeting with the parents who lodged the complaint.

If the complaint still remains unresolved, the Chair of Governors will seek advice from the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

11.3 Whistleblowing

Staff receive specific training on how and when to raise safeguarding or professional conduct concerns, including to external bodies such as the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline by dialling **0800 028 0285** or emailing **help@nspcc.org.uk**.

The school has a whistleblowing policy which can be viewed as a separate document.

Whistleblowing issues regarding the Headmistress should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

12. Alternative Provision

If the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil. We will develop strong working relationships with alternative providers and will always know where a child is based during school hours, including at any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the pupil may attend.

Before commissioning a placement, the school will undertake and record its own due diligence to determine whether the provision is safe and appropriate for the child's individual needs. Placement on a local authority list or register will not replace the school's own checks.

We will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. The provider must inform the school of any change in staffing, location, subcontracting or other arrangement that may affect the child's safety. The school will obtain assurance that appropriate checks have been completed for new staff.

The school will maintain the address of the main provision and every subcontracted or satellite site attended by the pupil.

The school will review each placement at least half-termly. The review will consider attendance, the child's views, progress, welfare, the suitability of the placement and whether safeguarding arrangements remain effective. If safeguarding concerns occur, the placement will be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary (further compliance can be found in paragraphs 208-213 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#)).

13. Record Keeping

All safeguarding and child protection records are held on CPOMS.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded on CPOMS.

The DSL will routinely analyse safeguarding records to identify trends, evaluate the impact of interventions, and inform strategy.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely on CPOMS and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual young people will be retained until their 26th birthday. CPOMS ensures that pupil records are deleted after this date. The DSL will ensure that any hard copies of safeguarding documents are securely disposed of after this date.

Child protection files for transferring pupils will be securely passed to the receiving school within 5 working days of the transfer (in-year) or within the first 5 days of a new term. Files will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained. The DSL is responsible for ensuring timely and secure transfer to support continuity of care and safeguarding oversight. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the young person. Before a child transfers, the DSL will consider whether information should be shared in advance to enable the receiving school to put support or safety arrangements in place. This includes risks the child may pose to themselves or others, such as a history of carrying, threatening with or using a weapon.

The DSL will decide what safeguarding information should be shared with relevant staff and when it should be shared. Staff will receive sufficient information to protect and support the child without being given unnecessary confidential detail.

In addition:

- Appendix B sets out our policy on record keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-employment checks.
- Appendix C sets out our policy on record keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff.

14. Training

14.1 All Staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify young people at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will receive training on online harms, including cybercrime, and harm indicators linked to children missing from education (CME).

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

External safeguarding training (e.g. WSCP) is expected every 3 years for all staff.

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

14.2 The DSL and Deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments). They will also undertake Prevent awareness training and disseminate the information/training to all staff.

The DSL will ensure that safeguarding records are subject to annual audit to monitor consistency, quality and impact. The DSL will also provide the Governing Body with regular reports summarising key data, trends, training compliance and any policy updates. The school will complete the annual Section 175 safeguarding audit as required by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

14.3 Governors

All governors receive training on safeguarding, including online risks and harm, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.

As the Chair of Governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Headmistress, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

14.4 Recruitment – Interview Panels

At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

14.5 Staff who have Contact with Pupils and Families

All staff who have contact with young people and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of young people and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

15. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by Mr P Jones (Assistant Headteacher). At every review, it will be approved by the full Governing Body.

16. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour for Learning
- CCTV
- Complaints
- Curriculum
- Disciplinary Policy
- Drugs Education and Drug Related Incidents
- Equal Opportunities
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- IT Acceptable Use
- Online Safety
- Privacy Notices
- Searching Screening Confiscation
- Sex and Relationship Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistle-Blowing

These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Appendix A: Types of Abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

- **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. Children may be abused by other children or adults, in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Females can also be abusers as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.
- **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 involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

All staff should be aware that child sexual and child criminal exploitation are forms of child abuse.

Appendix B: Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks – Policy and Procedures

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

New Staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with young people.

All offers of employment will be subject to the satisfactory completion of the employment checks.

Regulated activity relating to children includes:

- teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children where the activity is carried out frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period or overnight
- certain work carried out frequently in a specified establishment, such as a school, where the work provides an opportunity for contact with children
- relevant personal care or healthcare provided to a child, even where carried out only once

Supervision does not prevent teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children from being regulated activity where the frequency or overnight conditions are met.

Existing Staff and Volunteers

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

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a young person or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#), i.e. conduct that:
 - endangers a child or is likely to endanger a child;
 - if repeated against or in relation to a child would endanger the child or be likely to endanger the child;
 - involves sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material);

- involves sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings (including possession of such images); or
- is of a sexual nature involving a child.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a young person or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm) and the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left.

Volunteers who have been removed from regulated activity because they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child will be referred to the DBS.

Agency and Third-Party Staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that they have carried out the same checks as the school would otherwise perform on any individual who will be working at the school or college. In respect of an enhanced DBS check, the schools will ensure that written notification confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business.

The school will check that the person presenting for work is the same person on whom the agency or third-party organisation has completed the checks. The individual will be required to provide satisfactory photographic identification. The school will not ordinarily require the individual to present their personal DBS certificate where the required written assurance has been received from the agency.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

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

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will ensure that our safeguarding requirements are set out in the contract between the contractor and the school.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

Trainee Teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with young people. The school will verify the trainee teacher's identity on arrival and obtain written confirmation from the training provider that all necessary safeguarding checks have been completed. The school will not ordinarily require the trainee to present their personal DBS certificate where the provider has supplied the required assurance.

Visitors

The school will have different types of visitors, those with a professional role i.e. educational psychologists, social workers etc., those connected with the building, grounds maintenance, children's relatives or other visitors attending an activity in school such as a sports day.

The school will not request DBS checks or barred list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day. The Headmistress will exercise professional judgement about the need to escort or supervise visitors on site.

For visitors there in a professional capacity, the school will check ID and determine whether the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check (or the visitor's employers have confirmed that their staff have appropriate checks)

Volunteers

The school will:

- never permit an unchecked volunteer to work unsupervised or undertake regulated activity
- obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information before a new volunteer begins regulated activity
- undertake and retain a written risk assessment when deciding whether to request an enhanced DBS check without barred-list information for a volunteer who is not undertaking regulated activity

A volunteer who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period or overnight will be undertaking regulated activity, whether or not they are supervised.

The school will review the duties of existing volunteers. Where an existing volunteer comes within regulated activity from 1 September 2026 because of the removal of the supervision exemption, the school will check their children's barred-list status before they continue in that activity.

Existing volunteers do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which should include children's barred list information if engaging in regulated activity). However, if the school has any concerns, it will consider obtaining a new DBS check at the level appropriate to the role.

Governors

All Governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

All governors will also have a section 128 check.

Staff Working in Alternative Provision Settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

Adults who Supervise Pupils on Work Experience

When arranging work experience placements, the school will ensure that the placement provider has appropriate policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. The school will also have regard to current health and safety guidance for employers hosting young people on work experience.

Where an individual will teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise a child frequently, for more than three days in a 30-day period or overnight, that individual will be undertaking regulated activity relating to children. A person who is included on the children's barred list must not be permitted to undertake such activity.

The school will establish with the placement provider who will be responsible for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising the pupil and the frequency and nature of that contact. Where the activity is regulated activity, the school will obtain appropriate assurance from the placement provider that the individual is not barred from working with children.

