

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Document Title	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	
Version Number	V1	
Status	Approved	
Publication Date	July 2024	
Policy Owner/Author	Brian Walton	
Review Date	July 2025	
Approved/Ratified by	Brookside ELT and Local Governing Body	Date: 19.9.2024
Distribution	All Academy	

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Introduction and context

At Brookside Academy we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our academy to share this commitment. Adults in our academy take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. All adults will always act in the best interest of the child. We are committed to providing an environment that nurtures and transforms the lives of children and young people in our academy and take seriously our responsibilities to safeguard and promote their welfare. In addition, our academy undertake responsibilities to work in partnership with agencies and partners as part of the wider, multi-agency, safeguarding system, in accordance with our academy individual Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, statutory guidance and Somerset Safeguarding Partnership (SSCP) policies and procedures. Personal sensitive information is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Part 3, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Consent to share information will be sought unless we are required to share information where there are child protection concerns (and consent has been withheld) or we are requested to share information with other statutory agencies such as the police or local authority children's social care in pursuit of their enquiries in order to protect and safeguard children and young people.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively we ensure our approach is child centered, always considering what is in the **best interests** of the child or young person.

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

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

Most children grow up in loving families and supportive communities and become independent, resilient adults. Wherever possible we want this for all children and young people, so that they and their families can support themselves by engaging with and contributing to their local communities. In order to achieve this children, young people and their families should receive the right intervention as early as possible to tackle problems and prevent issues escalating. All practitioners will adopt an Early Help/Think Family approach meaning they look at the whole family situation and what needs to happen to improve that situation whether that means working with adults, children or the whole family.

Our academy commitment

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people through:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.
- Our academy assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of children and young people.
- The provision of high-quality residential provision which nurtures and develops our children and young people to achieve and thrive.
- Identifying concerns early and provide appropriate help and support for children and young people and their parents/carers to prevent concerns escalating to a point whereby intervention would be required under the Children Act 1989 and in accordance with the Somerset Effective Support for Children and Families, Thresholds for Assessment and Services guidance.
- Children and young people are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.
- Victims of harm should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, exploitation, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific duties under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

General duties include:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with disadvantages affecting children and young people with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

Details of our specific duties are published under BTCT's equality statement and measurable objectives. This document is available on BTCT website.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available in the academy and on our academy website.

Glossary

- References to "staff" related to any staff-member, paid or unpaid, who contribute to the care, transportation, activities or education for our children and young people.
- SSCP is an abbreviation for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Part One

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B.
- All staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Academy Behaviour Policy; the BTCT Code of Conduct.
- All staff will know how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any deputies, Trust Safeguarding Lead, and the named Governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the setting's safeguarding systems
- Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable children and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- Complete all safeguarding training (including online safety which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and cyber security).
- Any child may benefit from early help, but all academy staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
 - is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
 - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
 - has a mental health need
 - is a young carer
 - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
 - is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
 - has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from the academy and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
 - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
 - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
 - has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
 - is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
 - is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
 - is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
 - is a privately fostered child.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our academy has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has the status and authority to carry out the duties of the post.

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL are available on the website, in the academy reception area, our newsletters and on notice boards around the academy.

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- The DSL is a member of the academy's Senior Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, (including Online Safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place) within the setting.
- The DSL is the headteacher, and works with relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on child's attendance, engagement and achievement at the academy.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs, Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Administrators.
- Manages early identification of vulnerability of children and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where children with additional needs have been identified. These can include those:
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - who may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.

The DSL will also:

- Be a key point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
- Support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
- If required, liaise with the Case Manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to child protection cases which concern a staff member.
- Coordinate safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding to the academy community around policies and practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable children with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - know who these children are,
 - understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - Are supported to identify the challenges that children in this group might face.
 - Provide additional academic support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker to reach their potential.
- Ensure the successful transfer of the Safeguarding/Child Protection File when a child moves on to a new setting within 5 days for in year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.

- 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.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding cover and availability during term time/ any out of hours/out of term activities managed by the academy.

The Governing Body (including Trusts or Directors)

Our Trust and governing bodies will ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They will also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in the provision are effective, comply with the law at all times and Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

Duties are further outlined:

- The appointed Safeguarding Governor will liaise with the Head Teacher and the DSL to produce a termly report for governors and complete the S. 175 (annual safeguarding) audit for the Somerset Education Safeguarding Service;
- Ensure that the academy remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay.
- Ensure that this document is updated annually (or when there are significant updates)
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of setting's Senior Leadership Team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the training and learning for the academy community is robust, effective and regularly updated.
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with any advice from the safeguarding partners.
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework
- To ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to children, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for children to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child abuse (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns.
- the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) duties to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure are in place.

- Ensure they review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices by following DfE *Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges*:
 - identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
 - review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
 - block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
 - have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet the safeguarding needs.

This information should be included in the academy Prevent Duty Risk Assessment.

- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement for children in care and other care arrangements. Ensure the academy has current Education of Looked After Children in Schools Policy and they have reviewed the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of Looked After Children in the academy.

Staff Induction

As part of the mandatory induction process for new employees/volunteers, they will attend an induction briefing with either DSL or DDSL, that will include the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, academy Behaviour Policy, BTCT code of conduct, DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education. Online safety training will be part of staff induction, to include an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. New staff will also complete safeguarding training, Prevent and FGM awareness.

All will complete: Appendix A: Staff Induction Record. Staff induction includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns. Where My Concern/CPOMs is used in academy's staff will have a protocol and training on how to use effectively.

Safeguarding Training for all Staff

All staff receive annual safeguarding refresher training, where possible via face to face, delivered by DSL/DDSL or another Advanced Child Protection trained member of staff. This includes online safety, FGM training to understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty. All staff will complete online training which includes Prevent awareness training, this is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the Prevent Duty.

Throughout the year staff will also receive updates via email bulletins and staff meetings. Staff training includes references to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.

Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies

In addition to the all-staff training outlined above, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head teacher and deputies will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety) training required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.

The Head teacher and deputies/safeguarding officers will be trained to the same level as the DSL.

The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the SSCP and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins. As part of our whole academy safeguarding approach, our academy is encouraged to develop safeguarding specialisms within their teams e.g. SHSV, domestic abuse awareness, etc.

Training for Governors

All governors and trustees should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole academy approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

Part Two – Reporting concerns

It is not the staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

Clear procedures for reporting any concerns are given to all staff and volunteers and visitors. This is done as part of the staff induction, training or on a safeguarding leaflet as they sign in at our academy reception. This policy is made available on the academy website.

All staff are alert to potential indicators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and listen carefully to what a child says, how they behave, and observe how they communicate if non-verbal (due to age, special needs and/or disabilities, or if unwilling to communicate). All staff will try to understand the child's personal experiences and observe and record any concerns.

All staff communicate in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding and use evidence-based practice tools for engaging with children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

All concerns should be reported in writing, using the academy's concern form (whether online My Concern/CPOMs or paper based) Concerns should always be completed as soon as possible, on the same day. Trust staff visiting the academy site should not email the DSL, they should contact the DSL before leaving the site. Staff should never wait until the next day to report a concern.

