

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

for adoption by all CDAT schools

This policy is informed by the Christian values which are the basis for all of CDAT's work and any actions taken under this policy will reflect this.

'Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right'

Psalm 106:3

Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of next review
Trust Board (Issued by Central Team August 2026)	September 2026	Annually	September 2027

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Important Contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Sophie Cook	01260 272528
Deputy DSL	Becki Hodder Vicky Whiston	01260 272528
Designated Senior Manager	Sophie Cook	01260 272528
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Sarah Baron Claire Whitehead	01270 685904
Chair of Local Governance Committee	Hazel Bourke	hbourke@astbury.cheshire.sch.uk
Safeguarding governor	Hazel Bourke	hbourke@astbury.cheshire.sch.uk
Mental Health Lead	Vicky Whiston	01260 272528
Designated Teacher for Cared for Children	Sophie Cook	01260 272528
Single Point of Contact for Prevent	Sophie Cook	01260 272528
Attendance Lead	Sophie Cook	01260 272528
Channel helpline	N/A	020 7340 7264

1. Aims

CDAT's first priority is the responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our students. As a Trust that works across a number of local authorities (LAs), we recognise that the key statutory duties for safeguarding are held at a local level through Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. It is therefore appropriate that policy in respect of safeguarding and child protection is led at a local level. It is the responsibility of each school to personalise and implement such a policy. Each individual school is responsible for ensuring compliance with its local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements, procedures and policies and for publishing its own safeguarding and child protection policy in accordance with statutory requirements. Each school is also expected to comply with the latest requirements as laid out in KCSIE.

The Trust will ensure that all CDAT schools:

- Have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has overall accountability for safeguarding in their school.

- Have suitable arrangements to ensure that a deputy DSL is available to cover for the absence of the nominated DSL.
- Have a named governor for Safeguarding.
- That both DSL and deputy DSL receive training that at least matches statutory requirements of the role.
- Ensure that all staff and governors receive regular training on best practice in Safeguarding and that this training reflects the latest requirements of the government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' series of publications.
- Have in place safeguarding arrangements which are designed to take account of all possible safeguarding issues including Child Sexual Exploitation, FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and Preventing Radicalisation.
- Adhere to safer recruitment practices and that at least one member of any recruitment panel organised by the school has completed Safer Recruitment training within the recommended timescale.
- Maintain high-quality, accurate and secure records of any safeguarding concerns and incidents – taking account of all relevant Data Protection requirements. 2 Safeguarding Statement
- Have arrangements for working together with other agencies and for sharing information with other professionals.
- Take account of their local authority's procedures and practices established by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LCSB) and its successor Safeguarding Partnership, and comply with any requests from local safeguarding partners.
- Have in place effective policies covering Safeguarding & Child Protection, including whistleblowing.
- Develop a culture of listening to children and take account of their wishes and feelings.
- Teach children the skills they need to help safeguard themselves, including online safety through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Fulfil all their statutory responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

This school will ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.
- Visitors and volunteers attending site are subject to appropriate checks and are managed appropriately while on site.
- This policy is adapted to reflect local arrangements both at school and the local authority.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), and the Academy Trust Governance Guide. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners (see section 3).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination.
- HM Government (2025) 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation', which provides Guidance for members of a panel and partners of local panels in England and Wales on the duties under sections 36 and 38 Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the provision of support for people at risk of radicalisation.
- Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK, which outlines the standards that should be used as guidelines to support schools to use the right digital infrastructure and technology. The standards are to be used by everyone involved in the planning and use of technology within school settings. This guidance also sets out the standards that should be met with regard to filtering and monitoring.
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 - GOV.UK, which reforms how the UK manages non-personal and personal data.
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Procedures

The school follows the **Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) multi-agency safeguarding procedures** and local guidance when identifying, responding to and reporting concerns about the safety and welfare of children.

The procedures are available at:
https://pancheshire-cheshireeast.trixonline.co.uk/contents/contents

All staff and volunteers are expected to be familiar with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and to understand their responsibility to act promptly when they have a concern about a child. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs will refer to the CESCP procedures when determining the appropriate response to safeguarding concerns.

The school will follow the local procedures in relation to:

- **Recognising and responding to abuse and neglect:** Staff must report concerns about a child's welfare promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL. All concerns, disclosures and actions taken must be recorded accurately and securely.
- **Making referrals:** Where a child may be in need of help or protection, the DSL will follow Cheshire East's referral procedures and contact Cheshire East Together for Families, where appropriate. Staff must not assume that reporting a concern internally removes their individual responsibility to act to protect a child.
- **Immediate risk of harm:** Where a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm, emergency action must be taken. The police should be contacted on 999 where an immediate police response is required. A referral must not be delayed while waiting for internal approval.
- **Early help and multi-agency working:** The school will work with children, parents and relevant agencies to identify needs at an early stage, provide appropriate support and contribute to assessments, meetings and plans where required.
- **Information sharing:** Relevant information will be shared lawfully, promptly and securely with safeguarding partners where this is necessary to protect a child. Parents or carers will normally be informed about a referral unless doing so could increase the risk of harm to the child or compromise a safeguarding response.
- **Allegations against adults:** Any concern or allegation that a member of staff, volunteer or other adult working with children may have harmed a child, or may pose a risk to children, will be managed in accordance with the school's allegations procedures and the relevant Cheshire East guidance, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required.