Other people in the workplace who may encounter the pupil but are not responsible for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising them are not undertaking regulated activity solely because the pupil is present. The school and placement provider may consider whether another level of DBS check is appropriate for an individual who has contact with children but is not undertaking regulated activity.

The school cannot require a work-experience provider to obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information for an individual supervising a pupil aged 16 or 17 on work experience.

Where a pupil aged 16 or over undertakes work experience in a specified setting, such as a school or sixth-form college, and the placement gives them an opportunity for contact with children, the activity undertaken by the pupil may itself amount to regulated activity. In these circumstances, the placement provider should consider whether an enhanced DBS check is appropriate for the pupil. A DBS check cannot be requested for a pupil under the age of 16.

Pupils Staying with Host Families

Where the school arranges for a child to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family in the UK as part of an educational exchange or visit, the responsible adult providing the care and accommodation will be undertaking regulated activity. The school will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information for that adult.

The school will consider whether an enhanced DBS check without barred-list information should be requested for other people aged 16 or over who live in the household, having regard to the circumstances of the arrangement.

Where hosting takes place overseas and equivalent UK checks are not available, the school will work with the partner organisation to obtain appropriate assurances and undertake a proportionate risk assessment.

Appendix C: Allegations Against Staff, Supply Staff, Volunteers, Trainee Teachers and Contractors

For employees, this Appendix should be read in conjunction with the School's Disciplinary Policy. In the event of any inconsistency between this Appendix and the Disciplinary Policy, the provisions of this Appendix shall prevail.

This section of this policy is about managing cases of concerns/allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in school.

Reference is made to 'allegation/s' for ease. It applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, supply agency staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a young person, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a young person or young people in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that he or she would not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged conduct/abuse took place in the school. If an allegation relates to conduct outside of school, this is referred to as 'transferable risk'. Allegations against any person who works with young people must be taken seriously. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection whilst supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Where an allegation concerns a trainee teacher, the school will liaise with the training provider and agree which organisation will lead the investigation. The school remains responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding action is taken on its premises.

Where a person is supplied or employed by a third-party organisation, the school and the employer share responsibility for managing the safeguarding concern. The school will not cease using the person's services solely as an alternative to undertaking the required safeguarding process.

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

Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a young person or other young people is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the young person or young people concerned.
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with young people.
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to young people.
- Moving the young person or young people to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted.
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the local authority.

If suspension is required, the staff member will be suspended in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy and procedures.

If suspension is deemed appropriate, the employee will receive a named contact. Reasons for the suspension will be provided within one working day, but complete details may be unavailable to disclose due to the involvement of other authorities/agencies. The case manager and employee will agree the support to be in place during the investigation and communicate the expected timescales and likely course of action. If part of a trade union, the staff member must be advised to contact them. The employee's manager will be informed that they have been suspended whilst an investigation is completed, but no further details will be given.

Definitions for Outcomes of Allegation Investigations used in this Appendix

- **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 to the allegation.
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence).
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Ultimately, the options open to the school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegations and the evidence and information available. This will range from taking no further action, to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future.

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations

In the event of an allegation meeting the criteria in the first paragraph of this Appendix above, the Headmistress (or Chair of Governors where the Headmistress is the subject of the allegation) – the 'case manager' – will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries to establish the facts and to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. For example, whether the individual was in the school at the time of the allegations; whether the individual did or could have come into contact with the child; whether there any witnesses; and whether there is any CCTV footage.
- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority (LADO – Kevin Dykes). This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to young people or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with young people at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate.
- In relevant cases, inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies. Possible outcomes at this stage include:
 - **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
 - **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation

- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action and investigation in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the young person/young people involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.
- Keep the parents or carers of the young person/young people involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence).
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a young person, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a young person.

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the Governing Body will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Timescales

The case manager should monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible in a thorough and fair process.

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will usually be resolved within 1 week.
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will usually institute appropriate action within 3 working days.
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will normally hold this within 15 working days.
- In other cases, the first review should take place no later than four weeks after the initial assessment.

Specific Actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration should take into account the result of the police investigation or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If an allegation that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, is substantiated (including cases where the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services), a referral to the DBS must be made. The case manager may discuss this with the school's personnel adviser and the local authority's designated officer.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager must consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching and may discuss this with the personnel adviser and/or local authority's designated officer.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this. The case manager can access guidance to support the return to work from HR or the LADO as most people will benefit from help and support after a stressful experience.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the young person or young people who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Headmistress, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Headmistress, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil. If the allegation is determined to be malicious the case manager and LADO should consider whether the young person who has made the allegation is in need of help or at risk of abuse. In such circumstances, they may make a referral to social care.

Supply Workers

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the Governing Body or Headmistress when working in the school.

Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or local authority children's social care. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process.

The allegations management meeting, which is often arranged by the LADO, should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency or agencies are considered by the school during the investigation.

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

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared.
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a young person/young people involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality.
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation.
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises.

Record Keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file (on StaffSafe) for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation.
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved.
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above).
- A copy provided to the person concerned where agreed by children's social care or the police.
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Learning Lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff.
- The duration of the suspension.
- Whether or not the suspension was justified.
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

Appendix D: Specific Safeguarding Issues

This appendix provides additional information about safeguarding issues that may affect pupils. The indicators listed are not exhaustive and the presence of a single indicator does not necessarily mean that a child is being harmed. Staff must remain professionally curious, consider the child's circumstances as a whole and report concerns to the DSL through CPOMS. Staff should not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

Where a child is in immediate danger, the police must be contacted on 999. Where there is reason to believe that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care through the Integrated Front Door without delay.

Children Absent from Education

Children being absent from education, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, can be an important warning sign of safeguarding concerns. These may include abuse, neglect, sexual or criminal exploitation, county lines, serious violence, mental ill health, substance misuse, radicalisation, female genital mutilation or forced marriage.

The school recognises that early identification and a prompt, supportive response are essential. Absence will not be considered in isolation. Staff will consider patterns involving siblings, peers, locations and particular days or times, alongside information already held about the child and family.

The school will follow its Attendance Policy and Attendance Review Framework when responding to absence. Unexplained absences will be followed up promptly and, wherever possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

The Attendance Officer will ensure that the DSL is informed promptly when a pupil with known safeguarding vulnerabilities is absent without explanation. Relevant attendance information will be recorded and shared with professionals where this is necessary to protect the child.

Particular attention will be given to children who:

- have experienced repeated or prolonged absence
- are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- have previously been missing from home or care
- are affected by domestic abuse
- are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- are supervised by Youth Justice Services
- are from newly arrived, migrant, Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- have SEND, mental-health needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan
- are known to Children's Social Care
- may be removed from education without suitable alternative arrangements

Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established or there is reason to believe that they may be at risk, the school will follow its Missing Child Procedure. The DSL will consider whether a referral to the Integrated Front Door or police is required.

The school will notify the local authority where required, including when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point or where a pupil leaves without a confirmed destination.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. This may be:

- in exchange for something the child needs or wants
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- through violence or the threat of violence

Exploitation may be committed or facilitated by an individual, group, organised network or gang. Children may identify with or feel that they belong to the group exploiting them.

Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact and may be facilitated online. A child may have been criminally exploited even where the activity appears consensual. Exploitation may constitute modern slavery and a referral through the National Referral Mechanism may need to be considered.