Staff will follow the reporting procedures in the academy policy. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Social Care, Police or the NSPCC if the situation is an emergency and the DSL/DDSL or another Level 3 member of staff and headteacher are all unavailable.

If it is considered that a child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, a referral should be made to **Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224** or **Emergency Duty Team 0300 123 23 27** or Police.

When a child tells me about abuse, they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child, tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality, assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people to do this, say who this will be and why.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information Use TED 'Tell Me, explain to me, describe to me' questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you, tell them they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

Information Sharing

Our academy is committed to have due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing and withholding personal information as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff at the academy are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Staff will be open and honest, where practicable and safe to do so will explain what information is being shared, who the information is being shared with and the reason why they are sharing the information.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with [Information sharing for safeguarding practitioners](#)

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk,
- by doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent,
- or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when our academy will not provide students' personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). If in doubt we will seek legal advice.

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

Remote Learning and Safeguarding

Remote learning may be appropriate in situations when children, in agreement with the academy, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from the academy, or longer-term illness, assuming students are able to complete work at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, students are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms. This policy should be read alongside the Policy for children who cannot attend school because of health needs and/or BTCT Remote Learning Policy (available on BTCT website).

All live online teaching sessions will be delivered through Microsoft Teams, either through one-to-one sessions with the student and virtual teacher, or small paired sessions. All sessions will be recorded and stored for accessibility if required.

Attendance will be tracked by the virtual teacher and data shared with their academy's attendance officer. If attendance is sporadic, the virtual teacher will make direct contact with the designated member of staff to identify potential barriers to engagement.

Student expectations

- Students will follow guidance from the Trust Remote Learning Policy to ensure they know procedures and practice to keep themselves safe online and able to share safeguarding concerns.
- Students will have access to log-in to Microsoft Teams and follow the agreed set timetable discussed at the initial meeting. They will be expected to manage their timetable and ensure they attend agreed online lessons with the virtual teacher.

Virtual Teacher expectations

- Ensure settings are safe for use with students and remind the student that all lessons are recorded and stored.
- Look at the 20 safeguarding principles for remote lessons identified in the Trust Remote Learning Policy.
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the student's designated safeguarding lead or via My Concern/CPOMs. Follow the academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and directions from the KCSiE document.

Identifying and Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Children

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those students who have been identified as vulnerable. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information about vulnerable children is shared with teachers and academy leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- Children who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to academy-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions

This section should be read in conjunction with the academy Behaviour Policy.

When the **suspension** or permanent exclusion of a child is being considered and where additional vulnerabilities are identified it is important that the child's welfare is a paramount consideration.

The Head Teacher will consider their legal duty of care when sending a student home as the result of a **suspension**.

Our academy will exercise its legal duties in relation to its use of such interventions. These include:

- Consideration of whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the [Children Act 1989](#)
- Decisions being made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- Consideration of the child's rights under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- Interventions being consistent with statutory guidance [Suspension and exclusion guidance](#)

Actions to Take:

- Any child with a SEND and/or a safeguarding record should have an assessment of need undertaken, with a view to mitigating any identified risk of harm, in line with Identifying and Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Pupils.
- If the child has an allocated social worker, the academy should have a formal process to ensure contact is made prior to making the decision to suspend the child.
- If the child is Looked After or Previously Looked After, please follow guidance in Trust/Academy Looked After Child Policy.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to permanently exclude, please follow DfE guidance [Suspension and exclusions guidance Sept 2023](#)

Alternative Providers (AP)

Our academy recognises they continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of students placed in an Alternative Provision and should be satisfied that the placement meets the student's needs.

Our academy will ensure that the Alternative Providers has provided written confirmation that all relevant safer recruitment checks have been undertaken. All providers will be registered with DfE. At the initial commissioning meeting our academy will plan the reporting mechanisms for attendance and who is responsible for day-to-day responsibility for any non-attendance and missing children. Our academy will check the Alternative Provider is safe and suitable on a regular basis by visiting the AP **every term**, recording all checks completed and update risk assessment where necessary. Our academy will ensure the AP is helping the children with their personal development. Our academy will complete regular safeguarding audits with AP. Our academy will make regular meetings with any child who attends an Alternative Provider to ensure they feel safe and well, within their alternative learning environment.

Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable Force refers to the physical contact to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed. **Control means either passive physical contact or active physical contact.**

The use of Reasonable Force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered.

Our academy will follow guidance in BTCT Positive Handling and Use of Physical Intervention Policy available on [BTCT Polices](#)

Team Teach Training is available via Inclusion Team at BTCT. Good practice would be to ensure these processes are reviewed on a regular basis.

The use of Reasonable Force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance outlined below:

- [Use of Reasonable Force in Schools \(2013\)](#)
- [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention \(2019\)](#)

There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

Use of academy premises for non-academy activities

Our Trust hire out our academy facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities)

As part of the letting agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement) as a condition of use and occupation of the premises the organisation or individual has appropriate arrangements in place to keep children safe. Our operation team will have access to their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and know the procedures they have in place, failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement. This applies regardless of whether the children who attend any of these services or activities are children registered at our academy.

If our Trust provides services or activities under the direct supervision or management of the trust, academy staff, their safeguarding and child protection policy will apply. For example, summer sports events provided by BTCT must have a welfare officer who will follow the safeguarding and child protection policy. The welfare officer will be able to call an Advanced Child Protection trained member of staff for advice and guidance during school holidays and out of hours, if unavailable they are able to call **Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224** or **Emergency Duty Team 0300 123 23 27**. Any allegation relating to an adult using our premises for the purpose of running activities for children, we will follow Part 4 of KCSiE and BTCT Safeguarding and CP Policy – responding to low level concerns and staff allegations, this will include informing the LADO.

Part Three

Types of abuse/signs/specific safeguarding issues

Abuse and neglect (definitions)

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, exploitation and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviour can be associated with factors outside the academy and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Our responsibilities are:

- to understand what each category of abuse is
- to understand how this abuse can impact on the welfare and development of our children.
- to take appropriate action when we have concerns that a child or young person might be at risk of or already experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect.

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

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

shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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.

Sexual abuse: 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.

Safeguarding in specific circumstances:

In addition to the above there are other areas of safeguarding that we must have due regard to Part One and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education_highlights specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues which staff who work with children and young people should read the following is a synopsis of the areas addressed but are not a fully replica of the guidance.

Children and the court system may be required to give evidence in the criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are a range of guides to support child witnesses. In the civil courts children and young people may be involved in child arrangement hearing and the Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangement information tool detaining the dispute resolution service.

Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for unexplainable causes and/or persistent absences can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

Staff follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children with unexplainable and persistent absences from education, particularly on repeat occasions, as this

may indicate the need for early help. These should be discussed with the DSL, as safeguarding concerns will be reported to the local authority children's services.