The DSL will ensure that referrals and subsequent actions are followed up appropriately, that records are maintained, and that any lack of response or disagreement about the management of a safeguarding concern is escalated in accordance with local procedures.

The school will review the CESCP procedures regularly to ensure that its safeguarding arrangements reflect current local guidance and statutory requirements.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is 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. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Making or Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) refers to the creation, possession or sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos involving anyone under the age of 18. This includes consensual and non-consensual sharing, AI-generated content where it depicts a child, and content shared online or offline.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA).
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA.
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area.

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

4. Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10).
- Are young carers.
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Have English as an additional language (EAL).
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
- Are asylum seekers.
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12).
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions.
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - Body confidence and self-esteem
  - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
  - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

5.1 All Staff

All staff will:

- Read and understand part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually.
- Complete the Safeguarding and Prevent Training annually on Smartlog.
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance.
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online).
- Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems that support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and any deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL), the school behaviour policy, the trust behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The early help assessment process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including domestic and sexual abuse (including controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved), as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child

sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines).

- Knowing how to challenge decisions to ensure children receive the appropriate support.
- Recognising and understanding how children's behaviour may be a sign that they are suffering abuse or have experienced trauma
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm and supporting technology-facilitated abuse.
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online.
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children.
- That a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time.
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection.
- The school's arrangements for community-based early help and targeted family help and understand their role in identifying pupils who may benefit from support before statutory intervention.

All staff should be encouraged to be professionally curious in discharging the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Sophie Cook (Headteacher). The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety, and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Sophie Cook can be contacted out of hours on head@astbury.cheshire.sch.uk.

When the DSL is absent, the DDSLs – Becki Hodder and/or Vicky Whiston – will act as cover.

If the DSL and Becki Hodder/Vicky Whiston are not available, Lauren Gibbins will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

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

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place,
- Coordinating the school's approach to community-based early help and targeted family help.
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour

- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school
- Make sure that staff have appropriate Prevent training and induction

The DSL will also:

- Keep the headteacher informed of any issues
- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.
- Liaise with staff when deciding whether to make a referral by engaging with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically, including through community-based early help, family help and statutory services where appropriate.
- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search
- The full responsibilities of the DSL and, where applicable, DDSL are set out in their job description.
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

5.3 The Local Governance Committee (LGC)

The Local Governance Committee will:

- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Appoint a link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the Local Governance Committee. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and review their effectiveness. This includes:
    a) Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training.
    b) Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards

The Local Governance Committee will ensure that:

- The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support.

- Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies.
- The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
- The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure.
- This policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised.
- Systems are in place that enable children to confidently report abuse, knowing that their concerns will be treated seriously, and they can safely express their views and give feedback.

Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll), the Local Governance Committee will:

- Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
- Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
- Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see appendix 3).

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

5.4 The Headteacher

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

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
    - Are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
    - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable

- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting
- Ensuring safe and robust procedures are established and maintained for visitors to school.
- Taking all reasonable steps to stay informed of updates to legislation and best practice.
- Ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are implemented and that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Ensuring that the school practises safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 as amended.
- Ensuring that, where the school ceases to use the services of any person because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a prompt and detailed report is made to the DBS within one month.
- Ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to provide effective DSL cover during school hours. Safeguarding information will be shared securely where necessary to ensure continuity of safeguarding arrangements and timely responses to concerns.

5.5 The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Carrying out their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in all schools within the trust.
- Understanding their safeguarding duties and having regard to any statutory guidance on safeguarding issued by the Secretary of State.
- Taking strategic leadership responsibility for the trust's safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensuring the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors, and proprietors.
- Making sure that all schools within the trust have effective safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place that comply with their statutory obligations.
- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted by local governance committees, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are understood and followed by all staff.
- Having procedures in place to monitor the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures regularly.
- Ensuring that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, and that this training is updated regularly thereafter.
- Commissioning independent safeguarding audits of each school and the trust as a whole once per year.
- Receiving regular reports from the CEO on safeguarding to the board of trustees delegating operational responsibilities.
- Ensuring that every school within the trust complies with its duties under the above child protection and safeguarding legislation.

- Facilitating training opportunities trust-wide to ensure consistency in the level of training and expertise in safeguarding across the trust's schools.
- Guaranteeing that each school within the trust contributes to multi-agency working in line with the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- Confirming that the trust's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practices of the relevant local authorities as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures.
- Understanding the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment for each school within the trust and ensuring these are reflected in the trust's policies and procedures.
- Complying with its obligations under section 14B of the Children Act 2004 to supply the local safeguarding arrangements with information to fulfil its functions.
- Ensuring that staff in schools working directly with children read at least part one of KCSIE.
- Ensuring that staff in schools who do not work directly with children read either part one or Annex A of KCSIE. **NB:** Individual schools within the trust will assess which guidance will be most effective for their staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to assist staff in schools to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities in regard to safeguarding children.
- Ensuring schools within the trust appoint a member of staff from the SLT to the role of DSL as an explicit part of the role-holder's job description.
- Ensuring schools within the trust appoint one or more DDSLs to provide support to the DSL and ensuring that they are trained to the same standard as the DSL and that the role is explicit in their job description(s).
- Ensuring each school within the trust facilitates a whole-school approach to safeguarding; this includes ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern within a school that is part of the trust, ensuring there are procedures in place to take the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Ensuring systems are in place within the trust for pupils to confidently report abuse, knowing that their concerns will be treated seriously, and they can safely express their views and give feedback; these systems will be well-promoted, easily understood, and easily accessible.
- Ensuring that procedures are in place within the trust so that staff have due regard to relevant data protection principles that allow them to share and withhold personal information.
- Ensuring all relevant persons are aware of the trust's safeguarding arrangements, including the board of trustees itself, and each school's DSL, DDSL(s) and SLT.
- Making sure that pupils in each school are taught about safeguarding, including protection against dangers online (including when they are online at home), through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Adhering to statutory responsibilities by ensuring pre-employment checks are conducted on all staff within the trust who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.

