Primary Learning Trust (PLT)

…where everyone flourishes!

New Invention Learning Academy

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

2026/27

Primary Learning Trust
Gilpin Crescent
Pelsall
Walsall
WS3 4HX

Date: September 2026

Mission: to educate all our primary children for life, inspired by expert professionals, in a place *where everyone flourishes!*

Vision

- A family of schools, proud to be working together as one entity, in the right conditions for deep and purposeful **collaboration**
- To **belong** to a great place to learn, work and grow.
- To improve and sustain high educational standards across the Trust, through **evidence-informed** practice.
- To continuously improve teaching and learning, ensuring that every pupil has the best possible education.
- To hold trust on behalf of our children, achieving the best for and from our people, so that everyone can **flourish**.
- To empower our children and our people to create a better future.
- To advance the education system, as part of our civic duty, for the wider public benefit

Values

- **Belonging**: where all our people feel connected, valued, trusted and fulfilled, with a shared purpose to achieve excellence, in a place of psychological safety.
- **Flourishing:** where all our people thrive and continue to grow through the development of their intellectual potential and live well, building strong relationships as well-rounded human beings.
- **Collaboration:** by design, to ensure that all our people are supported and openly share ideas and practice; that no school - no child - is left behind, building together the pipeline that develops the next generation of leaders, global citizens, influencers and innovators.
- **Evidence-informed:** conceptual models of quality and improvement that can be shared and embedded. Deliberate and intentional knowledge-building to create expertise through cultures and communities of improvement, using the active ingredients of professional development.

Policy Overview

This model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will provide to our schools, which each school amends, personalises and shares on their own website.

Roles and Responsibilities.

• Pupils will: adhere to academy rules regarding conduct and safe behaviour; report anything that worries them to a trusted adult.
• Parents/carers will: work collaboratively with academy staff to promote the safety of their children and of other pupils; support our academy to teach pupils about keeping safe by reinforcing key safety messages; report any safeguarding concerns regarding their own children or another pupil to the academy.
• The academy will: ensure that all pupils have a safe learning environment and are taught about how to keep safe; train and support all adults involved with our academy to appropriately identify and respond to any pupil at risk of harm; work collaboratively with parents and professional agencies to safeguard our pupils.
• Governors and Trustees will: ensure this policy is applied robustly throughout the academy; review it regularly (annually at a minimum) to ensure the effectiveness and rigour of safeguarding practice at our academy.
• Primary Learning Trust central staff will: know, understand and follow the safeguarding procedures for each academy within which they work; undertake relevant regular training and updates to ensure their skills and knowledge support them to meet their safeguarding responsibility.
• Primary Learning Trust safeguarding team members will: advise and challenge academies and their staff to support them in deploying best practice to meet their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

CONTENTS

PART ONE – Our Academies
This section outlines the understanding of the community that we serve, and our presenting needs for children, young people and their families.
It defines how the safeguarding and child protection policy aligns to other policy and procedures within our school, and introduces key government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
This section provides details of all key safeguarding staff and an overview of some of the roles and responsibilities of those staff.
It provides an overview of how our curriculum ensures that the children and young people in our school are taught about safeguarding and how we promote an open culture and ethos where children and staff can share concerns safely and their voices are heard.
All parts of this policy are underpinned by local and national guidance, law and procedure and this is defined within part one.

PART TWO – Taking action
This part explores what safeguarding is; and everyone's responsibility for safeguarding and includes the updated Families First processes.
It explains the expectations for all staff if they have a concern about a child or young person.
Concerns regarding colleague's behaviour is covered in part five of the policy.
Professional curiosity is a key factor in this part and provides an emphasis on communicating with both the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Children's Services, plus an overview of sharing information to safeguard children and young people.
This part explains the requirements for recording safeguarding concerns in school, and an overview of Walsall Right Help, Right Time continuum of need.
The 6 "R"s are at the end of this part of the policy.

PART THREE – Defining abuse
This part explains what constitutes abuse/harm under the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
Additionally it defines further specific risks and should be read alongside part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
Part four of the policy makes more specific reference to preventing and responding to incidents of child on child abuse.

PART FOUR – Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Child On Child
This part explains our commitment from prevention to responses and procedures for managing child on child sexual abuse.
The roles of police and Children's Services is explained, and how we will support both victims and alleged/convicted perpetrators of abuse.
A Harmful Sexual Behaviour toolkit is included to ensure the Right Support is offered at the Right Time.

PART FIVE – Safer Recruitment Practice And Managing Allegations Against Staff
This part explains our safer recruitment procedures to support our safer culture in school.
It provides examples of how our school deters and prevents people unsuitable to work with children from being recruited to work in our school.
Allegations about concerns regarding members of staff including supply staff, volunteers and contractors are explained; also what our school will do in response to whether the harm threshold is met; or not.
Whistleblowing is explained alongside links to the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline.

Appendix 1 – The seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information
Appendix 2 – Children in specific circumstances-national guidance links
Appendix 3- Host Families – homestay during exchange visits
Appendix 4 - Lockdown procedure

PART ONE – OUR ACADEMY

1. INTRODUCTION

At our school, we believe that we teach your child today for their tomorrow.

Including skills that they can use now and for the rest of their lives but also keeping in touch with traditional values, such as respect for others. We have a determined focus on developing thinking skills and teaching your child to develop into independent, responsible Learners.

Our Academies are aware of and assess the risks/issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of our pupils. We are aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online.

Our Academies follows the child protection procedures as defined by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership *https://walsallsp.co.uk/* and the multi-agency threshold guidance, Walsall Right Help, Right Time - A Continuum of Need (Walsall partnership guidance) We work with partners to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

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

We facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding meaning that we ensure safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We know that ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

We adopt the approach that "it could happen here" for all aspects of safeguarding and bullying supports us to address any underlying bias in order to achieve equality for all children and adults within our school.