Our academy will follow the guidance detailed in Working together to improve schools attendance [From Aug 2024 here](#) and Somerset Education Engagement Policy for Children Missing Education. Further guidance available on KCSiE 2024.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any child who fails to attend school regularly
- of any child who has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more

All staff will have read their academy approach to children missing in education as part of induction and training. Our academy monitors attendance carefully and addresses poor or irregular attendance without delay. Our academy will always follow up with parents/carer when they are not at the academy. Our academy needs to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parent/careers. Our academy has staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly. They work with the local authority and will report any concerns to children's services where there is a safeguarding concern. Staff who know signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. Procedures to inform the child's local authority when we plan to take children off-roll when they: leave school to be home educated, move away, 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.

Our academy will ensure that children who are expected to attend but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a child leaves our academy, we will record the name of the child's new school and their expected start date, if they have a safeguarding record our DSL/DDSL will contact the DSL in their new school.

Children with family members in prison are more likely to have poor outcomes, including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. More information to support the academy can be found on the [Nicco](#) website

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE: • children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions; • children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation; • children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being; • children who misuse drugs and alcohol; • children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and • children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County Lines is the term used to describe gangs and organized 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.

Domestic abuse:

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

Our staff will treat any disclosure of information relating to Domestic Abuse as a Safeguarding concern and we will follow local Safeguarding Procedures.

We acknowledge the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 and will work with its new powers when working with our staff, all children and their families, where we believe Domestic Abuse is a feature and children are living with Domestic Abuse.

Our academy receives a notification (PSN)) from Avon and Somerset Police where there has been an incident in a household involving a child at this academy. We have agreed processes on how to respond and support the child whilst in the academy and are able to escalate any Safeguarding concerns into Children's Services. All PSN will be recorded as new concerns on and children's safeguarding records.

Teenagers aged 16/17 in a relationship are protected by Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Procedures and the law. If our academy is aware that any information received about such a concern, we will treat this as Safeguarding concern and follow our Safeguarding processes, where all involved will be offered support.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency approach in managing cases of Domestic Abuse and where children are residing, the victim will be seen as high risk of serious harm/ homicide. A Multi-Agency response is essential in ensuring that victims and their families are as safe as possible.

Further advice and guidance accessed via the [NSPCC](#), [Refuge](#) and [Safelives](#) spotlight on young people and domestic abuse. The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge 0808 2000 247

Further resources relating to violence against women and girls (VAWG) can be accessed [here](#)

Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, our academy will follow Somerset EHE protocol [here](#). Our academy will work together with the local authority and other 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 special educational needs, if child does have an EHCP the LA will review the plan and work with parents/carers. If there are significant safeguarding concerns, appropriate action will be taken to ensure the right support is put in place to keep the child safe.

Homelessness or being at risk of being made homeless is a significant risk for children or young people. The DSL should refer to the local housing authority at the earliest opportunity. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils to provide meaningful help, including an assessment of need and circumstances. The DfE and the Ministry of Housing, communities and local government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year old's who may be homeless or require accommodation. A series of fact sheets can be accessed [here](#).

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately met.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. In Somerset Young Carers services can be accessed via an Early Help Assessment.

Emotional, Mental Health and Wellbeing

All Staff should also be 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.

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.

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

We acknowledge many children will have periods of feeling anxious, afraid and upset, and can develop phobias. However, some children will experience this more frequently.

Undertaking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing leads to improved emotional health and wellbeing in children, and greater readiness to learn, improved attendance, attention, behaviour, and attainment.

We will provide information and signposting services to children and parents. If Staff have an emotional or mental health concern about a child we will respond to the concern, inform, and discuss our concerns with parents/carers and seek ways to support the child in and out of the academy. If staff have a mental concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL/DDSL or recording on My Concern/CPOMs.

Online Safety, Cyber Security (including remote/blended learning)

We will ensure that we have information and processes to raise awareness of online safety and cyber security for all our staff, children, and parents, our aim is to have a whole academy approach to online safety.

Our academy identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. For example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Our academy adopts a range of effective safeguarding measures, including those set out in *DfE Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges*, that both safeguards and empowers children and young people to access support and remain safe online by reducing the risk of harm through the use of filters, monitoring and appropriate use of policies for those accessing our IT system, whilst at the same time providing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn to keep themselves safe online. When children use our school network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. Our IT system provider has submitted a self-certification to the UK Internet Safety Centre, they also meet technical standards as referenced in *DfE Meeting the digital and technology standards in schools and colleges March 2023*.

A system has also been applied to academy devices supplied to children who are accessing online learning whilst out of the academy. However, many children are able to access the internet using their own data, to minimise inappropriate use, our academy will have issued guidance and advice to keep children safe whilst online to both children and parents/carers.

Cyber Security is a growing Safeguarding concern, and we ensure the appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place to safeguard our systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Our academy will use the standards and resources as available on National Cyber Security Centre.

The Sending of Indecent Images from one child to another through

Digital Media Devices, including nudes and semi-nudes.

In the latest advice for schools and colleges ([UKCiS update Feb 2024](#)) this is defined as the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services which work offline.

The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. This does not apply to adults sharing nudes or semi-nudes of under 18-year-olds. This is a form of child sexual abuse, and we will refer this to the police as a matter of urgency.

We will respond to a child sending indecent images as a safeguarding concern. The DSL/Senior Leadership Team will seek advice from the Police and will consider a referral into children's services.

Responding to Incidents of Child-on-child Abuse

Most cases of children hurting other children will be dealt with under our academy's behaviour policy, but our safeguarding and child protection policy for child-on-child abuse will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns.

All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers, including online abuse.

Our academy will have clear systems in place for children to report any abuse knowing their concerns will be treated seriously and respectfully.

At our academy:

- We have a zero-tolerance approach to all types of abuse. Incidents are taken seriously. These will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'boys will be boys' 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.
- Banter and teasing should be acknowledged and recognised as bullying behaviour and may require proportionate intervention.
- We aim to mitigate the risk of contributing to a culture of unacceptable behaviours or a culture that normalises abuse through education and reflective learning.
- Child-on-child abuse may reflect equality issues in terms of those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics.
- Early identification of vulnerability to child-on-child abuse is made by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.

The academy's response will be:

Proportionate

Considered

Supportive

Decided on a case-by-case basis

We will handle initial reports of abuse by:

- Securing the immediate safety of children involved in an incident and sourcing support for other young people affected.
- Listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will progress, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc.
- ensuring that children who may have been harmed will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting bullying, harassment, abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Ensuring the child's wishes are taken into consideration in any intervention and any action is taken to ensure safety of the target and other members of the wider peer cohort.
- Not promising confidentiality as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with others.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children are at risk but that some groups are more vulnerable than others and includes:

- A child with additional needs and disabilities
- A child living with domestic abuse.
- A child who is at risk of/suffering significant harm
- A child who is at risk of/or has been exploited or at risk of exploited (CCE, CSE)
- A looked after child
- A child who goes with unexplainable and/or persistent absences.
- Children who identify as or are perceived as gender questioning and/or any of the protective characteristics.