- Ensuring that staff within the trust are appropriately trained to support pupils to be themselves at school, e.g. if they are LGBTQ+.
- Ensuring each school within the trust has clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems in pupils, including clear routes to escalate concerns and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Guaranteeing that volunteers within the trust are appropriately supervised.
- Making sure that at least one person on any appointment panel within the trust has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- Ensuring that all staff within the trust receive safeguarding and child protection training updates, e.g. emails, as required, but at least annually.
- Ensuring each school within the trust takes overall strategic responsibility for filtering and monitoring and seeks assurance that the filtering and monitoring standards for schools are being met, and that the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems is reviewed at least annually.
- Certifying that there are procedures in place within the trust to handle allegations against staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Confirming that there are procedures in place within the trust to make a referral to the DBS and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), where appropriate, if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.
- Guaranteeing that there are procedures in place within the trust to handle pupils' allegations against other pupils.
- Ensuring that appropriate disciplinary procedures are in place, as well as policies pertaining to the behaviour of pupils and staff within the trust.
- Ensuring that procedures are in place to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including those in relation to child-on-child and teenage relationship abuse within the trust.
- Guaranteeing that there are systems in place for pupils to express their views and give feedback within the trust.
- Establishing an early help procedure and ensure all staff within the trust understand the procedure and their role in it.
- Appointing a designated teacher for LAC within each school to promote the educational achievement of LAC and ensure that this person has undergone appropriate training.
- Ensuring that the designated teacher for LAC within each school works with the virtual school head(s) (VSH) to discuss how the pupil premium funding can best be used to support LAC.
- Introducing mechanisms to assist staff within the trust in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities.
- Making sure that staff members within the trust have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC safe, particularly with regard to the pupil's legal status, contact details and care arrangements.

- Putting in place appropriate safeguarding responses for pupils who become absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods, to help identify any risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and prevent the risk of their disappearance in future.
- Ensuring the trust has put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for pupils who go missing from a school within the trust, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify any risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and prevent the risk of their disappearance in future.
- Ensuring that all members of the board of trustees have been subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- Creating a culture within the trust where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that robust safeguarding records are kept in each school and the effectiveness of recordkeeping is monitored.
- Acting in accordance with their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 the Equality Act 2010, and the trust's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensuring each school within the trust has appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe where school facilities or premises are hired or rented out to organisations or individuals and, where services or activities are provided separately by another body, seek assurance that the body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and that individuals working with children have appropriate DBS checks.
- Ensuring each school within the trust has safeguarding requirements that are included in any transfer of control agreement, i.e. lease or hire agreement, as a condition of use and occupation of the premises, and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.
- Ensuring each school within the trust has robust health and safety and emergency evacuation procedures.
- Being aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

6. Multi-Agency Working

The school contributes to multi-agency working as part of its statutory duty. The school is aware of and will follow the local safeguarding arrangements.

The school will be fully engaged, involved, and included in the child-centred approach towards local safeguarding arrangements. Once the school is named as a relevant agency by local safeguarding partners, it will follow its statutory duty to cooperate with the published arrangements in the same way as other relevant agencies.

The school will work collaboratively with families and partner agencies to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare, through community-based early help and targeted family help, and by contributing to coordinated multi-agency plans to support children and families.

Where a child may benefit from family help, the school will work with partner agencies and contribute to multi-agency assessments and plans.

The school will allow CSCS from the host LA and, where appropriate, the placing LA, access to pupils to enable them to undertake or consider assessments under sections 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989.

The school will also be mindful of the importance of inter-agency working in identifying and preventing CSE, CCE and other forms of extra-familial harm.

The school will reflect the DfE's expectations to secure strong multi-agency working by:

- Collaborating with services to achieve shared goals and share information.
- Learning from evidence and sharing perspectives to evaluate provision.
- Prioritising and sharing resources depending on pupils' needs.
- Understanding its role within the local safeguarding arrangements.
- Mutually and constructively challenging other's assumptions in a respectful manner.

7. Support Before Statutory Intervention

Support before statutory intervention means providing help as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. This may include support from universal services, community-based early help, or targeted family help, depending on the child's level of need.

Any pupil may benefit from support before statutory intervention; however, staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for community-based early help or family help for pupils who:

- Are disabled, have certain health conditions, or have specific additional needs.
- Have SEND, regardless of whether they have a statutory EHC plan.
- Have a mental health need.
- Are young carers.
- Have exhibited early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviours.
- Show signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Are frequently missing or going missing from care or from home.
- Have been repeatedly removed from the classroom.
- Have experienced multiple suspensions.
- Are on a part-time timetable.
- Are at risk of being permanently excluded or are in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.
- Are at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation.
- Are at risk of being radicalised into terrorism.
- Have family members in custody or are affected by parental offending.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health problems, or domestic abuse.
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Are at risk of honour or faith-based abuse, such as FGM or forced marriage.
- Are privately fostered.