Children who are exploited may be instructed or coerced to:

- transport or store drugs, money or weapons
- work in cannabis factories
- shoplift or commit robbery
- threaten or assault others
- recruit other children
- use bank accounts to transfer criminal funds
- commit online or technology-assisted offences

Possible indicators include:

- unexplained money, gifts, clothing or mobile phones
- relationships with controlling individuals or groups
- repeated absence or missing episodes
- travelling to unfamiliar locations
- unexplained injuries or fearfulness
- carrying weapons
- increasing secrecy or multiple mobile phones
- substance misuse
- a decline in attendance, engagement or attainment
- receiving an unusually high number of calls or messages
- being arrested or found in possession of drugs or stolen property

A child should not be treated primarily as an offender where there are indications that their behaviour may have occurred because of exploitation or coercion. Staff must report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will consider referral to Children's Social Care, the police and the National Referral Mechanism.

A full list of indicators can be found here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/>

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It may occur where an individual, group or organised network uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity:

- in exchange for something the child needs or wants
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- through violence or threats of violence

Child sexual exploitation may occur in person or online. It may involve physical contact or non-contact activity, including the production or sharing of sexual images. Most child sexual abuse is committed by someone known to the child.

A child may have been sexually exploited even where the activity appears consensual. Children cannot consent to their own abuse. A child may also be criminalised for conduct undertaken as a consequence of coercion or exploitation.

Possible indicators include:

- unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- relationships with significantly older or controlling people
- sexual-health concerns or pregnancy
- sexualised behaviour that is inappropriate for the child's age or development
- repeated absence or missing episodes
- drug or alcohol misuse
- changes in mood, behaviour or emotional wellbeing
- increased secrecy or unexplained online activity

- withdrawal from family, friends or education
- unexplained travel, hotel use or taxi journeys

Staff must report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will assess the risk and consider referral to Children's Social Care and the police.

County Lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which illegal drug networks or gangs use telephone lines or other forms of communication to facilitate the movement and sale of drugs between locations. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to transport drugs, money or weapons.

Children may be recruited in person or online and may be subjected to threats, violence, sexual abuse, debt bondage or coercive control. They may be moved or trafficked away from their home area and may stay in accommodation used by the network.

County lines activity may include "cuckooing", where offenders take over the home of a vulnerable person and use it as a base for criminal activity.

Possible indicators include:

- repeated absence or missing episodes
- travelling to unfamiliar or distant locations
- being found at transport hubs or in accommodation with unknown adults
- possession of drugs, weapons, money or multiple mobile phones
- unexplained injuries
- changes in friendship groups
- relationships with older or controlling individuals
- fearfulness, secrecy or withdrawal
- unexplained debt
- decline in attendance or engagement
- increased calls or messages
- recruiting or controlling other children

A child may not recognise that they are being exploited and may appear to cooperate with the people controlling them. Staff must not assume that apparent consent or criminal involvement removes the child's need for protection.

Concerns will be reported to the DSL. The DSL will consider referral to Children's Social Care, Merseyside Police and the National Referral Mechanism. Police should be contacted on 999 where there is an immediate danger or on 101 where the concern is not an emergency.

Modern Slavery and Trafficking

Modern slavery includes human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Children may be trafficked or exploited for criminal activity, sexual abuse, domestic servitude, forced labour or other purposes.

A child does not need to have crossed an international border to have been trafficked. Movement may take place within a town, between areas or entirely online through arrangements made by offenders.

Possible indicators include:

- being controlled by another person
- having little freedom of movement
- being unable to explain where they live or who cares for them
- unexplained travel
- possession of false documents
- repeated missing episodes
- working excessive hours
- unexplained money or debt
- fear of authorities

- signs of physical or sexual abuse
- involvement in criminal activity under another person's direction

Staff must report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will make any required safeguarding referral and consider whether a referral should be made through the National Referral Mechanism. Where there is immediate danger, the police will be contacted.

Contextual Safeguarding and Extra-Familial Harm

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of significant harm outside of their families, including within peer groups, local neighbourhoods and online environments.

Traditional child protection models have tended to focus on risks within the home, typically involving parents, carers or other trusted adults. However, this does not account for the considerable amount of time young people spend in social settings beyond their family, where peer influence, unsupervised environments and online platforms may pose significant risks to their safety, wellbeing and development.

Contextual safeguarding recognises that a child's environment and social context, including their peer network, community and wider societal influences can shape their behaviours, experiences and vulnerability. Consequently, it seeks to identify and respond to harm occurring in these domains and to address the systems, norms and settings that allow such harm to occur. This includes altering unsafe environments as well as supporting the individual child.

Research has shown that young people are often influenced as much by social dynamics and external factors as by family relationships. The school therefore considers these broader influences when assessing safeguarding risk and designing interventions and are aware that parents may not be responsible for the harm.

Contextual safeguarding encompasses a range of extra-familial harms, including (but not limited to):

- Child-on-child and relationship abuse
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Online abuse, grooming and harassment
- Missing episodes or absconding from education
- Gang involvement, serious youth violence and knife crime
- Radicalisation and extremist ideologies
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Abuse or exploitation in public spaces, including transport networks, shops, parks or parties
- Misogyny and relationship abuse
- Financial exploitation

All staff have a duty to be alert to such risks and apply professional curiosity when assessing a young person's context. Where concerns arise, they must be recorded on CPOMS and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL will:

- consider the child's peer relationships, locations, online activity and relevant local intelligence
- assess whether other children may be at risk
- undertake or coordinate contextual risk assessments
- involve parents or carers unless doing so could increase risk
- liaise with Family Help, Children's Social Care, Youth Justice Services or the police as appropriate
- work with partners to reduce risk within the environment in which the harm occurs
- ensure that support is child-centred and does not place responsibility for avoiding abuse on the child

The school will support with safety planning for locations, peer groups and online environments where appropriate.

Serious Violence and Weapons

Staff will be alert to indicators that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence. These may include:

- increased absence
- changes in friendships or relationships
- a significant decline in educational performance
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts, money or possessions
- carrying a weapon or associating with people who carry weapons
- involvement with gangs or organised networks
- threats made in person or online
- fear of travelling through particular areas
- concerns involving siblings or peers

Carrying a weapon may indicate exploitation, fear, coercion or an intention to cause harm. It will be treated as both a safeguarding and behaviour concern. The DSL will assess the risks to the pupil and others and consider referral to Children's Social Care or the police.

Where a pupil transfers to the school with a known history of carrying, threatening with or using a weapon, the DSL and senior leaders will obtain relevant safeguarding information and put an appropriate safety and support plan in place before or immediately upon admission.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse may involve a single incident or pattern of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological or emotional abuse. It may also include stalking, technology-assisted abuse and financial exploitation.

Domestic abuse may occur between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, witness its effects or be used as part of the abuse. A child who sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse is recognised as a victim in their own right.

Domestic abuse can have a serious and lasting effect on a child's safety, mental health, relationships, attendance and educational progress. Children may feel frightened, ashamed, responsible for the abuse or reluctant to disclose what is happening.

Staff must report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will consider the child's immediate safety, appropriate support and whether a referral to Children's Social Care or the police is required.

Operation Encompass and Police Notifications

Upton Hall School is part of Operation Encompass, a national initiative that ensures schools are notified by the police before the start of the next school day when a pupil has been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident in the home.

This information sharing enables the school to provide timely, appropriate pastoral support to affected children and their families.

Key Features:

- Operation Encompass notifications are received by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is trained in receiving and handling the information confidentially.
- The DSL ensures that appropriate support is offered to the child discreetly and sensitively on the same day.
- The DSL will not automatically question the child about an Operation Encompass notification. Any conversation will be led by the child's needs and circumstances and will avoid requiring the child to repeat traumatic information unnecessarily.