Research tells us that girls are more frequently identified as been abused by their peers and more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, and sexual harassment. They often are exploited by gangs and are victims of sexual violence when in gangs. However, we are aware as a school that these are behaviours not just confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as anti- social/criminal behaviours. Boys are more likely to be exploited /entrapped into gangs and subject to violence because of gang culture.

Bullying and Online bullying and behaviour

- Child on child abuse can happen online and through social media. Our schools will respond to this form of abuse, cyber bullying and related behaviour.

Responding to Racism

- We acknowledge that Britain is a multi-racial and multi-faith country, and everyone has the right to have their culture and religion respected by others. Racist bullying is not just about the colour, it can be about your ethnic background or religion too.
- We recognise that racism is illegal. We will, therefore, notify the Police if we believe an offence may have been committed.
- We will provide education in school about racism and its impact on children and their families and this will be taught as part of our RSE curriculum. We will use a whole school approach of tackling and eradicating this type of behaviour.

Hate crime

- Hate crimes happen because of race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation and disability.
- Hate crimes can include:
- physical attacks - physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson
- threat of attack - offensive letters or emails, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate you and unfounded, malicious complaints.
- verbal abuse or insults - harassment over the phone, by text or face to face, abusive gestures and remarks, bullying and threats.
- Hate crime can happen anywhere - at home, school, work or on the street. It can be frightening for the victim and witnesses. Hate crime can happen in school. It is an offence and we will notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Responding to an incident/disclosure

Where bullying, harassment, abuse or violence, has taken place outside of the academy e.g. on school transport, off site during lunchtimes, or in the local community involving one or more of our children; we will investigate and take action around the conduct of the children.

We will also consider if we should notify the Police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Where behaviour between peers is abusive or violent, including sexual harm or sexual harassment within the school; we will use our procedures as set out by the child protection and safeguarding policy, and the procedures as set out by the Somerset Children's Safeguarding Partnership. This may mean a referral to the police and a referral to other statutory partners.

All staff understand that all concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, we acknowledge that anyone can make a referral.

We will record all instances of bullying, prejudice, violence and sexual violence and related incidents involving children and young people. This will include racism and racist bullying. We will inform parents/carers of this.

Sanctions

We will consider the sanctions available to use as a school in reference to our Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying Policy.

We recognise disciplinary actions rarely resolve issues of child-on-child abuse and this academy will consider all courses of action and intervention.

We recognise that emotions and feelings can run high, and we will endeavour to respond to concerns from any child, other children, parents and the local community.

We will ensure all necessary parties including the parents/carers, are informed and kept up to date. We will listen to any concerns and will work to resolve these.

Multi-Agency Working

Our academy will work with our partners and agencies; Children's Social Care, the Police, Health and CAMHS.

We recognise that we will be invited to share information and part of the discussion, being a part of local partnerships and local partnership groups to help identify risks and issues both within the school and in our local community.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, this can be at any point in a child's life. We will decide if an early help approach will benefit a child following any outcome of assessment that we may use. This may mean the development of a safety and support plan as part of the early help process.

Prevention and Training

We are always working hard to create a culture where child on child abuse does not happen, particularly through our RSE curriculum.

We aim to create an ethos of good and respectful behaviour, and this should extend to all areas of the academy and on an academy day, including travelling to and from the academy.

We will ensure that all our children know who to talk to, how to receive advice and help within the academy. We will be able to signpost children to relevant local and national helplines and websites.

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent duty

Being radicalised is a form of exploitation. Preventing vulnerable people from becoming drawn into terrorism is a key aim of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST). It is about safeguarding children and adults, using existing and specialist tools to intervene early and prevent escalation into the 'criminal space' through a multi-agency Channel Panel. All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".¹¹⁰ This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent strategy covers all types of extremism, both domestic violent and non-violent extremism, including the extreme right wing, Islamist militantism and other causes.

Three national objectives of the Prevent strategy have been identified:

Objective 1: Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.

Objective 2: Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support.

Objective 3: Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in colleges should familiarise themselves with the Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales [here](#).

We adhere to the following in terms of four general themes:

- academy risk assessment,
- Working in partnership,
- Staff training, and
- IT policies.

Any concerns of Radicalisation should be reported to the DSL. The referral process will be via an [Prevent Local Process](#). An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

Special Education Needs and disabilities:

There's a concern sometimes that, for children with SEN and disabilities, or certain health conditions, their disability needs are seen first, and the potential for abuse second. If children are behaving in particular ways or they're looking distressed or their behaviour or demeanour is different from in the past, our staff should think about that being a sign of the potential for abuse and not simply see it as part of their disability or their special educational needs. These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. Staff should provide support with communication barriers and difficulties in managing and reporting these challenges.

Children with EHCPs not attending education long term, as a result of parents/carers refusing to send their child to their named placement (typically whilst waiting on outcomes from LA/tribunals). Our academy will ensure a weekly safeguarding call is made to the home from the person identified by the child as a trusted adult e.g. SENCo/Headteacher. The member of staff making the call will speak with both parent/carer and the child. All details of the call will be recorded, on My Concern where available.

Further support services available to help families with advice, information and services via Somerset Council website [Somerset SENDIASS](#)

- Mencap - [Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people](#)
- NSPCC - [Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people](#)

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

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

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

As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Schools should refer to our [Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children](#), when deciding how to proceed.

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.

Children who have a social worker:

At our academy, we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that a child is more at risk than most children. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental ill health. Our academy takes these needs into account when making plans to support children who have a social worker. Our DSL will work with the Virtual school head to monitor

and review the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children who have a social worker.

Looked after children:

Our staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked-after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked-after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked-after children and/or the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care. Our academy will make staff aware of the details of their Designated Teacher (DT). The Designated Teacher will submit an annual report in respect of looked-after children and previously looked after children to the governing body. Our academy will produce an Education of Looked After Children in Schools Policy, which will be regularly reviewed by the governing body. Following statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

So-called 'honour-based' violence (including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Child Marriage, Breast Ironing) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. All forms of honour-based violence (HBV) is abuse, regardless of motivation and should be handled and escalated as such. There are specific mandatory reporting duties for teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Additional guidance and publications:

- FGM: Mandatory reporting procedural information can be accessed [here](#)
- FGM Fact sheet can be access [here](#)
- Child Marriages: Multi- agency guidelines Updated April 2023 access [the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage](#)

Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) – Code C

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police Officers who suspect them of an offence.

PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for the purposes of this Code and any other Code. PACE also states that if at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.

The Designated Safeguarding (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any Police Officer who wishes to speak to a child about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded on My Concern/CPOMs or child's CP file. If having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns.

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

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

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

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority
3. failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
 - a. a police officer;
 - b. employed by the police;
 - c. under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or
 - d. a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance [PACE Code C 2019](#).

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Part Four

Responding to allegations, low-level concerns and whistleblowing

4.1 Allegations made against teachers, other staff, volunteers, contractors and Agency Staff: People in a Position of Trust

Keeping children safe in education covers two levels of concern:

1. Concerns / allegations that may meet the harm threshold.
2. Concerns / allegations that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low-level concerns'

At our school we recognise the possibility that adults working in schools may harm children. We take an 'it can happen here' approach where safeguarding is concerned.