The school will not limit its support to pupils affected by the above and will be mindful of a variety of additional circumstances in which pupils may benefit from community-based early help or family help.

Staff will be mindful of all signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and use their professional curiosity to raise concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will take the lead where family help or community-based early help is appropriate. This includes liaising with other agencies and arranging a multi-agency family help assessment where appropriate, following local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals during a community-based early help or family help assessment and, in some circumstances, may act as the Lead Practitioner, where

appropriate and in accordance with local arrangements. All cases will be reviewed regularly and consideration given to referral to CSCS where the child's circumstances do not improve or where the level of risk increases.

Staff will be familiar with the local thresholds for community-based early help, family help, Section 17 (Children in Need) and Section 47 (Child Protection) and will follow local safeguarding partnership procedures when making referrals.

8. Confidentiality

This school adopts the CDAT policies regarding the effective and confidential management of data, including:

- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (Pupils/Workforce)
- Privacy Notice (General/Children/Workforce)

The school recognises the importance of proactive information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet pupils' needs and identify any need for community-based early help or family help.

Notwithstanding the adherence to CDAT data policies, with regard to the sharing information within the school, across the Trust, and with the three safeguarding partners and other agencies as required, all staff are expected to support the requirements that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
    - There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
    - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
    - The DSL should consider that:
        - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)

        - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
        - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains

- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
    - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
    - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
    - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)

Where decisions are made about sharing or withholding information, these will be based on consideration of the risks to the pupil and, where appropriate, the rationale for decisions will be recorded.

Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 15, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3.

9. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff working within the trust will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others and online. Staff will also be aware that pupils can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse.

All staff working within the trust will recognise that abuse or neglect of a child may occur through the infliction of harm or through the failure to act to prevent harm. The school will understand that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical in nature, as well as the psychological impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others.

All staff working within the trust will pay particular attention to the effects of domestic abuse on children, recognising that harm may arise not only when children are directly involved, but also when they see, hear, or otherwise experience its consequences. All necessary steps will be taken to identify and respond appropriately to such concerns in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is bereaved

- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is suffering from mental ill health
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

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

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, the reader should take any references to the DSL to mean "the DSL (or deputy DSL)".

9.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

Local Procedures for Making a Referral

The school follows the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) multi-agency safeguarding procedures and the arrangements established by the three safeguarding partners: Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Constabulary and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board.

Where a member of staff has a concern about a child's safety or welfare, they must report it promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. The DSL will consider the nature and urgency of the concern and take appropriate action in accordance with the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures.

Where a child may need additional help or support, the school will consider the Cheshire East Early Help Framework and the *Right Help, Right Time* guidance. Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will make an immediate referral to Cheshire East Together for Families by telephone on **0300 123 5012 (option 3)** and complete the appropriate Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF), in accordance with local procedures. Staff must not delay a referral while waiting for the DSL if they believe a child is at risk of harm.

If a child is in immediate danger or requires an emergency response, the police will be contacted on **999**. For urgent child protection concerns outside normal office hours, the Emergency Duty Team will be contacted on **0300 123 5022**.

The referral will include all relevant information available to the school, including the child's details, the nature of the concerns, any disclosures made, observations, previous concerns, action already taken and

details of other agencies involved. The school will ensure that concerns, decisions, referrals and subsequent actions are recorded accurately, securely and promptly.

Parents and carers will normally be informed before a referral is made, unless doing so may place the child or another person at increased risk of harm, compromise an investigation or otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests. Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and securely with the relevant safeguarding agencies.

Following a referral, the DSL will maintain contact with the relevant agencies, record the outcome and ensure that any further action requested of the school is completed. If the school does not receive an appropriate response, or disagrees with a decision about the management of a referral, the DSL will follow the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership escalation procedures.

All staff are reminded that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Any member of staff who remains concerned about a child must continue to take action, even if a referral has already been made or the concern has been discussed with the DSL.

The school's procedures are informed by the **Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Online Procedures**, available at:
https://pancheshire-cheshireeast.trixonline.co.uk/contents/contents

Further information on making a referral is available from Cheshire East Council:
https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-children/are-you-concerned-about-a-child/report-a-concern-about-a-child.aspx

In addition, the following link proceeds to the UK government webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council: https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

9.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

9.3 Reporting and Responding to Concerns about Pupils

Reporting concerns

Staff members will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. Staff will always act in the best interests of a pupil when they are concerned about their welfare.

Staff will be aware that data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If there is any doubt about sharing information, staff will speak to the DSL or deputy. Fears about sharing information will not stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

If a member of staff has any concern about a pupil's welfare, or a pupil has reported a safeguarding concern in relation to themselves or a peer, they will act on them immediately by speaking to the DSL or deputy DSL.

Staff will not assume that a colleague or other professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping pupils safe. Staff will be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision.

Where the DSL is not available to discuss the concern, staff members will contact the deputy DSL with the matter. If, in exceptional circumstances, neither the DSL nor deputy is available, this will not delay action being taken. Staff will consider speaking to a member of the SLT and/or take advice from LA children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with the DSL or deputy as soon as possible.

Determining the appropriate response

Following a report, the DSL or deputy DSL will consider the information provided, the pupil's level of need and any known history before determining the most appropriate course of action.