In addition to domestic abuse incidents, schools may also be notified via police reports if:

- A pupil has been reported missing or absent in circumstances that give rise to concern
- A pupil has been arrested or involved in a criminal incident
- A welfare concern is identified through police attendance at a property

Where such information is shared:

- The DSL will assess whether the incident may require community-based early help, targeted Family Help or statutory intervention.
- The incident will be recorded securely on CPOMS with due regard for confidentiality and data protection.
- Parents will be contacted where appropriate, in line with advice from the police or safeguarding partners.

We recognise that timely information sharing with schools by the police can play a critical role in identifying risk, reducing harm and ensuring a coordinated safeguarding response. The school works in close partnership with Merseyside Police, Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and other relevant agencies to ensure the best outcomes for children.

Child-to-Parent or Caregiver Abuse

Domestic abuse may include abuse by a child towards a parent or caregiver. This can involve physical violence, threats, coercive or controlling behaviour, emotional abuse, damage to property or financial abuse.

Such behaviour should not be dismissed as a parenting problem or ordinary family conflict. The response must consider the safety and needs of the parent or caregiver, siblings and the child displaying the behaviour. The child may themselves have experienced trauma, abuse, exploitation or unmet additional needs.

Concerns will be reported to the DSL, who will consider the need for a whole-family assessment and appropriate Family Help or statutory support.

Pupils who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself a safeguarding risk. However, pupils who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, are questioning their sexual orientation or are perceived by others to be lesbian, gay or bisexual may be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying, family rejection or other harm.

The school is committed to the dignity and worth of every person. All members of the school community will be treated with respect and pupils will be supported in a manner consistent with the school's Catholic ethos, safeguarding responsibilities and duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Homophobic, biphobic or other discriminatory language and behaviour will be challenged. Appropriate action will be taken through the school's safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying procedures.

Pupils will be able to identify a trusted adult with whom they can speak openly. Staff will listen sensitively, take the pupil's wishes and feelings into account and remain alert to possible bullying, family difficulties, mental-health needs or other safeguarding concerns.

A pupil's disclosure about their sexual orientation will not, by itself, be treated as a safeguarding concern or automatically shared with their parents or carers. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where this is necessary and proportionate. Where a disclosure indicates that the pupil may be suffering or at risk of harm, staff will follow the school's usual safeguarding procedures.

Children Questioning Their Gender and Requests for Support with Social Transition

Some children may question how they feel about being a girl or boy, including their physical sex and the expectations associated with it. Gender questioning is not in itself a safeguarding concern. However, children who are questioning their gender may experience discriminatory bullying, family or peer difficulties, mental health needs or other vulnerabilities that require support.

Staff will listen respectfully and sensitively without making assumptions about the cause, duration or eventual outcome of a child's feelings. The school will remain professionally curious about the child's wider experiences, including their family circumstances, peer relationships, mental and physical health, neurodiversity and any bullying or social pressure they may be experiencing.

The school will not initiate social transition or suggest that a child should socially transition. Where a child or their parent or carer requests changes intended to support the child in seeking changes intended to support the child in presenting as the opposite sex, the request will be referred to the Headmistress or another nominated senior leader and the DSL. Individual members of staff must not independently agree or implement such changes.

The child's wishes and feelings will be heard and considered, having regard to their age and understanding. However, a request will not be agreed automatically. The school will consider the welfare and best interests of

the individual child, the impact on other children and its safeguarding, legal and equality obligations. Any relevant clinical or other professional advice will also be considered.

Parents and carers have the leading role in their child's life and will ordinarily be involved as a matter of priority when a child requests support with social transition. The school will work constructively with the child and their family to understand their views and identify appropriate support.

In the rare circumstances where contacting parents or carers may place the child at greater risk of harm, the DSL will assess the safeguarding risk and determine what action is required before contact is made or any decision is taken. A child speaking privately to a member of staff about their feelings, without requesting changes from the school, will not in itself require confidentiality to be broken unless the conversation raises a safeguarding concern.

When considering a request, the school will take a careful and individualised approach. Decisions may not always accord with the child's or family's preferred outcome. Any support agreed will seek to maintain flexibility and avoid pressuring the child towards a particular identity or pathway.

The school will comply with its obligations under safeguarding legislation, the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The use of toilets, changing facilities and participation in sex-separated activities will be determined in accordance with current statutory guidance, the school's legal obligations and the rights, safety and welfare of all pupils.

The school will record:

- the nature of the request
- the child's wishes and feelings
- the views of parents or carers
- relevant safeguarding considerations
- professional or clinical advice considered
- the decision reached and reasons for it
- any support agreed
- arrangements for review

Decisions will be reviewed at appropriate intervals and reconsidered if the child's circumstances, needs or wishes change.

Fabricated or Induced Illness/Perplexing Presentation

Staff must be aware of the risk of children being abused through fabricated or induced illness (FII). There are three main ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:

- fabrication of signs and symptoms. This may include fabrication of past medical history;
- fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts and records, and specimens of bodily fluids. This may also include falsification of letters and documents;
- induction of illness by a variety of means.

Staff must not confront or attempt to diagnose parents.

Where this is identified and considered a risk, a referral will be made to The Integrated Front Door (IFD) for support and guidance. School may involve other agencies in making their assessments. That could include school nurse, community paediatrician, occupational therapists for example. For more on Perplexing presentations go to <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/7-Minute-Briefing-Perplexing-Presentations-and-FII.pdf>

Private Fostering

[Private fostering](#) is when a young person or young person under 16 years old (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone for 28 days or more by private arrangement (without the involvement of a local authority) with someone who is not a:

- parent
- close relative (brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent or step parent)

- guardian or a person with parental responsibility

Private foster carers might be:

- friends of the young person's family
- someone willing to care for the young person of a family they don't know; or relatives not mentioned in the list above, for example a cousin or great aunt

Examples of private foster care arrangements:

- young people sent to this country for education or health care by parents or guardians living overseas
- teenagers living with a friend's family as a result of problems at home
- young people on holiday exchanges
- young people whose parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, which make it difficult for them to use ordinary day care or after school care

Reporting an arrangement:

All private fostering arrangements will be reported to LA Children's Services through the Integrated Front Door by phoning 0151 606 2008. All private fostering notifications received by the Integrated Front Door will be transferred to the appropriate district social work assessment team and the safeguarding unit will be notified.

Homelessness

Homelessness or the risk of it poses a serious threat to a child's welfare. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and their deputies must know how to contact and refer to the Local Housing Authority to act early on concerns. Risk indicators include:

- Debt or rent arrears
- Domestic abuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Eviction or threat of eviction

Referrals to housing services should follow local procedures but must not replace referrals to Children's Social Care where a child is at risk of harm.

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, councils must assess needs, create housing plans, and support those at risk. Early intervention is key. While most cases involve families, 16- and 17-year-olds may be homeless independently. In such cases, Children's Social Care is the lead agency, and DSLs must ensure appropriate referrals are made. See statutory guidance for more details.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act places a duty on local housing authorities to notify relevant educational and health services when a child is placed in temporary accommodation, where the required consent has been provided.

Where the school receives such a notification, the DSL will consider the implications for the child's safety, welfare, attendance, transport, health, educational continuity and access to support. Relevant information will be shared with appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis and the child's circumstances will be monitored.

Receipt of a temporary accommodation notification does not in itself require a safeguarding referral. However, it does not replace the school's existing safeguarding responsibilities or prevent a referral to Children's Social Care where a child has suffered or is at risk of harm.