Any concerns about the conduct of another adult in our academy should be taken to the Head Teacher without delay. Any concerns or allegations about the Head Teacher should go to Peter Elliott Trust Leader. A case manager will be allocated during the initial strategy meeting with HR and Trust Safeguarding Lead. Confidentiality maintained at all times.

¹ The police caution is: "You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence."

² A person need not be cautioned if questions are for other necessary purposes, e.g.: (a) solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; to obtain information in accordance with any relevant statutory requirement; in furtherance of the proper and effective conduct of a search, e.g. to determine the need to search in the exercise of powers of stop and search or to seek co-operation while carrying out a search; or to seek verification of a written record.

We will ensure that the allegations threshold is considered, where it is alleged that anyone working in the academy that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers and volunteers has:

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

When dealing with allegations, we will:

- apply common sense and judgement.
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently; and,
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

BTCT Management of Allegations policy and procedure is available on the [BTCT website](#)

Initial action by the Case Manager

Before contacting the Local Authority appointed Designated Officer (LADO) the Case Manager or other senior leader will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts and to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future Police investigation. Following the completion of basic enquiries, the Case Manager will complete the Allegations Reporting Form.

We will adhere to the procedures set out under Allegations Management which can be found on the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website. A referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO is via an Allegations Reporting Form or ARF. All information is available [here](#).

The following may be required:

- written details of the concern/allegation - signed and dated by the person receiving the initial concern/allegation report.
- any other information and names of any potential witnesses; surveillance systems etc.
- a chronology of significant events.
- information already known about those involved, including previous history, other concerns/allegations made by the child or family and the individual's current contact with children.
- checks on any historic incident(s) or logbooks.

There may be situations when the Case Manager will want to involve the Police immediately, for example if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.

Where there is no such evidence, the Case Manager should discuss the concerns/allegations with the LADO to help determine whether Police involvement is necessary.

The academy may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using our premises for the purposes of running activities for

children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow our allegations management and complete a referral to the LADO.

All Staff are made aware of the academy's safeguarding procedures including the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and other adults at induction and safeguarding training.

This policy applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer in our Trust settings.

We aim to create an open and transparent culture where all concerns about all adults involved with our settings are dealt with promptly and appropriately. We aim to identify any concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the Trust and settings are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with our Trust ethos.

If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the academy will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.

Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The academy should not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.

4.2 Low-Level concerns made against teachers, other staff, volunteers, contractors and Agency Staff: People in a Position of Trust

What is a low-level concern

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

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider completing an allegation reporting form (ARF) and submitting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

While low-level concerns are, by their nature, less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the Trust understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g. child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children; sharing about a staff member's personal life
- having favourites, for example calling children by pet names or terms of endearment or buying gifts
- 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; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Staff will remain aware of the fact that all children under the age of 18, are children by law – staff will ensure that they do not assume maturity on behalf of a child and do not engage with children as they would with their own peers.

Sharing and recording a low-level concern

To safeguard and protect children and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with children (member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor) they must immediately report this to the Head teacher (where Headteacher is not available in school report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead DSL)

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, the name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted. If the individual wishes to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

The following will be recorded:

- details of the concern.
- the context in which the concern arose; and
- details of the action taken.

Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Staff concerns should not be recorded on My Concern/CPOMs under any circumstances.

Responding to low-level concerns

Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

In the academy the Headteacher member will:

As the DSL, will determine next steps based on the following:

Behaviour is appropriate and entirely consistent with the staff code of conduct and the law.

The Behaviour constitutes a low-level concern.

If there is any doubt as to whether the information shared may meet the harm threshold, Trust Leader, HR and Trust Safeguarding Lead should be consulted for advice.

If the behaviour meets the harm threshold, a strategy meeting with Trust Leader, HR and Trust Safeguarding Lead will be held and a case manager appointed. This will be referred to the LADO and other relevant external agencies.

Any further investigation may include:

Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information.

Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so.

Where necessary further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information.

This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses.

Self-reporting

It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the "Guidance for safer working practice". In these circumstances they should self-report, either initially to their line manager and/or headteacher. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

Reviewing Low-Level Concerns

The records will be reviewed termly with the Headteacher & DSL, HR Team and Trust Safeguarding Lead. Whenever a new low-level concern is added, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and referred to the LADO if required. A record of these reviews will be retained.

The Trust will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the school's culture and whether or not it has enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur. The headteacher/ELT will review whether any changes need to be made to relevant policies or training programmes considering any evaluations of the school's culture, to achieve an open and transparent culture that deals with all concerns promptly and appropriately.

References

Low-level concerns will usually not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated. All low-level concerns will be stored whilst the individual remains employed within the Trust

Whistleblowing Procedures

Staff are aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- BTCT whistleblowing policy is available via the [BTCT website](#)
- General guidance and advice on whistleblowing: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available](#) for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can also call 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Phone lines are open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday.
- The above channels are accessible to all staff (in the staff handbook, code of conduct and staff notice boards, part of new staff induction).

Part Five

Responding to Child-on-Child abuse

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum. It ranges from normal and developmentally expected (age-appropriate), to inappropriate, problematic, abusive, and violent. Problematic, abusive, and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. This is known as Harmful Sexual Behaviour and it can occur online or in person, or simultaneously. Our school recognises that children are vulnerable to and also capable of harmful sexual behaviour.

We take any allegation of abuse between our children seriously and follow our child protection procedures if a report of harmful sexual behaviour is made. This may include seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate. Decisions are made considering the age and developmental stages of any child involved. We also consider any other factors as appropriate and balance this with our duty and responsibilities to protect all children.

Within this document we use the following widely used and recognised terms in places: 'victim(s)' and 'alleged perpetrator(s)'. We recognise that a child who has reported abuse may not consider themselves to be a victim and may not want to be described in this way. We also recognise that a child who is reported to have displayed abusive behaviour may not consider that they have done so, and that if abusive behaviour has occurred it will have been impactful to them too. We are conscious of the language we use when managing reported abuse, especially when speaking with our children, and will consider this on a case-by-case basis. We are prepared to use any term which our children are most comfortable with.

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes statutory guidance for all education settings: [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, 2024). Part 5 of this guidance sets out how schools should manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another. 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.

- 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.

We recognise that our children can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At the academy, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities, and when children are travelling home.

Sexual violence

This means sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- rape;

- assault by penetration;
- sexual assault (which includes inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching); and
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

Sexual harassment

This means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of the academy, including:

- sexual comments (telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names);
- sexual 'jokes or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, or interfering with someone's clothes;
- displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture or video under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, and / or to cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm (this is a criminal offence).

Online sexual harassment

This can be a single event, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and / or sexual violence. It may include:

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (this is a criminal offence);
- sharing of unwanted explicit content;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats; and
- coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are not comfortable with online.

Responding to Harmful sexual behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging 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.

We use the umbrella term "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). HSB can be an indicator that a child is or has experienced abuse.