This may include:

- Managing any support for the pupil internally via the school's pastoral support processes, including considering where doing so does not place the pupil at additional risk, and whether the DSL or deputy should inform parents to further support the pupil's wellbeing.
- Undertaking a family help assessment.
- Making a referral to statutory services, e.g. as the pupil could be in need, is in need or is suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

Where a community-based early help or family help assessment is undertaken, the DSL will normally coordinate the school's involvement with partner agencies. Staff will contribute to assessments, planning and reviews as required. The school will keep all cases under regular review and will request further intervention or make a referral to CSCS where the pupil's circumstances do not improve or where risks increase.

Staff members will be advised to read the DfE's guidance on information sharing to support them in the event that they need to make a decision about sharing information.

Referrals and multi-agency working

Where a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or is in immediate danger, a referral will be made immediately to CSCS and/or the police, as appropriate. Referrals will follow the local referral process. Where a criminal offence is suspected, including incidents of sexual violence, the police will be notified without delay.

The reporting and referral process outlined in the DfE's flowchart setting out the actions taken where there are concerns about a pupil will be followed accordingly.

The DSL will be familiar with local safeguarding partnership referral arrangements and will provide advice and support to staff where required. Information will be shared with external agencies in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's confidentiality procedures.

Where the school makes a referral, the DSL will expect to receive confirmation of the LA social worker's decision within one working day. Where this information is not forthcoming, the DSL will follow this up.

If the LA social worker decides to carry out a statutory assessment, the DSL or deputy will do everything they can to support this process, with assistance from relevant staff members as required.

If the situation does not improve after a referral, the DSL will ask for reconsideration to ensure that their concerns have been addressed and that the situation improves for the pupil.

The DSL will maintain effective liaison with CSCS, the police and other relevant agencies to support the pupil's welfare and ensure that the school does not compromise any ongoing investigations.

The school will not wait for the outcome of a statutory or criminal investigation before taking appropriate action to safeguard and support the pupil. Where statutory intervention is not required, the school will continue to consider appropriate support through community-based early help, family help, pastoral support or other suitable interventions.

Supporting pupils and recording concerns

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the school will ensure that the pupil's wishes and feelings are taken into account and that pupils are given opportunities to express their views. Staff will respond calmly and supportively, ensuring pupils feel listened to, taken seriously and supported.

Discussions with parents will take place where appropriate and where doing so will not place the pupil or others at increased risk of harm. The school will work with parents and partner agencies, where appropriate, to support the pupil's safety and wellbeing.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded promptly by the DSL or deputy DSL and stored securely in accordance with the school's record management procedures.

Local Authority Referral and Escalation Procedures

The school follows the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) multi-agency safeguarding procedures and Cheshire East Council's referral and escalation arrangements. These procedures guide staff in identifying children who may be at risk of harm, accessing early help and referring concerns to Children's Social Care.

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns may arise from a single incident or from a pattern of indicators over time. All concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

Indicators that may prompt a referral

Indicators of concern may include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical abuse:** unexplained injuries, repeated bruising, burns, fractures, injuries inconsistent with the explanation given, or a child expressing fear of going home.
- **Emotional abuse:** persistent humiliation, rejection, threats, intimidation, exposure to harmful adult behaviour, extreme anxiety, low self-esteem or significant changes in behaviour.
- **Sexual abuse:** a disclosure of sexual abuse, age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, signs of sexual exploitation, or concerns about inappropriate contact online or in person.
- **Neglect:** persistent hunger, poor hygiene, unsuitable clothing, untreated medical needs, inadequate supervision, repeated unexplained absences or a failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- **Domestic abuse:** a child witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse, coercive control or violence within the home.
- **Exploitation and extra-familial harm:** concerns about child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines, trafficking, grooming, bullying, serious violence or unsafe relationships.
- **Online safety concerns:** online grooming, sexual images, coercion, threats, cyberbullying or other online activity that places a child at risk.

- **Other safeguarding concerns:** female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, radicalisation, fabricated or induced illness, parental substance misuse, parental mental health difficulties or any other circumstances that may place a child at risk of harm.

This list is not exhaustive. Staff must not wait for multiple indicators or proof of abuse before reporting a concern. A child's disclosure, behaviour, presentation, attendance or circumstances may individually or collectively justify further safeguarding action.

Procedures for making a referral

Any member of staff who is concerned about a child must report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL and record the concern factually, using the school's safeguarding recording system (CPOMs).

The DSL will assess the information available, consider the child's needs and risks, and decide on the appropriate response in accordance with the Cheshire East multi-agency threshold guidance, including *Right Help, Right Time*.

The school will follow these procedures:

1. **Early help:** Where concerns indicate that a child or family requires additional support but there is no current indication that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the school will consider early help and appropriate multi-agency support.
2. **Referral to Children's Social Care:** Where a child may be in need of additional services or there are concerns about their safety or welfare, the DSL will contact *Cheshire East Together for Families* on **0300 123 5012 (option 3)**. The Cheshire East Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) will be completed in accordance with local procedures. Relevant screening tools, such as the neglect or contextual safeguarding tools, will be used where appropriate.
3. **Child protection concerns:** Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care. The school will provide all relevant information and cooperate with any subsequent assessment, strategy discussion, child protection enquiry or conference.
4. **Immediate danger:** If a child is in immediate danger or requires an emergency police response, staff will contact **999**. Urgent child protection concerns arising outside normal office hours should be referred to the *Cheshire East Emergency Duty Team* on **0300 123 5022**.