Family Members in Prison

Children who experience the imprisonment of a parent or close family member may face additional vulnerability. They may experience stigma, financial hardship, changes in care arrangements, emotional distress, mental ill health or difficulties with attendance and engagement. Research indicates that these children may also be at increased risk of exclusion, substance misuse and poorer longer-term outcomes.

The school will respond sensitively and will not make assumptions about the child or family. Appropriate pastoral support will be identified in consultation with the child and, where appropriate, their parent or carer. The school

may draw on specialist resources such as those provided by [NICCO](#) and consider whether the family would benefit from community-based early help or targeted Family Help.

Young People and the Court System

Young people 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, **published by HM Courts and Tribunals service**, to support young people aged [5-11](#) years and [12-17 years](#). These guides explain each step of the process and support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making young person arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for young people. The Ministry of Justice has launched an [online child arrangements information tool](#) with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Harmful Practices

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All staff will be alert to the possibility of a young person being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will record their concerns on CPOMS and speak to the DSL, who will make a referral to the Integrated Front Door.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to young people affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.4 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include and may initially mirror those of sexual abuse:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
 - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
 - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
 - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
 - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
 - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
 - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
 - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
 - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
 - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM

- Having limited level of integration within UK society
- Confiding to a professional that she is to have a “special procedure” or to attend a special occasion to “become a woman”
- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other young people about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the ‘one chance’ rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place.
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the Integrated Front Door.
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmf@fcdo.gov.uk.
- Ensure that the pupil has a single point of contact in school who they can talk to, and refer for support from external agencies as necessary.

Preventing Radicalisation

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Protecting children from this risk forms part of the school’s wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to legitimise support for or the use of terrorist violence. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child may be susceptible to radicalisation. Staff will remain alert to changes in behaviour, relationships, language, online activity or circumstances that may indicate that a child requires help or protection. Indicators will be considered in context and will not be used to stereotype pupils because of their religion, ethnicity, culture or political views.

The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify young people at risk.

We will assess the risk of young people in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and the regional Prevent lead.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place using Netsweeper and we will equip our pupils with the necessary skills to stay safe online at school and at home.

Young people who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff have a concern about radicalisation, they will record it on CPOMS and report it to the DSL in accordance with sections 7.1 and 7.9.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Cybercrime and Cyber Choices

Cybercrime may be cyber-dependent or cyber-enabled. Cyber-dependent crimes can be committed only through the use of computers, computer networks or other forms of information and communications technology.

Cyber-dependent offences may include:

- unauthorised access to computers, accounts or networks, sometimes referred to as hacking
- accessing a school network to obtain confidential information, examination material or alter records
- denial-of-service or distributed denial-of-service attacks, sometimes referred to as booting
- creating, supplying or obtaining malware, viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets or remote-access tools with the intention of committing an offence

Children with a strong interest or ability in computing may inadvertently or deliberately cross legal and ethical boundaries. Staff should not assume that technically skilled pupils understand the law or the potential consequences of their activity.

Concerns must be reported to the DSL. The DSL will consider the child's intentions, activity, level of understanding, risk to others and any evidence of coercion or exploitation. Where appropriate, the DSL may make a referral to the Cyber Choices programme.

Cyber Choices is a national preventative policing programme designed to divert children and young people away from low-level cyber-dependent offending and towards positive use of their technical skills.

Cyber Choices does not deal with cyber-enabled offences or wider online safety concerns such as fraud, purchasing illegal drugs online, child sexual abuse, exploitation, cyberbullying or harmful online communication. These concerns will be managed through the appropriate safeguarding and police referral routes.

Where there is evidence of a crime, an immediate risk or significant harm, the DSL will consider referral to the police and Children's Social Care rather than relying solely on Cyber Choices.

Checking the Identity and Suitability of Visitors

The school receives different categories of visitors, including professionals, contractors, visiting speakers, performers, family members and people attending school events. The level of checking, supervision and access permitted will reflect the purpose of the visit and the visitor's likely contact with pupils.

All visitors must report to reception, provide satisfactory identification when requested, sign in through the school's visitor management system and wear the appropriate identification badge while on site.

For a visitor attending in a professional capacity, such as a social worker, educational psychologist or other education, health or local authority practitioner, the school will:

- verify the visitor's identity
- confirm the purpose of the visit
- obtain assurance from the visitor's employer or responsible organisation that appropriate safer recruitment and DBS checks have been completed where required
- determine whether the visitor needs to be escorted or supervised

The school will not ordinarily ask a professional visitor to present their personal DBS certificate where their employer has provided the necessary assurance. Where the professional has been supplied through a third party, the school will follow the arrangements for agency or third-party staff.

Where a visitor will have no contact with children, a DBS check is unlikely to be required. The school will not request DBS or barred-list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives attending school events. The Headmistress will use professional judgement to determine whether such visitors should be escorted or supervised.

Visiting speakers, performers and external organisations will be considered in advance. The school will assess:

- the educational value and purpose of the visit
- the age appropriateness of the proposed content
- the suitability and reputation of the individual or organisation
- the level of contact with pupils
- whether additional checks, supervision or restrictions are required

A visitor who cannot establish their identity or the purpose of their visit, or where the school cannot obtain appropriate assurance, will not be given unsupervised access to pupils. The school reserves the right to refuse or terminate a visit where safeguarding concerns arise.

Appendix E: Missing Child Procedure

1. Purpose

It is essential that the necessary steps are taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people, and this is seen as an utmost priority in our school. Any young person going missing from a class is a safeguarding issue.

This procedure will be followed alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and any other relevant school policy or procedure.

All staff must understand what to do in the event that a young person were to be lost or go missing either from the school building, site or during an off-site visit.

It is the responsibility of the DSL and Headmistress to ensure that these procedures are understood and followed.

It is the responsibility of all staff to read these procedures and to act at all times accordingly.

2. Introduction

These procedures have been adopted in respect of any young person who goes missing from our premises or wanders off from our care, even if they remain on site.

These procedures will be used in respect of all cases in which it is found that a young person is lost or missing.

It enables the school to deal promptly and professionally in a “worst case scenario” of a missing young person. It emphasises the responsibility for attendance, registers and keeping young people safe.

Due consideration will be given by the DSL as to whether a referral to the Integrated Front Door is required. For example, where the young person is in need of protection, community-based early help, targeted Family Help or other support.

Staff are responsible for completing the attendance registers, including at after school clubs and activities. The register must be completed accurately and promptly. The law requires schools to have an attendance register taken both in morning and afternoon sessions.

3. Steps to Keep Young People Safe

Our procedures will always be managed with common sense and sound judgement.

For pupils in Years 7-11 we must only release young people into the care of individuals who have been notified to us by the parent/carer(s) in advance, and we must ensure that young people do not leave the premises unsupervised. We must take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.

At all times, parents can be assured that all young people remain within the safe environment of our school/setting, including attendance at any outings. We ensure that proper precautions are taken to prevent young people going missing.

Where a pupil leaves the premises without permission, the school will first consider the circumstances, the pupil's safety and any underlying safeguarding or additional needs. Any behavioural response will be appropriate and proportionate and will not replace necessary safeguarding support.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their young person.

Particular care will be taken to register all young people on SIMS at the start of every lesson. As a minimum, any unexplained absences will be reported immediately to the DSL and school attendance officer by the teacher so that swift and immediate action will be taken. This should be done via email. In the absence or unavailability of the DSL, the deputy DSLs will assume these responsibilities. On the rare occasion of the DSL and the deputies all being unavailable, any other member of the senior leadership team will assume responsibility for these procedures.

In the case of incidents occurring whilst young people are learning outside the classroom on school visits, the visit leader will assume such responsibility, as agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator on behalf of the DSL and Headmistress.