It is likely that their natural healthy sexual development has been disrupted in some way. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two.

The academy will use the [NSPCC](#) Hackett Sexualised Behaviour Continuum alongside the knowledge/context of the child to categorise and determine the correct response.

Our DSL has a good understanding of HSB and all reports will be made to the DSL and/or deputy.

Response to harmful sexual behaviour by staff should be effective and proportionate.

Stop – it is important to stop the behaviour immediately before you address it e.g. ask them to move their hand away, use distraction or change the environment.

Define (specifically) – after the behaviour has stopped it is important to define why the behaviour is wrong

State – it is important to clearly state what the school rules are in response to the behaviour e.g. our private parts are private, link to either Pantosaurus or school rules.

Enforce – we need to enforce consequences for the child but not consequences that will shame or humiliate them

Staff should report these concerns:

- as soon as possible
- be clear and explicit
- name the body parts
- where and when it happened
- distinguish between fact and opinion
- don't use euphemisms, as these can be interpreted differently by different people
- use the child's own word and put in quotation marks.

Responses to **developmentally appropriate** sexualised behaviour could be to carry out age-appropriate sex and relationship education across the whole school to reinforce positive message is correct. If the behaviour is considered developmentally typical, there is no need to report the incident externally. Using **STOP, Define, State, Enforce** SDSE tool is a helpful way to support a child's understanding of the rules around sexualised behaviours. Where safe for the child, make the parent/carers aware of any incidents of sexualised behaviour.

Responses to **problematic** sexualised behaviour should include reporting to the local authority. In addition carry out age-appropriate sex and relationship education across the whole school to reinforce positive messages. Monitor the behaviour of the child involved and record any incidents.

Harmful sexual behaviour incidents should always be reported to the local authority.

Safeguarding staff will complete a Sexualised Behaviour Checklist to inform their decision making.

School should complete a safety plan that addresses all issues, this should reflect the child's view and be explained so that the child sees it positively and knows that positive behaviour is supported. The safety plan should be reviewed within three months.

School to monitor the behaviour of the child involved and record any further incidents. Carry out age-appropriate sex and relationship education across the whole school to reinforce

positive messages. Where safe for the child, make the parent/carer aware of any incidents of sexualised behaviour.

1. Action following a report of child-on-child sexual abuse

How we manage reports of sexual abuse made by our children is very important. The wellbeing of our children is always central to our approach. Any child reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We always reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. No child will ever be made to feel that they are creating a problem by reporting harmful sexual behaviour or to feel ashamed. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s), and any other children involved/impacted including siblings.

Our staff will follow these safeguarding practice principles:

- wherever possible, managing any report of harmful sexual behaviour with two members of staff present. This will usually include our Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead);
- listening carefully to a child in a non-judgemental way and ensuring we are clear about how the report will be progressed. We will ensure our children know they can speak to our staff again if they wish to provide more information, or for any other reason;
- where a report includes an online element, we work to the [NPCC When to Call the Police Advice for Schools and Colleges](#) and government advice in [Searching screening and confiscation](#) and [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people](#). We will never view an illegal image of a child as part of our response to a report of harmful sexual behaviour, unless necessary in exceptional circumstances. We will never forward an illegal image of a child; and

working in partnership with other agencies (including statutory partners) to ensure that concerns are appropriately managed.

Safeguarding staff will complete a Sexualised Behaviour Checklist to inform their decision making.

Where a child already has Children's Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child in Need or a child with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform the child's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate

2. Confidentiality and information sharing

Our staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone (including parents/carers or children) about a safeguarding concern, nor promise to keep a secret. In accordance with KCSiE requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) and will require further referral to the local authority and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Parents and carers will normally be informed about any report of abuse, unless we consider that this may place the victim at greater risk.

In some cases, we may need to make a request for support to Children's Social Care and / or a report to the police where this is against a child's wishes. In such cases, we will explain our reasons for doing so and support the child appropriately.

3. Anonymity

We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of harmful sexual behaviour. This means we will consider carefully, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about it, and which staff should know about any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

We are aware of the potential impact of social media, which can facilitate the spreading of rumour and expose a victim's identity, making things more challenging for them. Where the use of social media becomes a factor and is affecting our capacity to manage the report and support our children, we will address this, linking with agencies as appropriate.

4. Recording

It is essential that we record all reports about harmful sexual behaviour within our academy, as with any other child protection concern, any member of staff receiving a report of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time, and location. The record will then be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, our staff will first speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) as soon as possible, and deal with recording as soon as possible afterwards.

Brook Traffic Light Tool

At our academy, DSL or DDSL have undertaken training and are able to use Brook's nationally recognised Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool.

This tool helps professionals:

identify – What is the behaviour?

understand – What is the behaviour communicating?

respond – What response will meet the child's needs?

It helps us make consistent and informed decisions about our response to sexual behaviours and it supports our existing safeguarding arrangements.

Our school may use the Lucy Faithful HSB Tool Kit [Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now](#) Brooks Traffic Light Tool, Somerset HSB Protocol [Available here](#) and/or Hackett's Continuum. These are nationally and local recognised and acclaimed tools to assist in determining healthy, problematic and harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people.

5. Risk Assessment

We will usually complete a risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour. Our risk assessment will include the following considerations:

- the victim, and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them.
- whether there may have been other victims.
- the alleged perpetrator(s).
- the time and location of the incident(s), and any action required to make the location(s) safer; and
- all other children (and, if appropriate, our staff) at the academy, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.

Our risk assessment will be recorded and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. Wherever possible, the victim, alleged perpetrator, and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and subsequent reviews of the risk assessment.

At all times, we will be actively considering any risks that are identified through our risk assessment, and its ongoing review, to our children. We will put measures in place to protect our children accordingly.

Considerations

The safety of our children is paramount. We will use a proportionate approach, based on the principle that harmful sexual behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Our approach will help us to ensure that all children are protected and supported appropriately.

The following principles will guide us:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether harmful sexual behaviour has been displayed.
- the ages and developmental stages of all children involved.
- consideration of any power imbalance between the children involved.
- consideration of whether the alleged incident is a one-off or part of a sustained pattern of abuse.
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.

- the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- consideration of any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or academy staff; and
- consideration of any other related issues and wider context.

All concerns will be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis. Our actions will not be judgmental about the guilt of the alleged perpetrator and will always be taken in the interests of all children involved, balanced with our duty and responsibilities to protect our other children.

6. Safeguarding and supporting a victim

We will assess what short-term and long-term support a child may need to help them manage the immediate aftermath of an incident, and to recover from what they have experienced. A child's existing support network will be central to this work; we will work with other partners as appropriate and in accordance with a child's wishes and, wherever appropriate, in discussion with parents and carers.

We will consider what is necessary to support a victim straightaway. For example, making adaptations to their timetable and in-school support and taking steps to protect them from attention or peer pressure they may experience due to making a report. We will also ensure there is regular review of arrangements to be confident they meet the needs of all children involved.