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

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

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

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

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

This policy is shared with parents/carers and is available on the Academy website: https://www.thenila.uk/

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

All staff and volunteers are aware of the safeguarding procedures in our school and these are explained to as part of staff induction (see Training)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 is statutory guidance and is understood and followed by:

Primary Learning Trust
Our Senior Leadership Team
All staff and volunteers

In our school staff, volunteers and visitors will:-

- be familiar with and understand our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
- be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc (see part 5)
- be involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, child in need plans, child protection plans and early help assessments where necessary (see part 2)
- be alert to signs and indicators of abuse (see part 2)
- participate in reviews undertaken by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership as required

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

- Staff induction procedures
- Recording and information sharing guidance
- Recruitment and vetting policy
- Online safety policy (including remote learning)
- Anti bullying policy
- Attendance and children absent from education
- Staff code of conduct
- Photography policy
- Intimate care policy
- Safe handling/reasonable force policy and guidance
- Use of mobile phones policy
- Behaviour and/or Positive Relationships policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Radicalisation and Extremism guidance for schools Sept 2015
- SEND policy
- Equality policy
- Positive handling policy
- Filtering and Monitoring Policy/processes

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs K Rowley & Mr A Pearson
Head Teacher	Mr A Pearson
Chair of Governors	Mrs D Zaki
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs D Zaki
Deputy DSL	Mr R Bould & Mrs E Waterhouse
Special Educational Needs Coordinator	Mrs E Waterhouse
Single Point of Contact (Preventing Radicalisation) (SPOC)	Mr A Pearson
Looked After Children Designated Teacher	Mrs K Rowley
Designated Lead for online Safety (responsible to DSL)	Mr J Shea & Mrs K Rowley
Senior Lead for Mental Health	Mrs E Waterhouse

ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

New Invention Learning Academy has appointed Mrs K Rowley as the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead as they are the appropriate senior member of staff with the authority to perform the role and form part of the school's leadership team. The designated safeguarding lead takes lead responsibility for safeguarding, child protection and online safety.

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead has responsibilities as follows:-

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Children's Services as required
- support staff who make referrals to local authority Children's Services
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required;
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required
- liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians SENCO and Mental Health Lead) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- be aware of pupils who have a social worker
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school leadership staff
- liaise with the headteacher to inform him of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult.
- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring.
- Oversee online filtering and monitoring systems and act on issues identified or raised and receive recommendations on how to meet them. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-technology-for-your-school

- Monitor all aspects of filtering and monitoring systems. Ensuring they use an educational provider, it meets the risk profile of the school and they are aware that this is working effectively
- Meet the DFE filtering and monitoring technical standards
- Consider meeting the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK. including undertaking Cyber security training for all staff, including governors, trustees to improve cuber resilience.
- Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK . and Walsall Council Schools Cybersecurity support
- Ensure learning and practice is informed by accessing: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-education

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available you must refer your concerns to someone else who is named as a deputy for this role.

All staff are aware of the process for making referrals to Children's Services and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral. Further information is outlined within part two.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRUST, THE ACADEMY (New Invention Learning Academy) AND THE GOVERNING BOARD

Primary Learning Trust holds overall responsibility for ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding across the Trust. While this overarching accountability remains with the Trust Board, specific safeguarding responsibilities are delegated to individual academies and their Governing Boards, each of which must implement and adhere to Trust-wide safeguarding policies and procedures. This ensures a consistent, robust approach to safeguarding, whilst recognising the local responsibilities of academy leaders and designated safeguarding staff.

The Trust Governing Board is the accountable body for ensuring the safety of the school.

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

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

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

The Academy will ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Our school will work with Children's Services, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of accessing support available at the earliest stage through Family Help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

The Trust will ensure that the safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority. This includes the requirements under Section 175/ Section 157 of the Education Act 2002.

The Academy is to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in place.

The Academy recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and all staff have the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

The Academy will ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online, child on child sexual abuse (sexual violence and sexual harassment) through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Trust will ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations against teachers, headteachers, principals, volunteers and other staff.

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

The Trust ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in our schools are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.

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

The Trust is aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements specified on page 42 of our policy.

The Nominated Governor for safeguarding in school is Mrs D Zaki. They are responsible for liaising with the Head Teacher/ Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead over all matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils/students.

The Governing Board (usually the Chair of Trustees) is nominated to be responsible for liaising with other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher/Head of School/ CEO.

THE ROLE OF DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

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

The designated safeguarding lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

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

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

Guidance for Designated Teachers

CURRICULUM

The Governing Board considers how children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through PHSE, SRE, SEAL, SMSC, British Values, online safety, assemblies, approved visitors etc.

Our school makes use of the DfE "one stop" page for teachers on **GOV.UK**, outlined within. Teaching about relationships, sex and health. This includes teacher training modules on the RSHE topics and non-statutory implementation guidance.
We are familiar with the following resources to help us plan and teach about safeguarding:

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

By using the resources above our children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

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

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

TRAINING

All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding Children and Young People training, this is delivered at the start of every new academic year.

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

• Our child protection policy (inclusive of procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
• Our behaviour policy for pupils/students
• Our staff Code of Conduct
• Our safeguarding response to children absent from education
• Our online safety policy
• The role of our designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead
• Part one in full- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. (Senior leaders, DSL's and Governing Bodies will assess whether staff who do not work directly with children will be suitably informed by reading (and signing for understanding) annex A of the guidance. Annex A is a condensed version of part 1. All staff who work directly with children in our school will read and sign acceptance of understanding for Part 1)

• Explanation of the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

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

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

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process (see part five)

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership offers training in Safeguarding Children and Young People, Child Protection, Walsall Local Authority, Safer Recruitment and other topics relating to safeguarding children. Staff training is not only crucial in protecting children and young people, but also makes them aware of how they can protect themselves against allegations. Further information about these courses can be accessed via the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website at https://walsallsp.co.uk/

THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK AND LEGISLATIVE DUTIES

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

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

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility as follows:-

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

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

Keeping children safe in education 2026
Teaching online safety in schools
Working together to safeguard children 2026: statutory guidance
Working together to improve school attendance
Welcome to the Walsall Children's Services Procedures Manual
walsallsp.co.uk
Walsall Safeguarding Partnership > Professionals & Volunteers > Procedures and Guidance > Adults Procedures
The Education Act 2002 s157/s175
What to do if you're Worried a Child is being Abused March 2015
Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
Education inspection framework

PART TWO - TAKING ACTION

SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.

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

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

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Our staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
All our staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
We have a designated safeguarding lead (and trained deputies) who provide support to staff and volunteers to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as Children's Services.