Referrals must not be delayed while waiting for further evidence, an internal meeting or parental consent. If a member of staff believes that a child is at risk and the DSL has not taken appropriate action, they must make the referral themselves and inform the DSL or headteacher as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Parents and carers will normally be informed of a referral unless doing so could place the child or another person at risk, compromise an investigation or otherwise prejudice the child's safety. Advice will be sought from Children's Social Care or the police where necessary.

All referrals, decisions, professional advice and actions taken must be recorded securely, including the date and time of the referral, the information shared, the name of the person contacted and the outcome.

Escalation procedures

The school recognises its responsibility to continue advocating for a child where safeguarding concerns remain unresolved. If the school believes that a referral has not been responded to appropriately, that the level of support offered is insufficient, or that a child remains at risk, the DSL will take the following action:

- Contact *Cheshire East Together for Families* to seek clarification of the referral decision and agree the next steps.
- Provide any additional information or evidence that may assist in assessing the level of risk.

- Request a review of the decision where significant concerns remain and seek advice from the relevant social care manager or safeguarding professional.
- Follow the **Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Multi-Agency Professional Challenge and Escalation Procedure** where there is disagreement between agencies about a child's needs, risk of harm or the appropriate safeguarding response.
- Escalate the concern through the relevant management arrangements until an appropriate response has been secured, keeping a clear record of discussions, decisions and actions.

If the school remains concerned that a child is at risk of significant harm, a further referral will be made where necessary. Previous referrals or decisions not to take further action do not prevent the school from referring new information or escalating continuing concerns.

The school will cooperate fully with Children's Social Care, the police, health services and other relevant agencies and will attend meetings, contribute information and support agreed plans to safeguard the child.

Any allegation or concern that an adult working with children may have harmed a child, or may pose a risk of harm, will be managed in accordance with the school's allegations procedures and referred to the Cheshire East Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the criteria are met.

Local procedures and guidance

The school will use the current versions of the following local guidance:

- Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Online Procedures: https://pancheshire-cheshireeast.trixonline.co.uk/contents/contents
- Cheshire East Council — Report a concern about a child: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-children/are-you-concerned-about-a-child/report-a-concern-about-a-child.aspx
- Cheshire East Children's Services — Contacts and Referrals: https://cheshireeastcs.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/contacts-and-referrals

The DSL will ensure that staff know how to raise and escalate safeguarding concerns and that local referral arrangements are reviewed regularly.

9.4 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4 of this policy.

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

Identifying concerns and indicators of risk

Staff must remain alert to signs that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Indicators may include a family member or sibling having undergone FGM, a disclosure that FGM is being planned, a child expressing anxiety about an upcoming trip abroad or a special ceremony, or information suggesting that the child may be taken out of the country to undergo the procedure. No single indicator proves that a child is at risk, but all concerns must be taken seriously and assessed in context.

Referral procedures

Any member of staff who suspects that a girl may be at risk of FGM must report their concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. The DSL will ensure that an immediate referral is made to Cheshire East Children's Social Care through Cheshire East Together for Families, in accordance with local safeguarding procedures. The referral must not be delayed while seeking further evidence or discussing the concern with parents or carers.

Cheshire East referral contact: 0300 123 5012 (option 3).

Where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm, the police must be contacted on **999**. For non-emergency police reporting, contact **101**.

Parents or carers must not be informed of the referral where doing so could increase the risk to the child or compromise safeguarding enquiries. Staff must not investigate the concern themselves or attempt to examine a child.

Mandatory reporting duty

Where a teacher, in the course of their professional duties, is informed directly by a girl under the age of 18 that she has undergone FGM, or personally observes physical signs that appear to show FGM has taken place, the teacher has a legal duty to report the known case directly to the police under section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015. The report must be made as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than the end of the next working day.

This is a personal legal duty and cannot be transferred to the DSL. The teacher must contact the police on **101**, unless an emergency response is required, and must inform the DSL so that appropriate safeguarding action can also be taken. Staff must not conduct any physical examination of a child.

Where FGM is suspected or a girl is considered to be at risk, but the mandatory reporting duty does not apply, staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and ensure an immediate referral to Children's Social Care.

Multi-agency working and ongoing protection

The school will cooperate with Cheshire East Children's Social Care, Cheshire Constabulary and relevant health professionals to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are implemented. Staff will record concerns, disclosures, referrals and decisions accurately and securely, and will consider whether other girls in the family or household may also be at risk.

The DSL will monitor the outcome of referrals and escalate concerns through the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures if the response does not adequately address the risk to the child.

9.5 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

Figure 1 below, before section 7.7, illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

Early help assessment

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Cheshire East Local Procedures: Early Help, Family Help and Safeguarding Referrals

The school follows Cheshire East's *Right Help, Right Time* Multi-Agency Threshold of Need Guidance and local safeguarding procedures to identify children and families who may benefit from additional support. The school works in partnership with children, parents and relevant agencies to identify needs at the earliest opportunity and ensure that children receive the appropriate level of support.

Where concerns can be addressed through universal services or additional support, the school will work with families and relevant professionals and consider the appropriate Early Help, Extra Help or Family Help arrangements, in line with current Cheshire East procedures and the child's level of need. The school uses the Cheshire East Together for Families Integrated Front Door to seek advice and access the appropriate referral pathway.