It may be necessary to make requests for support to mental health and wellbeing services or for therapeutic intervention. We may also need to liaise with other agencies to remove inappropriate material from the Internet, such as the [Internet Watch Foundation](#).

Safeguarding and supporting an alleged perpetrator

We have a duty of care to all children and will protect and support children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. We will do this through considering a child's needs, any risks to their safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support them and their family.

Some children may not realise they have behaved abusively. We will not use language that may make them feel judged or criminalised and ensure that any intervention will be at the least intrusive level required to effectively address the behaviour.

We will carefully consider when to inform an alleged perpetrator(s) about a report of harmful sexual behaviour made against them. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to Children's Social Care and/or the police, to discuss next steps, including how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. This will not prevent the school from taking immediate action to safeguard children, where required.

We will consider appropriate sanctions using our behaviour policy, and work with a child and their support network to consider measures that may help to address their behaviour.

Informing parents and carers

In line with our child protection procedures, we inform parents or carers about reports of sexual abuse unless to do so may place a child at additional risk. We will seek advice from other safeguarding partners in individual cases. In circumstances where parents or carers have

not been informed, we will ensure that we support a child in any decision we take. This is likely to be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

7. Ongoing support

Children who have experienced harmful sexual behaviour display a wide range of responses. Children may show clear signs of trauma, physical and emotional responses, or no overt signs at all. Children who display harmful sexual behaviour may also respond in these or in other ways. We will remain vigilant and show sensitivity to the needs of all our children, for example, about attendance in lessons.

We will consider what ongoing support our children may need, and tailor this on a case-by-case basis. For example, the support provided for children following a single incident of a lewd remark may be different from that following a report of sexual assault. Examples are pastoral support, counselling services, and ensuring that there is a trusted adult for the children involved to speak with if they wish to. It may be necessary for us to maintain arrangements to protect and support victims for some time, working with Children's Social Care and other agencies as required.

We may also need to provide support to children who have witnessed harmful sexual behaviour, or otherwise been affected. This will be informed by our risk assessment and our ongoing work.

We will also consider whether any intervention or support is required as part of a whole-setting approach for our children, or with the wider academy community.

8. Outcomes

We will always seek to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to a report, liaising with our safeguarding partners as appropriate.

The following scenarios may apply:

Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children involved are not in need of early help or statutory intervention. In these cases, we will follow our other academy policies in addressing matters, for example our behaviour / anti-bullying policies, provide education and pastoral support where appropriate.

Early Help

Where statutory intervention is not required or agreed, we may use early help instead. This means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. We will work with parents and carers and other relevant partners when following this approach, which can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation.

Requests for support to Children's Social Care

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a request for support to Children's Social Care. We will inform parents and carers of this unless doing so may put a child at additional risk. We will seek advice from other safeguarding partners in individual cases.

If we make a request for support, Children's Social Care will consider whether the children involved need protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care and other agencies as appropriate. Partnership working helps to ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

In some cases, Children's Social Care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. If a statutory assessment is not considered appropriate by Children's Social Care, we will consider what other support for the children involved may be required. We will make further requests for support to Children's Social Care if we consider that a child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

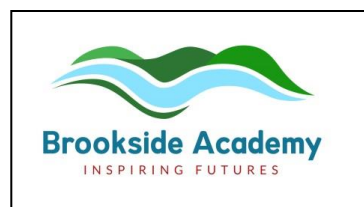
Reporting to the police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, we will report it to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

When we have made a report to the police, we will consult with them and agree what information can be disclosed to our staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the police and other agencies as appropriate to support all children involved (including potential witnesses). This will help to ensure that any actions we take do not jeopardise a police investigation. Sometimes the police will decide that further action is not required. In these circumstances we will continue to engage with other agencies to support the children involved.

Safeguarding Induction



Staff Member: Name and Role:	
Date of Commencement:	
Inductor: Name and Role	
Date of Induction:	
Signed by Inductee:	
Signed by Inductor:	

Agenda:

Welcome to our academy

Outline of the safeguarding induction meeting

- Vision and Ethos
- What is Safeguarding (Child Protection)
- What safeguarding means for children and young people at our academy
- Vision and influence
- Action to be taken if you have a concern.

All members of staff and volunteers need to read and complete a declaration to acknowledge the following key safeguarding documents:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy (including any appendix templates)
- Behaviour Policy including Child on Child
- Academy procedure to unexplained and/or persistent absences
- BTCT Staff Code of Conduct
- BTCT Whistleblowing Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 Part 1 and Annex B
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE March 2015)

Brookside Academy Vision

The vision that we have for our academy is one in which 'Every Child Achieves' and as such we work tirelessly to ensure that we know each child, that they are well taught and have access to great facilities and opportunities to develop academically and personally. We are in the relentless pursuit of excellence within a culture of no barriers and no excuses to achievement. Every child in our care will be supported and challenged to be highly successful and will be incredibly well prepared for the next stage in their lifelong journey of learning.

Our mission

To inspire the young people of our community to achieve success and the best possible outcomes by providing education based upon outstanding teaching and learning, highly supportive environments, and the celebration of diversity.

What is Safeguarding (Child Protection)

Safeguarding is an overarching term used to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, and they are protected from abuse, exploitation and neglect. **We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.** This means protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best life chances.

Every member of staff, irrespective of their role in the organisation, has a responsibility to keep children or young people safe and to take appropriate action whenever they hear, observe or are told information that could impact on their welfare and safety.

Child protection is the statutory threshold for intervention in family life whereby, a child or young person is suffering or at risk of significant harm. As an organisation APEX West has a number of statutory responsibilities that must be fulfilled which are set out in legislation and statutory guidance.

You have been issued with Part 1 of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)** and you will have been asked to read the document ahead of today's induction. Have you had an opportunity to do so? Do you have any questions?

What Safeguarding means for children or young people at our academy

At our school we expect our staff to exercise high standards of behaviour and provide high quality professional support for our children. It is therefore important that we all understand the nature of our work and the responsibilities related to it, which places us in a unique position of trust. During your induction, you will have the opportunity to access a range of training that will provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to do your job. In addition, you will be required to read several different policies and procedures that will provide you with contextual information and guidance.

All staff, irrespective of their role in the organisation, have a responsibility to ensure that illegal, unsafe, unprofessional or irresponsible behaviour exhibited by staff is challenged and

reported. It is always difficult to raise concerns about a colleagues' behaviour, but you must discuss any concerns with the designated or deputy safeguarding lead.

If you do not feel you can raise concerns within the organisation, then you can access the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. or email help@nspcc.org.uk

You must familiarise yourself with the following policies which are available on the Safeguarding Notice Board (Staff Room) and on the School Website:

1. **Guidance on safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (updated Feb 2022 [here](#))** Our Trust has adopted this as our staff code of conduct
2. **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE March 2015)** advice for practitioners
3. **Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and Procedures**

Voice and influence

When working with children and young people communication is crucial, especially in relation to safeguarding. Communication is a two-way process and doesn't just relate to a child's ability to communicate via speech therefore, we need to approach communication in its broadest terms, considering body language, gestures, behaviour and presentation. We must also support our children to make positive choices.