We are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from support at the earlies point. Families First means we will work with children and families to provide support as early as possible, when the issue is identified at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

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

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
(Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE September 2026)

DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND DISCLOSURES

All staff are trained and aware that:-

- a child may disclose something that has upset or harmed them
- someone else might report something that a child has told them, or that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed

- a child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation
- a child's behaviour, including any observed changes to behaviour ‘usual’ for that child may suggest he or she is being abused
- the behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child may cause concern
- a child demonstrates worrying behaviour towards other children
- a child may display indicators of mental health

We know that being professionally curious is not simply about asking the question. It is about the language used, creating a trusting relationship, create a culture in which to disclose and giving time to children and young people so they do not feel pressured.

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

Staff will also ensure consideration of early help indicators and be alert to any child who:

Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit

Has a parent or carer in custody (previously it was 'family member in prison'), or is affected by parental offending

Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care (the word ‘education’ has been added)

All staff and volunteers are alert to the potential need for early help/referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- is a young carer;
- has a mental health need.
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care.
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or exploitation.
- Talking about or spreading misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories

- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is a privately fostered child.
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending.

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

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

Our staff know that if they are unhappy with the response received from our designated safeguarding all staff/volunteers have the right to contact Walsall Children's Services

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

- place the child at risk of significant harm or further risk of significant harm.
- place a vulnerable adult at risk of harm
- compromise and enquiries that need to be undertaken by Children's Services or the police

Our school will endeavour to ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children.

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

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidently or though observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.
When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that our actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

PROCEDURES FOR WHEN SOMEONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON INCLUDING EARLY HELP

- all concerns for children and young people will be recorded on our safeguarding management information system.
- all concerns will be recorded as soon as possible (and within one hour)
- all concerns will be referred to the designated safeguarding lead/deputy designated safeguarding lead or SENCo in their absence
- all concerns of significant harm will be referred to the Local Authority Children's Services (MASH) without delay
- all concerns shared with the designated safeguarding lead will be considered alongside Walsall's Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time guidance
- All concerns of allegations in relation to staff and volunteers harmful behaviour will be referred to the head/principle (if the concern is in relation to the head/principle the chair of governors should be informed without delay) See part five.

Remember records should include:

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

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

Principles for our Academy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Non-statutory guidance on promoting the education of children with a social worker and kinship care arrangements contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of virtual school heads.
Children's social care: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Virtual School Head roles for children with a Social Worker

WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED WHEN MAKING A REFERRAL

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

RESPONSES FROM PARENTS

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

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb);
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development;
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries;
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries;
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child;
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child;
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse;
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household.

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

Call the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

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

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

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

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

Key Processes

Family Help – Identifying and Understanding Needs

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

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

All our staff, including volunteers are aware of the Walsall Families First pathway, focusing on getting the right help and support in place at the right time as defined in Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time – Continuum of Need Guidance: - https://walsallsp.co.uk/children/professionals/professionals-working-with-children/right-help-right-time/

Options will therefore include:

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

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

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

For early support from specialist services such as housing, social care, police and wider services when we require additional support from our multi agency colleagues, you first point of contact would be your partnership officer from the locality your school geographically belongs to, accessed: https://family-hubs.walsall.gov.uk/families-first

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

If Family Help is appropriate our designated safeguarding lead/deputy or other appropriate individual will lead, with consent from the family, will initiate an 'our family' : https://family-hubs.walsall.gov.uk/families-first liaising with external agencies and complete any required requests and/or assessments. Wider school staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals contribute to information gathering and take the role of Family Help Coordinator.

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

Child in Need

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remember you have a statutory duty under the Education Act 2002 to pass on any child protection concerns about the child.

RESPONDING TO A CONCERN – THE "6 R's RESPONSE"

Receive Reassure React Record Refer Reflect

Receive

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

Reassure

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

React

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

Record

- Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the words that the child has used.
- Do not record your assumptions and interpretations, just what you heard and saw.
- Do not destroy original notes even if you later write things up more neatly and fully.
- Record the date, time and place of the disclosure.
- Sign any written records and identify your position in the school setting.
- Do not ask a child to write and account or sign any of your documentation as this may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by Children's Services or Police.

Refer ● Immediately inform the Designated Senior Person for child protection (insert details) or in their absence the Deputy Designated Senior Person for child protection (insert details) who will be responsible for following the appropriate procedures. In the absence of anyone being available in school, contact the Local Authority
Reflect ● Ask yourself if you have done everything you can within your role. ● Refer any remaining concerns to the designated teacher, e.g. any knowledge of siblings in the school, or previous contact with parents. ● Dealing with disclosures can be difficult and disturbing; you should seek support for yourself via the support within your school or an alternative source but be aware of principles of confidentiality.

DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SHARING

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

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

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

When children leave our school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained; this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file. If we are the receiving school we will ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs, are aware as required.

Professional Judgement and Proportionate Sharing (KCSIE 2026)

Information Sharing & Proportionate Summarising:
In accordance with KCSIE 2026 (Paragraph 144), professional judgement must be used to ensure that all information shared with internal safeguarding leads, statutory partners, or external agencies is focused and proportionate.

- Proportionality: Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) may summarise or omit details that are unnecessary for safeguarding purposes.

- Managing Risk: Extreme care must be taken never to omit information that may be relevant to understanding or managing a safeguarding risk.

- Duty to Share: This approach is supported by the information sharing duty, designed to give all staff greater confidence to share appropriate and relevant information in a timely, confident manner.

PART THREE - DEFINING ABUSE

Definitions of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation.

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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

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

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

All staff are aware of safeguarding issues and aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including those generated using AI (e.g. deepfakes) which put children at risk and in danger.

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

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

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape;
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt, including a linear bruise;
- Bite marks;
- Round burn marks;
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks;
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given or the development/ability of the child;
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred;
- Bald patches;
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning;
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather;
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- Fear of medical help;
- Fear of changing for PE;
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance;
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of

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

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

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

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

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

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

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

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

Supporting Practice in tackling child sexual abuse

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

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

- Constant hunger;
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food;
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness;
- Frequently dirty or unkempt;
- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather;
- Poor school attendance or often late for school;
- Poor concentration;
- Affection or attention seeking behaviour;

- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated;
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight;
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially;
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers

FURTHER SPECIFIC RISKS

All staff will have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately absent from education, references to misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

Part 1 Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2026 will be available at induction, read and understood by all staff/volunteers outlining risk

CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM

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

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

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

We will recognise these vulnerabilities and offer early help where necessary for the children, young people and their families to safeguard emotional wellbeing; we will access resources as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2026.

CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION

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

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Children absent from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. We have procedures in place in response to children absent from education which support identification of such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority Children's Services and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents are reminded to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

Our Academies have:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who are absent from education (especially on repeat occasions)
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:

- leave school to be home educated (see below)
- move away from the school's location
- remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
- are permanently excluded

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

When a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from our school with a view to educating at home, we will work together with other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been

made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. We refer to Elective Home Education guidance to support our processes and decisions.

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

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

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

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

CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON

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

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CCE and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship or may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

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

CCE/CSE may involve an exchange for something the victim wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator

Potential vulnerabilities include:

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

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

Our Academy refers to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership procedures to consider completion of the screening tool and/or NWG risk assessment. Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website

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

Our Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager is Katie Storer-Young who manages our Exploitation team, if you are worried about exploitation or missing concerns about a child please refer to MASH or the child's social worker. You should also copy missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk into any referrals

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: COUNTY LINES

Our staff/volunteers are aware that some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

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

Our staff have alerted to the fact that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same; however, we are aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. We know that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

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

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

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

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.
Further information County Lines Guidance

Any concerns will be referred to Children's Services and support will be sought from:-

Our Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager is Lisa Bowen who manages our Exploitation team, if you are worried about exploitation or missing concerns about a child please refer to MASH or the child's social worker. You should also copy missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk in to any referrals

CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

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

We are clear in our school that only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Our staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. We understand that when children have suffered abuse, neglect and exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (especially in the context of Covid 19), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. We know that early help is critical when supporting children and young people who are suffering trauma, depression, anxiety, low mood and other indicators of mental health.

KCSIE 2026 introduces explicit references to suicidal ideation and suicide risks as key indicators of underlying abuse or neglect. Staff must be explicitly directed to report these to the DSL rather than treating them purely as a pastoral or medical issue.

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

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

Further advice can be found via
Preventing and tackling Bullying
Mental Health and behaviour in Schools
Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing

Rise Above PHSE curriculum support
Every Interaction Matters
Wellbeing for Education recovery including s bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

In our school we understand that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

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

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

CHILDREN WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, OR GENDER QUESTIONING

In Keeping Children Safe In Education 2026, Paragraph 251 states A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm; however, they can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. Schools and colleges should consider how to address vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying and take steps to prevent it, including putting appropriate sanctions in place.

Schools and colleges should take time to understand the thoughts and 65 feelings of children who are questioning their gender and should be appropriately professionally curious about the full range of the child's experiences. Schools and colleges should remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

We know that bullying has a detrimental impact on young people's mental health and their ability to thrive at school and college. Bullying can affect a child's attainment and wellbeing. We are clear that all forms of bullying, for whatever reason, are unacceptable. School will take a strong, proactive stand against all forms of bullying, and will tackle bullying at the earliest opportunity to prevent it from escalating.

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

RSE curriculum

DOMESTIC ABUSE

We know that domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Our staff/volunteers understand that exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, and can be perpetrated by intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Controlling behaviour

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

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

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

Additional support is available from Operation Encompass and provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse.

The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

Further information can be accessed via:-
Domestic violence and abuse
NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects
Refuge what is domestic abuse/effects of domestic abuse on children
Safe lives: young people and domestic abuse

EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS

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

When the Academy hires or rents out school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) they will ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe.

When services or activities are provided by the Academy, under the direct supervision or management of our school staff, our arrangements for child protection will apply.

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

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

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

Alternative Provision

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

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

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

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

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

HOMELESSNESS

Our staff/volunteers understand that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) are

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

We are aware that indicators may be:-
•household debt
•rent arrears
•domestic abuse
•anti-social behaviour
•the family being asked to leave a property

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

Further explanation is found at Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets Homeless reduction factsheet

HONOUR BASED ABUSE (FORCED MARRIAGE, FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND BREAST IRONING)

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

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

- Female Genital Mutilation

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

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

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM

- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a ‘special’ procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

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

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

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

We know that where a teacher (including HLTA’s and cover supervisors) discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there is a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police. We know teachers (including HLTA’s and cover supervisors) must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless our teachers (including HLTA’s and cover supervisors) have good reason not to, they will still consider and discuss any such case with our schools designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and involve Children’s Services as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases i.e. where teachers (including HLTA’s and cover supervisors) do not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers (including HLTA’s and cover supervisors) will follow our safeguarding procedures and those set out in Walsall’s procedures.

Mandatory reporting of FGM factsheet

- Forced Marriage

The legal age at which a marriage can take place is now 18 and applies to non-binding, unofficial marriages as well as legal marriages. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or

emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. We can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage, our staff have been briefed on the indicators of possible forced marriage and honour based abuse and will refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
Guidance for forced marriage
The Right to Choose-guidance on forced marriage

ONLINE SAFETY

We know pupils increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The Designated safeguarding lead has responsibility for ensuring all online access is appropriately, filtered, monitored, risk assessed, reviewed and updated as necessary.

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

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk (4C's):

• **Content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views; AI-generated deepfakes or realistic misinformation,
• **Contact**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; Generative AI chatbots that may give harmful, manipulative, or age-inappropriate advice,
• **Conduct**: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying; self-generated intimate images, Creating or distributing non-consensual AI-generated images of peers, Hacking, illegal downloads, or breaking digital laws.
• **Commerce**: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (https://apwg.org/).
Where children are being asked to learn online at home the DfE has provided advice to support schools and colleges do so safely.

We are in regular contact with parents and carers. These communications are used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We hope parents and carers find it helpful to understand what systems we use to filter and monitor online use. It is especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the

sites they will asked to access and be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Whilst considering our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, The Academy will do all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process, The Academy ensures our school has appropriate technological filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They ensure that our leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. The Academy is committed to consider the age range of our children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks. Staff are also aware that they need to fully and actively monitor the use of technology both in the classroom and any tasks set at home.

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE (Including Harassment and violence)

Staff are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- • Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- bullying (including cyberbullying prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying),
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'),
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse),
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon,
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence),
- sexual harassment9 such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse,
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party,
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and seminudes,
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”, or “having a laugh” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse.

In our school we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school’s Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying policy and Online Safety policy.

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

The allegation:

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

All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender questioning are at greater risk.