As soon as a pupil is reported missing from a lesson, a search of the school premises will be undertaken. This search will be co-ordinated by the DSL supported by staff in the school office and any other member of staff available at the time.

These indicative timescales do not apply where information suggests that the pupil may be in immediate danger or at heightened risk. In those circumstances, parents and the police will be contacted without delay.

The search of all of the obvious places – including toilets, empty rooms and the school grounds – should take no more than 15 minutes.

At this point, if the pupil has not been found, parents will be contacted. They will be advised of what has happened and will be asked to try to contact their daughter themselves by calling her mobile number. If after a further 15 minutes, there has been no contact with the young person and she has not been found in school, the DSL will dial the police on **101**. If there is reason to suspect that the young person is at risk of harm or in immediate danger, the police emergency number (**999**) will be dialled.

The information required by the police to assist in locating and returning the pupil to a safe environment is as follows:

- The pupil's names; date of birth; status (for example, CLA); responsible authority
- Where and when they went missing
- Previous missing episodes (if any) and where they went
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with
- What the young person was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags, phone (include mobile number)
- Description and recent photo
- Medical history, if relevant
- Time and location last seen
- Circumstances or events around going missing with relevant safeguarding information
- Details of family, friends and associates

Whilst the search is ongoing, the school will continue to liaise with the police and act in accordance with police instructions.

Option 1 – if the young person is found before the police have arrived then the police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 2 - if the young person returns to school of their own volition, then the police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 3 - if the police locate the young person and bring them back to the school the police will conduct the safe and well interview and the school will follow school procedure.

Where a pupil has a known risk of being missing, a risk assessment for the pupil will be written and put in place.

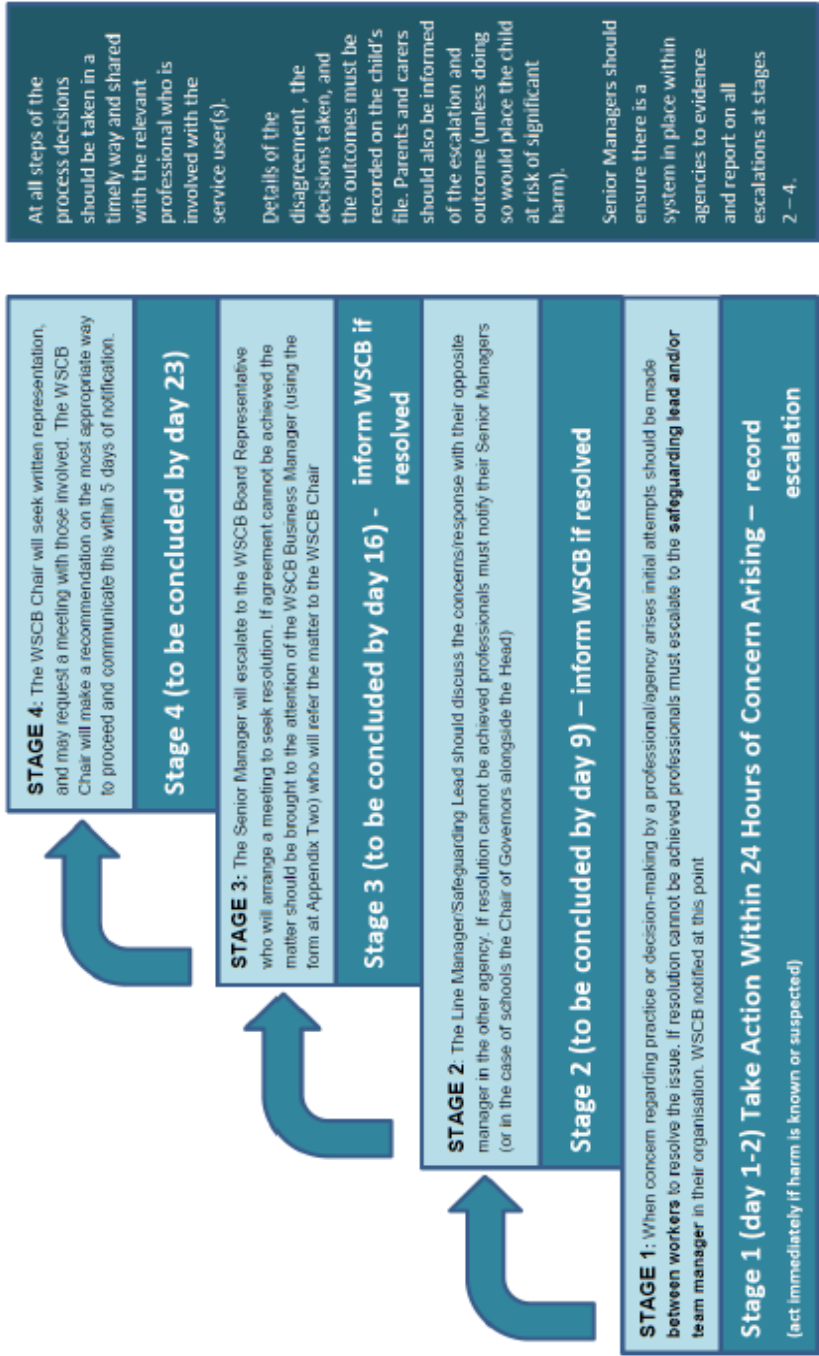
3.7. Visitors are recorded upon arrival and departure of the school site and follow the school signing in procedure. Any pupil who needs to sign out for an appointment out of school must provide a letter from home requesting

the time out and this absence be recorded appropriately and sanctioned by a Head of Year/SLT. Evidence of the medical appointment should also be provided.



Professional Disagreement and Escalation Multi-agency Procedure

Resolving Professional Disagreements Process and Timescales



Appendix G: Safeguarding and Child Protection – Staff Quick Reference Guide

This appendix is a quick-reference guide. It does not replace the requirement for staff to read the applicable sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including Part One or to follow the full Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

1. Key school safeguarding contacts

Role	Name	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr Philip Jones	pjones@uptonhall.org ext. 236
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr Paul McAleese	pmcaleese@uptonhall.org ext. 207
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Andrea Gaunt	agaunt@uptonhall.org ext. 202
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Miss Paula Etheridge	petheridge@uptonhall.org ext. 230
Chair of Governors	Mrs Patricia Young	Contact through Cath Howell ext. 205
Safeguarding Link Governor	Mrs Micha Woodworth	Contact through Cath Howell ext. 205
CPOMS	All staff with an account	https://uptonhall.cpoms.net or through the Staff Portal

2. If a pupil discloses abuse or you become concerned

- Listen carefully and take the pupil seriously.
- Remain calm and offer appropriate reassurance.
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you must share the information with people who can help.
- Do not investigate, confront an alleged perpetrator or ask leading questions.
- Use open prompts only where necessary, such as “Tell me what happened” or “Is there anything else you want me to know?”
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat their account unnecessarily.
- Make an accurate and factual record using the pupil’s own words wherever possible.
- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.
- Record the concern promptly on CPOMS unless it relates to an adult working in or on behalf of the school.
- Do not allow completing a written record to delay an urgent verbal report.
- Continue to provide appropriate support without discussing the matter with anyone who does not need to know.

3. Distinguishing pastoral and safeguarding concerns

The CPOMS incident form requires staff to indicate whether an incident is a **pastoral concern** or a **safeguarding concern**. The DSL can see all pastoral and safeguarding incidents recorded on CPOMS and will review concerns to identify patterns, escalation or additional safeguarding needs.