Where a child's needs cannot be met through the support available, the school will seek advice and make an appropriate referral in accordance with Cheshire East's local procedures. Where there are concerns that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the school will contact the Together for Families on 0300 123 5012, option 3 without delay and follow the relevant child protection procedures.

All staff must report safeguarding concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. However, if a child is at risk of harm and appropriate action has not been taken, staff must take further action themselves. Early Help, Extra Help or Family Help arrangements must never delay a child protection referral or any immediate action necessary to protect a child.

The school will maintain accurate records of concerns, referrals and actions taken, work collaboratively with relevant agencies, and escalate concerns in accordance with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures where the response does not adequately address the child's needs or safety.

9.6 If you have concerns about extremism

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

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's

social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the police or Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

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

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

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

9.7 If you have a concern about mental health

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.

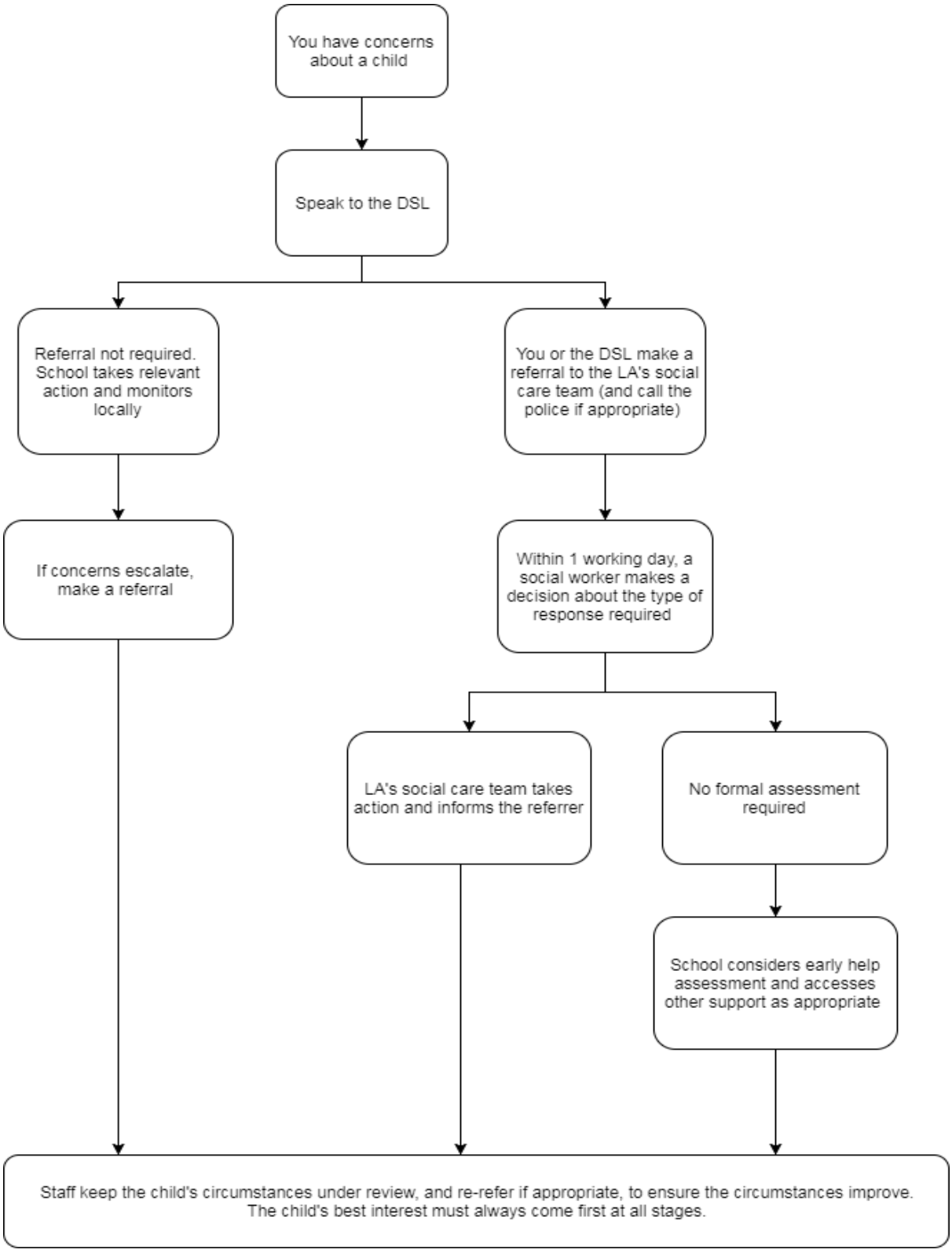
Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree on a course of action.

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

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 7.4 for what to do.)



In all cases remember to:

- Listen rather than directly question, remain calm;
- Never stop a child who is recalling significant events;
- Never ask a child if they are being abused;
- Make a record of the discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child language – do not substitute words);
- Advise you will have to pass the information on;
- Avoid coaching/prompting;
- Never take photographs of any injury;
- Never undress a child to physically examine them;
- Allow time and provide a safe haven / quiet area for future support;
- At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult;
- Provide reassurance that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe; nor should a victim ever be made to feel they are a problem or ashamed for making a report;
- Reassure that where abuse has occurred online or outside of the school or college it will be treated equally seriously.