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

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

PREVENTING RADICALISATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Staff are alert to changes in children’s behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school’s core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society. We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Our school governors, the Head Teacher, Single Point of Contact, (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will assess the level of risk within our school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. We have risk assessments that include consideration of the school's RE curriculum, SEND policy, assembly policy, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of pupils by gender and SEN, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

The broader responsibilities for our School are defined within the Walsall Radicalisation and Extremism guidance September 2015.

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

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

If a member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the SPOC and to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (if this is not the same person). Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and

Channel training from the Home Office. Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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

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

PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

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

It is the duty of local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered within their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, but our responsibility to be aware and refer children who may be privately fostered. If our school makes arrangements for children to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related then we will consider whether the arrangement where children stay with UK families could amount to "private fostering"

All staff in our school will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies) of any children that fall into the category of private fostering.

REASONABLE FORCE

There are limited circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time', the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

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

Our procedures are clear that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes a report immediately and share the report with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies) to ensure that:-
•The child was not harmed
•That first aid has been considered
•That the parents/carers of the child or young person have been informed
•That reasonable force was the best and most proportionate response to the situation

Further information
Use of Reasonable force in Schools

SERIOUS VIOLENCE

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

Staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence

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

Further information
Preventing youth violence and gang involvement

YOUNG CARERS
We understand that a young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem.
Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister. They do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning, or helping someone to get dressed and move around.

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

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

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

Part 4 - Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment between children/child on child abuse.

All of our staff and volunteers are aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. We know this abuse may be driven by wider societal factors beyond our school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language and adapt our curriculum as below to overcome this wherever we can.

We make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated and it will never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. We will be challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

- Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- bullying (including cyberbullying prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying),
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’),
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse),
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon,
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence),

- sexual harassment9 such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse,
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party,
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and seminudes,
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

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

Prepared	**Protecting**	**Preventing**
Understanding the risk of harm and build capacity. Build strong foundations and capacity to tackle youth violence in the long term.	Supporting and changing lives Creating contentions and feeling of safety and belonging for young people Effective youth engagement that build trust and nurtures positive behaviour, beliefs and skills.	Prevention and intervention To be able to intervene at the earliest opportunity and maximise the early help offer to young people and families.

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

Their role in preventing child-on-child abuse
How to identify the indicators of abuse
What to do if they have a concern about a child
How to respond to a report of abuse
How to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)
Where to go if they need support
That children can abuse other children inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:

- Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
- Non-consensual sharing of self-generated images and/or videos, including those generated using AI (e.g. deepfakes) especially around chat groups.
- Sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content

That they need to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'

That even if there are no reports in school, it doesn't mean it's not happening

The importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviour

That girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers

To keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation;

Abuse may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of our school

We teach our pupils:

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

The curriculum includes teaching about:

Healthy and respectful relationships
What respectful behaviour looks like
Consent
Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
Body confidence and self-esteem
Prejudiced behaviour
Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence is defined as:

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

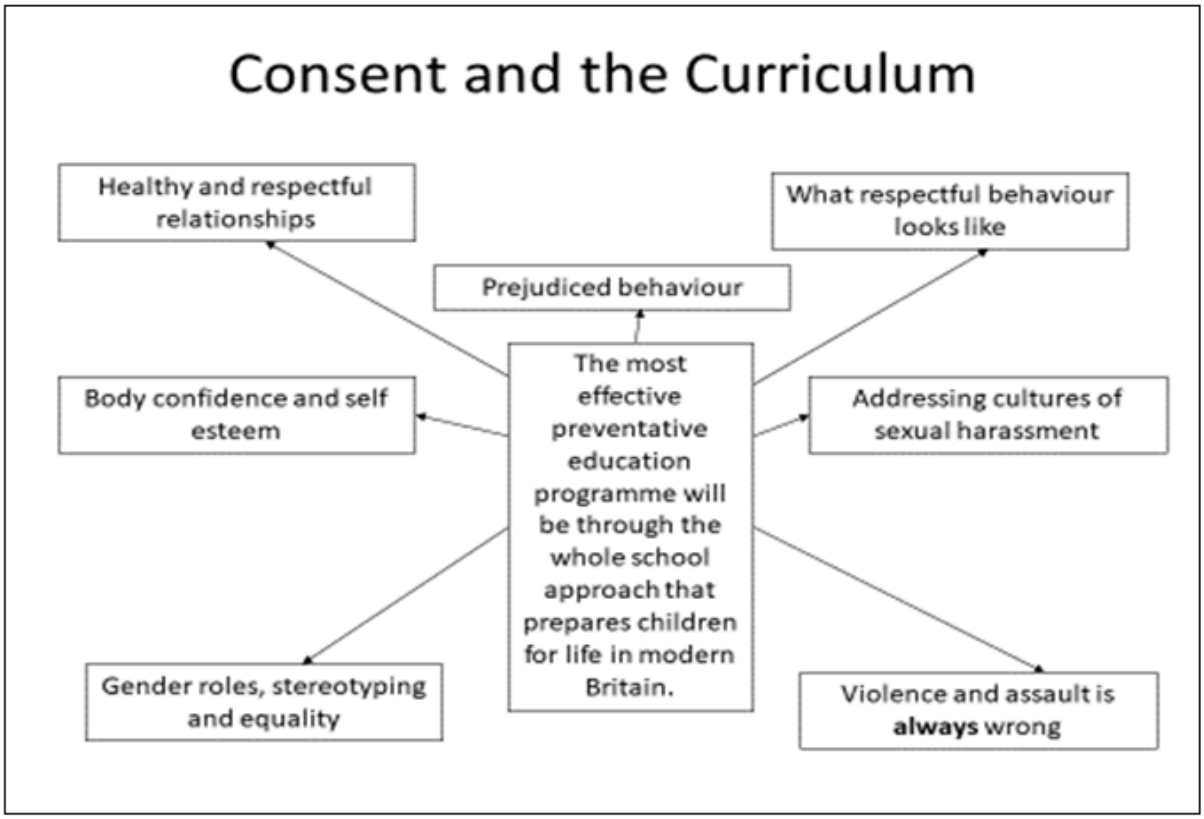
Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (We are aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)
Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Consent is defined as:

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

Sexual consent

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



Sexual harassment is defined as:

• ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school.
• Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
• sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
• sexual “jokes” or taunting
• physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (we consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
• online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence
• sharing self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including those generated using AI (e.g. deepfakes)
• sharing of unwanted explicit content is an offence
• upskirting (is a criminal offence)
• sexualised online bullying is an offence

- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB):

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB will be considered in a child protection context and Walsall Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need guidance will be referred to.