Pastoral concerns

A pastoral concern relates primarily to a pupil’s general wellbeing, relationships, attendance, behaviour or engagement with school and does not currently indicate that the pupil has suffered or may be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or significant harm.

Examples may include:

- an isolated friendship difficulty
- a minor disagreement between pupils
- a temporary worry about schoolwork
- a low-level change in presentation or engagement
- a concern requiring support from a form tutor or Head of Year

Pastoral concerns should be recorded using the appropriate **pastoral concern** option on the CPOMS incident form. Where immediate pastoral support is needed, the member of staff should also inform the pupil's form tutor or Head of Year.

A concern should not continue to be treated solely as pastoral where it becomes repeated, persistent, more serious or indicative of possible harm. Several apparently minor concerns may collectively indicate a safeguarding need.

Safeguarding concerns

A safeguarding concern exists where there is information or an indication that a pupil:

- has suffered or may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- has an unexplained or concerning injury, such as bruising, burns, bites or fractures, or provides an explanation that is inconsistent with the injury
- may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- has made a disclosure of abuse or harmful behaviour
- may present an immediate risk to themselves or another person
- may be experiencing child-on-child abuse
- may be at risk through their family, community or online environment
- requires consideration by the DSL or an external safeguarding agency

Safeguarding concerns must be recorded using the **safeguarding concern** option on the CPOMS incident form.

If a member of staff is uncertain whether a concern is pastoral or safeguarding, they should select "safeguarding concern". The DSL will review the information and determine the appropriate classification and response.

Selecting the wrong category in good faith will not prevent the concern from being considered. It is more important that the concern is reported promptly and accurately than that the member of staff attempts to determine the safeguarding threshold themselves.

4. Reporting and recording concerns

- Where possible, speak to the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately about any safeguarding concern.
- Record the concern promptly using [CPOMS](#). CPOMS can also be accessed through the Staff Portal.
- Select either **pastoral concern** or **safeguarding concern** on the CPOMS incident form. If in doubt, select **safeguarding concern** and allow the DSL to decide.
- Record what was seen, heard or disclosed. Do not attempt to diagnose the issue, determine the legal threshold or investigate the concern.
- Check that the date and time are accurate. Follow the CPOMS workflow for alerting or assigning the concern to the relevant member of staff.
- The DSL will have oversight of all pastoral and safeguarding incidents recorded on CPOMS, including incidents initially directed to pastoral staff.
- If the concern is urgent, speak directly to the DSL or a Deputy DSL. Do not rely solely on submitting a CPOMS entry.
- Staff who do not have a school email address and therefore cannot access CPOMS must inform the DSL or a Deputy DSL. They will be given a paper safeguarding or pastoral concern form on which to record the details.
- The completed paper form must be handed directly to the DSL or a Deputy DSL as soon as possible. It must not be left in a classroom, staffroom, pigeonhole or other unsecured location.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL will ensure that information submitted on a paper form is added to the pupil's secure record and classified appropriately.
- A lack of CPOMS access must never delay the reporting of a concern.

Records must:

- be made as soon as possible after the incident or disclosure
- be clear, factual, dated and timed
- use the pupil's own words wherever possible
- distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and professional opinion

- identify any immediate action taken and the people informed
- be updated when further information or action becomes available

CPOMS is the school's principal system for recording pastoral and safeguarding concerns:

<https://uptonhall.cpoms.net>. It is also linked from the Staff Portal. An urgent safeguarding concern must always be communicated directly to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

5. Initial response

Situation	Required action
A pupil is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance	Call 999 and inform the DSL immediately
You have a safeguarding concern about a pupil	Speak to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and record it as a safeguarding concern on CPOMS
You have a pastoral concern that does not currently indicate a risk of harm	Record it as a pastoral concern on CPOMS and inform the relevant pastoral member of staff where immediate support is needed
You are unsure whether the concern is pastoral or safeguarding	Select safeguarding concern on CPOMS. The DSL will review and classify it
A series of pastoral concerns is developing	Record the latest concern and alert the DSL. Several lower-level concerns may collectively indicate a safeguarding need
You do not have a school email address or CPOMS access	Inform the DSL or a Deputy DSL, who will provide a paper form. Complete it promptly and return it directly
A pupil may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm	Inform the DSL immediately. A referral must be made to children's social care without delay
The DSL is unavailable	Report the concern to a Deputy DSL
The DSL and Deputy DSLs are unavailable	Report the concern to another member of SLT. If necessary, make a direct referral to the Integrated Front Door or police and inform the DSL as soon as possible
You disagree with the response to a safeguarding concern	Escalate through the school and WSCP procedures. Staff may make a direct referral where they believe appropriate safeguarding action has not been taken
The concern relates to an adult working in or on behalf of the school	Follow the separate adult-concern reporting route. Do not record it on the pupil's ordinary CPOMS chronology

6. Making a direct referral

Anyone can make a referral to children's social care. Staff must not assume that somebody else will take action.

If the DSL, Deputy DSLs and other senior leaders are unavailable and a pupil may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, staff should contact the Wirral Integrated Front Door directly. The police must be contacted where a pupil is in immediate danger or a crime may have been committed.

A member of staff who makes a direct referral must:

- provide all relevant information
- follow any advice given by children's social care or the police
- record the referral and the action taken
- inform the DSL as soon as possible

If children's social care decides not to take further action and the member of staff remains concerned, the matter must be discussed with the DSL and escalated through the WSCP procedures where appropriate.

7. Concerns about adults

7.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

Report the matter immediately to the Headmistress where an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children

If the concern is about the Headmistress, report it directly to the Chair of Governors. If the concern is about the Chair of Governors, it should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

The person receiving the allegation will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer where appropriate. Staff must not investigate the matter, question witnesses, confront the person who is the subject of the concern or alert them to the allegation.

Concerns about adults must not be recorded on the pupil's ordinary CPOMS chronology.

7.2 Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct
- does not meet the harm threshold
- causes a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt"
- may indicate inappropriate conduct outside work

Low-level concerns must be reported to the Headmistress in accordance with the school's low-level concerns procedure. A concern about the Headmistress must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Staff are encouraged to report concerns even where they are uncertain whether the behaviour reaches a particular threshold. The term "low-level" describes the threshold of the behaviour, not its importance.

8. Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse can occur inside or outside school and online. It may include:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying
- physical abuse
- sexual violence or sexual harassment
- abuse within intimate personal relationships
- consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes
- upskirting
- initiation or hazing-type behaviour

All concerns must be reported. Staff must not dismiss abusive behaviour as banter, part of growing up or an inevitable feature of friendships.

The absence of a report does not mean that abuse is not taking place. Staff must remain alert to changes in behaviour, attendance, friendships, emotional wellbeing or engagement with school.

The wishes and feelings of the pupil affected will be heard and considered. However, they do not determine whether safeguarding action is necessary.

9. Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the DSL.

Staff must:

- reassure the pupil that they are being taken seriously
- explain that the abuse is not their fault
- avoid asking detailed or leading questions

- avoid promising confidentiality
- consider the immediate safety of the pupil and other children
- make a factual record using the pupil's own words

Staff must not attempt to mediate between the pupils involved or bring them together to discuss the incident.

10. Making and sharing nudes and semi-nudes

Report any incident involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes to the DSL immediately.

Staff must not:

- view, copy, print, share or save an image
- ask a pupil to send, download or display an image
- search a pupil's device unless authorised under the school's procedures
- delete an image or message before receiving direction from the DSL
- investigate the incident independently

If an unsolicited image appears on a staff device, the member of staff should close or secure the device, avoid forwarding or copying the image and seek immediate advice from the DSL.