Action to be taken if you have a concern about the welfare of a child or the conduction/actions of a member of staff or visitor to our schools.

You should discuss your concerns, observations or any information that may impact on the welfare of a child with a designated or deputy safeguarding lead.

What is important is that you act and raise your concerns, the designated or deputy safeguarding lead may hold other relevant information, but your information may be new and important - the final part of the information jigsaw.

Updated September 2024

Appendix B

Schools who have EYFS children in Nursery or Reception Classes

Please note that the requirements only relate to the Welfare and Safeguarding requirements of the EYFS (0-5 years). The learning and development requirements must also be met in full.

Where to find the EYFS and safeguarding framework to include in your policy where relevant:

[EYFS Statutory Framework for school-based providers](#)

[Ofsted EYFS Inspection Framework Sept 2023](#)

- Our academy recognises that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child. It is important to recognise that indicators of abuse, exploitation and neglect do not automatically mean a child is being abused, however all concerns should be taken seriously and will be explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.
- The EYFS 2021 requires providers *'to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well'* and accordingly, everyone involved in the care of young children has a role to play in their protection. All members of staff in the setting are part of the wider safeguarding system for children and are in a unique position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance.
- As an appendix to this policy, we ensure that we are compliant with all the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.
- We have a mobile devices and camera policy in place within the provision that details the procedure for use of these devices. This covers the use of Mobile devices and Cameras in the setting and on visits and includes the settings procedures with regards to mobile devices and cameras for all staff, volunteers and visitors.

Appendix C

Action to be taken if there are concerns in relation to safeguarding practices in our Trust and residential provision.

All staff, volunteers and agency staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and any potential failures in the safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Head Teacher and designated safeguarding leads. Should staff feel unable to raise concerns within the organisation advice and guidance has been produced to ensure that they are aware of how to raise such concerns externally see.

NSPCC Whistleblowing advice and information. Which is also available on the safeguarding notice board in the staff room. In addition, our Trust whistleblowing policy is available via the website.

Specific Responsibilities Relating to Residential Provision

Children and young people can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings and there are additional requirements for children's homes therefore we must comply with the quality standards and relevant children's homes regulations working closely with Somerset Council and any local authorities that have placed their children at Brymore Academy.

We are committed to ensuring that our children and young people are safe from harm and able to develop, thrive and fulfil their potential. We value and nurture each child as an individual with talents, strengths and capabilities that can develop over time, by fostering positive relationships and establishing clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Working in close partnership with the school we support their emotional, mental and physical health needs, nurturing their learning, including out-of-school learning and preparation for independence. We have high expectations of our staff as committed members of a team to provide a safe and stimulating environment in high quality buildings.

Regulation 5 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and quality standards states that it "crucial that the homework in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, but in particular the child's local authority and statutory social worker.

Boarding schools must have due consideration to the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards [From September 2022](#) which sets down the national minimum standards (standards) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children for whom accommodation is provided by boarding schools. The standards do not override the need for schools to comply with other legislation which sets the standards for independent schools, and legislation covering health and safety, fire or planning regulations. However, boarding school should 'have regard to' the standards and can demonstrate that it either complies with the guidance or has considered the guidance and has good reason for departing from it.

Boarding schools NMS. In addition, there are National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (April 2015) and National Minimum Standards for Further Education Residential Accommodation (September 2018) in respect of accommodation by further education colleges and 16-19 academies of students under the age of 18.

Appendix D – Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Leads in our schools from September 2024

Apex West (Minehead)	Michelle Craig
Apex South (MBA)	Carl Winch
Bridgwater College Academy	Elly Hutchinson
Brookside Academy	Brian Walton
Brymore Academy	Chloe Doble
Hamp Academy	Kelly Cresswell
Maiden Beech Primary	Claire Luce
Otterhampton Primary	Claire Luce
Stanchester Academy	Sharon Hooper
West Somerset College	Cat Hargreaves

Role	Name	Date
Chair of Governors	Alex Tedford	
Safeguarding Governor	Adi Whatling	
Head Teacher*	Brian Walton	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)*	Brian Walton	
Deputy DSL (s)*	Sarah Ashford Nicola Nevell Sandra Cinicola	

Appendix E – Multi-Agency Contacts for Safeguarding in Education

If you have concerns about a child or young person in Somerset

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	Call the POLICE on 999	
To make an URGENT referral (i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm)	Phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224	
To make a NON-URGENT referral, complete an Early Help Assessment and send to	Email SDInputters@somerset.gov.uk	
To raise concerns or ask for advice about radicalisation	Phone PREVENT DUTY on 01278 647466 or Email PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	Phone the Lighthouse Safeguarding on 01278 649228	
DSL Consultation Line 0300 123 3078	Early Help Hub 01823 3555803	Critical Incident Support EPS SSE 01823 357000

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Anthony Goble 0300 123 2224
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For information and guidance relating to safeguarding practice, policy and procedures

Education Safeguarding Service	Email educationsafeguardinglead@somerset.gov.uk
Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul
Child Missing from Education	Online notification form – Somerset Council

Children affected by Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit Phone 020 7008 0151 Email fmufco@fco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline Phone 0344 381 4772 Email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	NSPCC FGM Helpline Phone 0800 028 3550 Email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	Phone 0800 6949999
Young Carers – advice and support	Phone 0300 123 2224 Email YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline Phone 0800 028 0285 Email help@nspcc.org.uk
Primary Mental Health Advice (CAMHS)	Email CYP@somerset.org

DOCUMENT CONTROL-RECORD OF CHANGES

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of change e.g. BCT request, change in legislation
1	15 March 2017	Whole Document	New BCT safeguarding and CP Policy	Update reflect changes to legislative guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 and development of BCT Policies
2	1 November 2017	Whole Document	Update in light of SSE Model Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy	Request from Academy
3	20 June 2018	Whole Document	Updates reflect changes to legislative guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and development of BCT Policies	KCSiE September 2018
4	2 September 2019	Whole Document	Updated to reflect changes to legislative guidance and changes to national policies and procedures.	Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019) Working together to Safeguard Children (March 2018) Somerset Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) previously Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board.
5	2 September 2020	Whole Document	Updated to reflect changes to legislative guidance and changes to national policies and procedures. The Trust has an addendum to this policy during Covid 19 pandemic.	Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)
6	10 th August 2021	Peer on Peer page 15	Updated statements on the definition of abuse and gender nature of abuse	KCSiE 2020 para 106
7	1 Sept 2021	Whole document	Updated to reflect changes to legislative guidance and changes to national policies and procedures.	KCSiE 2021 WTSC 2020
8	1 Sept 2022	Annex F - changes	Updated to reflect changes to legislative guidance	KCSiE 2022
9	13 th Sept 2022	Pages 26-30	Updated to reflect changes to low-level concerns	Guidance Farrer & Co, internal decision making
10	1 st Sept 2023	Annex F - changes	Updated to reflect changes to legislative guidance	KCSiE 2023
11	Dec 2023 June 2024	Annex F – changes	Updated to reflect changes to legislative guidance.	WTSC KCSiE