School has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence; that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it, In KCSIE 2026 it is clear that:
• Recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported,
• Recognising the escalatory nature of misogyny and the benefits of early identification to support their approach to minimising the risk of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence,
• Challenging behaviours, potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting
Taking a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. All such incidents require a safeguarding response, with a proportionate approach that considers the age, development, and circumstances of the children involved, as well as any elements of coercion, exploitation or vulnerability.

Children who are victims of HSB, sexual harassment or sexual violence wherever it happens, may find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Whilst any report of HSB, sexual harassment or sexual violence should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely girls will be the victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with disabilities are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers
https://shorespace.org.uk/

Online:

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

The Legal status:

It is unlawful for our school to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights include:
• Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
• Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
• Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
• Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to an effective education

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

Our starting point regarding any report will always be that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It is especially important, not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'just having a laugh", part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Procedures for online abuse

Our procedures for dealing with the concerns are:-
•We will never view, download or share the imagery, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal
•If we have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), we will report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies)
•We will not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
•We will not ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or our statutory partners.

•We will not share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers unless advised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or our statutory partners to do so.
•We will not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
• We will recognise the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
•We will explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Confidentiality:

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, we will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved. We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. If required we will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.
Gillick competence - Fraser guidelines

Risk assessment:

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

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

Risk assessments will be recorded and be kept under review. At all times we will be actively considering the risks posed to all pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.
Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required also.

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

Manage internally:

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

Families First:

• We may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from additional support from Family Help, providing support as soon as an issue emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early support is more effective in responding to issues early to help minimise the likelihood of the concerns escalating, thereby promoting the welfare of children and families.

Families First can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

• Family Help and the ability to manage an issue internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: school may manage internally and seek support from Family Help for both the victim and perpetrator(s).

• All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded

Referrals to Children's Services:

• Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger we will make a referral to Children's Services
• At the point of referral to Children's Services we will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision will be made with the support of Children's Services.
• If a referral is made Children's Services will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.
• Where statutory assessments are appropriate we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.
• We will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Children's Services investigation before protecting the victim and other children in school. It is important for our school to work closely with Children's Services (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

• In some cases, Children's Services will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. We will be prepared to refer again if we believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm, referring to FaST: Finding a Solution Together if still not in agreement with the decision. https://walsallsp.co.uk/about-us/fast/

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

• All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions will be recorded

Referrals to Police:

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting principle is that we will refer on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach in these cases.
Referrals to the police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to Children's Services. Our designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will liaise closely with the local police presence.

The police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.

Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People released under RUI can have no conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.

Whatever arrangements are in place we will consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise.

Particular regard will be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim and the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness We will ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence we will update the risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children in school and, (if we have not already done so) consider any suitable action in line with our behaviour policy. This process will include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remain(s) in school and the victim is still a registered pupil, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator(s)'

timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils in our school. We will ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

If the case is classed as “no further action” (NFA’d) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. We understand the alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

We may make a referral to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) which is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report to one of their Child Protection Advisors will occur.

Working with all partners:

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

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

Victims:

We know it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We ensure the we explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Guidance is listed below to support our procedures, including LGFL 'Undressed' providing us with advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders

Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools.
Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools
KCSIE 2026 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education
Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and PRUs (statutory guidance for schools)
Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools)
Children Missing Education (advice for schools)
Cyberbullying (advice for schools)
The Equality and Human Rights Commission (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (advice for schools)
Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance (advice for further and higher education providers)
Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
Rise Above (advice by Public Health England for schools)
Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools)
Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing (advice for schools)
Teaching about relationships sex and health (guidance for schools)
UKCIS sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for dealing with concerns
HSB toolkit
Undressed resources from LGFL

PART FIVE – SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

OUR SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

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

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

Our recruitment and selection process

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

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

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

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

We require applicants to provide:

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

Our Academy does not accept copies of curriculum vitae in place of an application form.

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

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

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

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

As part of our commitment to safeguarding:

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

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

Our interview questions will always include:

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

Our interviews will always be used to explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing will include:
• applicants' implication that adults and children are equal
• applicants lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
• applicants inappropriate idealisation of children
• applicants inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children
• applicants' indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours

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

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

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

Our Academy pre-appointment vetting checks, regulated activity and recording information

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

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

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

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

When obtaining an enhanced DBS; if an applicant is moving from a previous post which ended not more than three months before the person's appointment within our school we will follow guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

We use Check the children's barred list - GOV.UK to ensure that the right level of DBS and barring checks are completed in our Academy. Once complete we will be able to compare any information disclosed on the certificate with any information shared by the applicant during the recruitment process. When assessing any disclosure information on a DBS certificate we will take into consideration the explanation from the applicant, including:
• the seriousness and relevance to the post applied for
• how long ago the offence occurred
• whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents
• the circumstances around the incident
• whether the individual accepted responsibility for their actions

We will also consider the incident in the context of the Teachers' Standards and Teacher misconduct guidance, if the applicant is applying for a teaching post.

When using the Update Service we will:
• obtain consent from the individual to carry out an online check to view the status of an existing standard or enhanced DBS check;
• confirm the DBS certificate matches the individual's identity
• examine the original certificate to ensure that it is valid for our school
• ensure that the level of the check is appropriate to the job they are applying for

Our schools' procedures for prohibitions, directions, sanctions and restrictions

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

We complete checks under section 128 direction to check if someone is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a maintained school.
From 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system no longer maintains a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states.

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

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

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

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

We have procedures in place to undertake the necessary childcare disqualification checks for staff who work with children aged 5 and under, including reception classes, but also apply to

those working in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, such as breakfast clubs and after school care. We refer to Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018 for clarity of checks.

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

In our Academy individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK undergo the same checks as all other staff. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, we make any further checks we think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

Following the UK's exit from the EU we apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

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

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

To support us in this process we refer to Recruiting teachers from overseas guidance

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

We ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at our school, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity relating to children will require an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity relating to

children, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including children's barred list information) will be required. Under no circumstances will a contractor on whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity relating to children. We check the identity of contractors on arrival at our academy.