11. Online safety

Online safety concerns may involve content, contact, conduct or commerce. They may include:

- grooming, exploitation or coercion
- cyberbullying, harassment or abuse
- exposure to harmful or illegal material
- financial exploitation, scams or online fraud
- radicalisation or extremist material
- the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes
- the misuse of artificial intelligence or manipulated images

Online safeguarding concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the DSL. Urgent concerns must be communicated directly.

Staff must not investigate online activity themselves, make contact with a suspected perpetrator or unnecessarily view harmful or illegal material.

12. Prevent and Channel

Staff must be alert to changes that may indicate that a pupil is susceptible to radicalisation or is being influenced or exploited by extremist ideology.

Concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the DSL. The DSL will consider whether Family Help, children's social care, the police or a Channel referral is appropriate.

When a Channel referral is being considered, relevant information may be shared with the police and other Channel partners where sharing is necessary, proportionate and lawful to safeguard the pupil or other people.

There is no single indicator of radicalisation. Staff should consider behaviour in context and avoid making assumptions based on religion, ethnicity, culture or political opinion.

13. Female genital mutilation

Any concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM must be reported immediately to the DSL.

A teacher who, in the course of their professional duties, discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 has a personal statutory duty to report this directly to the police. The teacher must also inform the DSL.

The duty applies where the girl discloses that FGM has been carried out or the teacher observes physical signs that appear to show it has been carried out. Staff must not examine a pupil.

Where there is a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, or where information does not meet the conditions for the personal reporting duty, the school's usual safeguarding procedures must be followed.

14. Mental health

Mental-health difficulties may sometimes indicate that a pupil has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff must follow safeguarding procedures where a pupil's presentation, behaviour or disclosure creates a safeguarding concern. This includes concerns involving self-harm, suicidal thoughts or a significant deterioration in emotional wellbeing.

Only appropriately trained professionals should diagnose mental-health conditions. Staff should record what they have seen or heard and avoid making clinical conclusions.

Where there is an immediate risk to life or a medical emergency, call 999 and inform the DSL.

15. Confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding information must be shared only with people who need it to protect the child. However, data protection law does not prevent information from being shared for safeguarding purposes.

Staff must:

- never promise to keep a safeguarding disclosure secret
- share relevant information promptly with the DSL
- distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and professional opinion
- record decisions and the reasons for them
- seek advice if uncertain without allowing uncertainty to delay action

Parental consent is not required before information is shared where seeking consent may place a child at greater risk, prejudice an investigation or undermine the safeguarding response.

Staff must not discuss safeguarding concerns with colleagues who are not involved in the response or access CPOMS records without a professional reason.

16. Key local and national contacts

Service or role	Contact details
Wirral Integrated Front Door—Monday to Friday, 9.00am–5.00pm	0151 606 2008
Wirral Integrated Front Door—outside office hours	0151 677 6557
Local Authority Designated Officer	Kevin Dykes – safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk
Safeguarding Unit support	Kerry Williams – kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk
Head of Service, Quality and Safeguarding Children	Lynn Campbell – 0151 666 4442
Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Education	Nicola Griffiths – nicolagriffiths2@wirral.gov.uk
Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager	Gareth Kidd – 0151 666 4314
Director of Children's Services	Elizabeth Hartley – 0151 606 2000
Family Help	Use the current Wirral Council/WSCP Request for Service route. Advice is available from the Integrated Front Door
Family Crime Investigation Unit	0151 777 2685
Police—emergency	999
Police—non-emergency	101
DfE Counter-Extremism Helpline	020 7340 7264
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285

17. Remember

Recognise – Respond – Report – Record

- Never assume that somebody else will act.
- Never investigate a safeguarding concern yourself.
- Never delay urgent action while waiting for the DSL.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Always act in the best interests of the child.
- Record concerns on [CPOMS](#), which is also available through the Staff Portal.
- If you do not have a school email address or CPOMS access, speak directly to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and complete the paper form provided.
- If in doubt about whether a concern is pastoral or safeguarding, select **safeguarding concern**. The DSL will decide the appropriate classification and response.

Appendix H: Training Log

Staff/Training	Date completed
Whole School Safeguarding Training	- September INSET 2024 - November INSET 2024 - February INSET 2025 (Online Safety) - September INSET 2025 - All Staff WSCP training – October 2025 - Weekly safeguarding briefings - Prevent and Mental Health – 2025/26 - September INSET 2026
Designated Safeguarding Lead Mr P Jones – Assistant Headteacher	- Annual Certificate in Safeguarding 15/09/24 - Annual Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for Designated Leads 18/09/24 - Annual Certificate in Teaching Online Safety for Secondary Schools 18/09/24 - Annual Certificate in the Prevent Duty 08/10/24 - WSCP DSL Training 27/11/24 - Wirral VS Designated Teacher Training 09/12/24 - Annual Advanced Certificate in Online Safety for DSLs – February 2025 - Enhanced Prevent Training 3/3/25 - Responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviour 8/7/25 - Annual Certificate in Safeguarding 4/9/25 - Annual Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for Designated Leads 4/9/25 - Child Sexual Abuse 5/9/25 - DSL Prevent training 27/1/26 - Senior Mental Health Lead 23/2/26 - Systemic Practice 25/2/26 and June 2026
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Mrs A Gaunt – Headmistress Mr P McAleese – Deputy Headteacher	Annual Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for Designated Leads – February 2025
Safer Recruitment Training Mrs C Howell – PA to the Headmistress/Clerk to Governors Mrs A Gaunt – Headmistress Mr P Jones – Assistant Headteacher Mr P McAleese – Deputy Headteacher Mrs K Spiby – Director of Business Mrs P Young – Chair of Governors Ms A Murphy – Deputy Headteacher* Miss L Griffiths – Assistant Headteacher*	- February 2025 *January 2026
Managing Allegations Training Mrs A Gaunt – Headmistress Mr P Jones – Assistant Headteacher	March 2026
Restrictive Intervention Training Mrs A Gaunt – Headmistress Mr P McAleese – Deputy Headteacher Ms A Murphy – Deputy Headteacher Mr P Jones – Assistant Headteacher	March 2026

Miss L Griffiths – Assistant Headteacher Miss P Etheridge - SENCO Mrs S Roberts – Assistant Director of Sixth Form Mrs S James – Head of Year Mrs S Brereton – Head of Year Mr M Whisker – Head of Year	
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Useful Links

Thresholds Resources:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/multi-agency-thresholds/>

Multi-agency Safeguarding Procedures:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>

Concerns about a Young Person:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/public/concerned-about-a-child/>

Contacts and Referrals:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/5-1-contacts-referrals/>

Information Sharing and Confidentiality:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/1-3-information-sharing-confidentiality/>

Step Up and Step Down:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/1-4-step-step-process/>

Family Help and Support for Families:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>

Multi-agency Standards for Child in Need (Section 17)

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/WSCB-Multi-agency-Standards-for-Child-in-Need.pdf>

Multi-agency Standards for Child Protection

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/5-8-multi-agency-standards-child-protection/>

Neglect:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/neglect/>

Domestic Abuse:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

Engaging with Resistant Families:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/engaging-with-resistant-families/>

Child Exploitation:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/>

Private Fostering:

https://wirralchildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_private_fost.html

Supporting Families Enhancing Futures:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/supporting-families-enhancing-futures/>

Multi-agency Escalation:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/10-2-multi-agency-escalation-procedure/>

Tools for Professionals:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/tools-for-professionals/>

Seven Minute Briefings:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/7-minute-briefings/>