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

Walsall Local Authority provides a letter of comfort which provides assurance to schools that all necessary checks have been undertaken for Childrens Services and Health staff (including Social Workers, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, SEND Case Workers, Family Help Officers, CAMHS workers and other roles that involved working directly with children, young people and their families). This ensures that we can be assured that key staff meeting with children and families, in our school have had the appropriate DBS check. We will request evidence of their Walsall Council/Health ID/photo card, and we understand that such staff are not required to present their DBS certificate to our school

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

In our Academy under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. We complete risk assessments for volunteers and these consider:
• the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
• what we know about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers;
• whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability; and
• whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and if it is, what level is appropriate bearing in mind DBS checks for volunteers are free.

Details of the risk assessment will always be recorded.

Ongoing vigilance in our Academies.

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

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

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

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

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

SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS MADE ABOUT STAFF, INCLUDING SUPPLY TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS.

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

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

In these circumstances all allegations against other members of staff or volunteers will be referred to the Headteacher/principle. In their absence you should seek to speak with a member of staff from the Senior Leadership Team. If your concern is about the Headteacher/principle you need to speak to the Chair of Governors. Information sharing should not be barrier but in the unlikely event that you cannot access the people above please discuss your concerns with the Local Authority Designated Officer, 01922 652322 email lado@walsall.gov.uk

If a concern has reached the harm threshold:

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

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

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

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

The LADO will discuss the matter with the Headteacher/principle to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Children's Services is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate. Suspension will not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. All options to avoid suspension will be considered prior to taking that step. The headteacher/governor must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at school, or until the allegation is resolved. It will be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at school is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, the headteacher/governor will seek views from our personnel adviser and the LADO, as well as the police and Children's Services where they have been involved. Where it is deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within school and provided with their contact details.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be:
• formally told about the allegation as soon as possible. The headteacher/governor will consult the LADO and where involved Children's Services and/or the police on what information can be disclosed
• kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child – no information can be shared regarding the staff member

• made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers in schools whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002.

Where the initial discussion leads to no further action, our headteacher/governor and the LADO will:
• record the decision and justification for it
• agree on what information will be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom

Some allegations will require immediate referral to the Children's Services and the Police, but common sense and judgement will be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO will immediately refer the matter to the Children's Services and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened.

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

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

Where a referral is made directly to Children's Services, they will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police and the headteacher.
Where such allegations are made consideration must be given to the following three strands:

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

The definitions that will be used when we determine the outcome of an allegation are set out below:
• Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
• Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation
• False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

• Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence
• Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Services may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per behaviour policies.
Where an adult makes an allegation to our school that they were abused as a child, the individual will be advised/supported to report the allegation to the police. Non-recent allegations made by a child, will be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with Children's Services and the police.

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

If a concern has not reached the harm threshold/lower level concerns:

Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example, suspicion, complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside our schools; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

A low-level concern is still a concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of our school may have acted in a way that:
• is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
• does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
• being over friendly with children
• having favourites
• taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
• engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
• using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Our training helps staff understand that such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.
Our procedure for sharing confidentially such concerns as above is clear: -

If low-level concerns are shared initially with the DSL or with the headteacher it is a matter for the individual academy to decide. If the former, then our DSL will inform the headteacher of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern.
The academy headteacher will be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in our academy the headteacher may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If we are in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, we will consult with the relevant LADO.

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

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

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

Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers are able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our academy safeguarding regime; concerns are taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

If there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in our school staff will refer to the Whistle-blowing Policy.

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

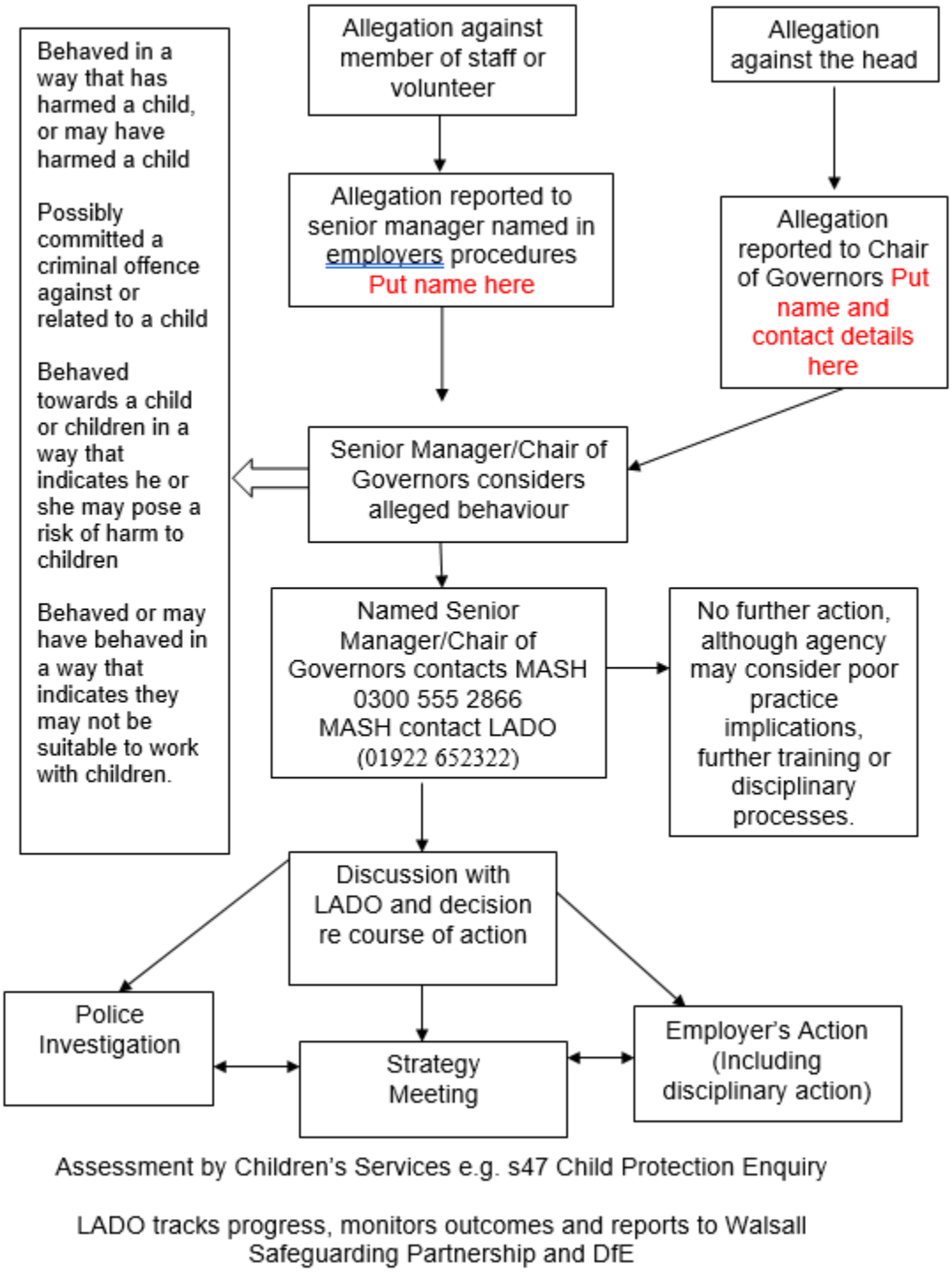
- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- a legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above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

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 800 5000 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing and
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/

More information and the full Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection Procedures can be found at https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers



Appendix 1

The seven golden rules to sharing information

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Appendix 2 - CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES -

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

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

Care of unaccompanied migrant children and victims of modern-day slavery.		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children
Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked	DfE and HO guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance
Child exploitation disruption toolkit		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit
Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance Forced marriage: information and practice guidelines		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack
Home Office Faith based Abuse: National Action Plan		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief
Police Powers	Police and Criminal Evidence Act PACE	PACE Code C

Appendix 3 - Host families - homestay during exchange visits

Schools and colleges often make arrangements for children to take part in exchange visits, either to other parts of the UK or abroad. Exchanges can benefit learning across a range of

subjects. In particular, foreign visits can enrich the languages curriculum and provide exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and expertise in the use of other languages. We have a duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare. This extends to considering their safety and how best to minimise risk of harm to those children during any exchange visit the school or college arranges, and when organising for the care and accommodation of a child with a host family (known as homestays) as part of the exchange.

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

A regulated activity provider commits a criminal offence if it knows, or has reason to believe that, an individual is barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from engaging in regulated activity but allows that individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.
Where the child's parent(s) or a student themselves arranges their own homestay, this would be a private arrangement therefore the school or college would not be the regulated activity provider.

Appendix 4 - Lockdown Procedure

SMART Response

NEW INVENTION NILA LEARNING ACADEMY

LOCK DOWN

Level 0 (incident is reported)

Remain calm, report to HT or most senior member of staff, Risk Assess to identify threat level, review CCTV. If it needs further investigation, Headteacher steps it up to Level 1.

Level 1

(Investigative Assessment)

Remain calm. Keep yourself safe. Communicate potential risk via phone/radio

333 – to call out:

REPEAT x 2 'URGENT CALL'

CCTV reviewed if available

Member of Leadership Team goes to area of threat to assess, ideally in pairs.

If area clear, step down to Level 0 – communicate via phone/radio

"URGENT CALL, STEP DOWN" x2

OR

If HT feels area is not clear and is unsafe, step up to level 2 and communicate to Bronze card holders via phone/radio:

"URGENT CALL, LEVEL 2" x 2

Level 2

(Take positions)

Remain calm. Complete headcount.

Office to communicate with radios (PE / Playground)

Site team lock any building entrances. Y3 and Y4 cloakrooms to be locked.

Call 999 and liaise with emergency services. Review CCTV, if available.

If HT feels that the 'threat' can be isolated to one area, step up to Level 3.

If HT feels that the 'threat' can not be isolated to one area then step up to Level 4

Level 3

(Secure affected areas)

Headteacher's office is the named Control Centre. Second location is the school office.

Remain calm but alert. CCTV reviewed, if available. Communicate to all classes:

"URGENT – SECURE ALL AREAS" x 4 using phone/radio.

Keep all windows closed, building locked, blinds closed. Keep pupils inside and continue to follow timetable as far as possible – indoors. Be prepared to follow further instructions.

CEO, Central Team, Chair of Trustees, LA to be contacted. Communicate with parents & neighbouring schools. Activate Bronze cards.

Level 4

Secure all areas - full SMART response

Remain calm but alert. Communicate to all classes:

"URGENT – LOCKDOWN" x 4 using phone/radio

CCTV reviewed, if possible

The site should fall SILENT immediately.

Collect pupils/make your way into a room within the building immediately. Toilets, communal areas to be cleared. No one visits the toilets.

If already in a room, stay there.

Take in anyone else that may be coming from communal areas.

Account for pupils in your care. If possible, notify office of missing/additional pupils.

Outdoor, communal area pupils to move to predetermined safe place.

Attempt to block doors with items which are available. Hide staff lanyard. Turn off lights/screens, close blinds. Keep everyone silent, ideally seated on the floor in the least visible area.

Remain like this with doors barricaded until you receive the all-clear. Activate Bronze cards.

SMART Response

NEW INVENTION NILA LEARNING ACADEMY

LOCK DOWN

Level 0 (incident is reported)

Remain calm, report to HT or most senior member of staff, Risk Assess to identify threat level, review CCTV. If it needs further investigation, Headteacher steps it up to Level 1.

Level 1

(Investigative Assessment)

'URGENT CALL' x 2

Remain calm

Keep working as normal

Await next stage.

If clear – step down

"URGENT CALL, STEP DOWN" x 2

If unsafe – step up to level 2.

"URGENT CALL, LEVEL 2" x 2

Level 2

(Take positions)

Remain calm.

Headcount.

Lock any building entrances, inc cloakrooms.

Office to call PE in (if outside)

Level 3

(Secure affected areas)

"URGENT – SECURE ALL AREAS" x 4

Windows closed, building locked, blinds closed. Keep pupils inside and continue to follow timetable – indoors

If clear – step down

"URGENT CALL, STEP DOWN" x 2

If unsafe

ESCALATE TO LEVEL 4

Level 4

Secure all areas - full SMART response

"URGENT – LOCKDOWN" x 4

The site should fall SILENT immediately.

No toilet visits. Block doors. Lights / screens off.

If already in a room, stay there.

Keep everyone silent, ideally seated on the floor in the least visible area. Remain like this with doors barricaded until you receive the all-clear.

When clear

"URGENT CALL, STEP DOWN" x 2

Appendix 5 - Emergency Evacuation Testing Log

Date Tested	
13.3.26	Scaled up to Level 3, not full lockdown. Full lockdown scheduled to be tested Summer 2026.
3.7.26	Level 4 – full lockdown drill