9.8 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the chair of governors.

The headteacher/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 3, if appropriate.

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the headteacher, report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

9.9 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We are aware that some children may be particularly vulnerable and have an increased risk of abuse. Each school within the trust will recognise that children with SEND or certain health conditions are three times more likely to be abused by their peers, can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to child-on-child group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The school will consider extra pastoral support for those children.

We understand that all pupils have the right to be safeguarded from harm regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality or disability and will ensure that all schools within the trust give special consideration to, amongst others, children who:

- Have SEND.
- Are vulnerable to being bullied.
- Are looked after or living in unsupportive home situations.

DSLs working in schools within the trust will ensure they appropriately assess all instances of child-on-child abuse, including in cases of image-based abuse, to help determine whether the alleged perpetrator(s) is

under the age of 18 or is an adult posing as a child. The DSL will immediately refer the case if it is found that a so-called child-on-child abuse incident involves an adult, e.g. where an adult poses as a child online to groom a child or young person.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our schools' behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

See appendix 4 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

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

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Ensure that supportive and safe environments and relationships are created, as these are what will facilitate disclosures.
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 7.10 below)
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously

- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
    - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
    - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
    - That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
        - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
        - A friend may make a report
        - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
        - A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
    - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
    - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
    - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
    - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
    - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

9.10 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes ('sexting')

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, including pseudo-images, which are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

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

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

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

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

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

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident. See appendix 4 for more information on assessing adult-involved incidents
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to SEN)
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further review by the DSL

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

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

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

Informing parents/carers

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through local procedures, and supported by the DSL.

Recording incidents

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 14 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

Curriculum coverage

Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective education, including:

- Putting safeguarding first
- Approaching from the perspective of the child
- Promoting dialogue and understanding
- Empowering and enabling children and young people
- Never frightening or scare-mongering
- Challenging victim-blaming attitudes

9.11 Reporting systems for our pupils

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils
- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils know how to report a safeguarding concern and feel safe, listened to and supported when asking for help.

Pupils are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about their own safety or wellbeing, or that of another child. Trusted adults may include their class teacher, teaching assistant, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a Deputy DSL or another member of staff with whom they feel comfortable.

Safeguarding posters are displayed around the school, including in appropriate areas accessible to pupils. These posters include photographs and names of identified trusted adults so that children can recognise who they can approach if they need help or have a worry. Staff regularly remind pupils about these reporting arrangements through assemblies, classroom discussions and other age-appropriate safeguarding activities.

Pupils are encouraged to speak to an adult in person or to use any other reporting method made available by the school. If a child feels unable to speak to one adult, they are encouraged to approach another trusted adult until they receive help. Pupils are reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be listened to respectfully.

10. Online Safety and the Use of Mobile Technology

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

Our school has adopted the CDAT Acceptable Use Policy for pupils and for the school workforce.

The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material. This will include, but not be limited to, content relating to pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users (or generative AI applications that simulate this), such as 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, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography) and including those generated using AI, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To address these risks, we will take reasonable steps to:

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
    - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
    - Keeping personal information private
    - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
    - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim

- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year.
- Ensure that staff training in online safety in each of its schools covers the four categories of risk as outlined in KCSIE, as set out above: content, contact, conduct, commerce.
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
    - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
    - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that all CDAT schools have appropriate filtering systems in place on school devices and school networks to prevent children accessing inappropriate material, in accordance with the filtering and monitoring standards published by the DfE.

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our school's policies in these areas, including acceptable use policies for the workforce and pupils, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policies which can be found on the CDAT website at: Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

10.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Our school recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

We will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our Behaviour Policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

11. Notifying Parents or Carers

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

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

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

Staff know that the following situations are the instances in which parental consent would not be gained prior to a referral:

- Discussion would impede a police investigation or social work enquiry
- Sexual abuse is suspected
- Organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- Fabrication or induced illness or perplexing presentations is suspected
- Honour Based Abuse e.g. forced marriage, FGM etc. is a possibility/is suspected

Additional consideration re parental consent would be needed in the following circumstances, particularly if there are concerns around parental involvement or influence:

- Extremism or radicalisation is suspected
- County Lines activities are suspected

Staff are also aware that, even in situations where the parent does not give consent, the best interests of the child are paramount and therefore, they would share their concerns. In addition, the referral will not be delayed if it has not been possible to contact the parents/carers.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s)

12. Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues

We recognise that pupils with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so
- Pupils with SEND may not always recognise that what is happening to them is abuse.
- Pupils requiring intimate care or who are more isolated from others may be at increased risk.
- Pupils may be more dependent on adults for care.

The school will also consider whether additional pastoral support or communication support is required. As a church school we have additional access to pastoral support through the parish, partner schools across CDAT, and Chester Diocese.

13. Pupils with a Social Worker

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

In all cases, the DSL will inform the relevant social worker when a child leaves the school.

14. Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher, Sophie Cook, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

15. Pupils who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning

We recognise that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children.

We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL. As a church school we have additional access to pastoral support through the parish, partner schools across CDAT, and Chester Diocese.

When families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning pupils, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

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

16. Pupils with Medical Conditions

The school recognises that pupils with medical conditions or allergies may require additional safeguarding consideration.

A safeguarding referral will not be made solely because of an incident relating to the management of a pupil's medical condition; however, where concerns indicate that a pupil may be at increased risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation, for example where essential medical information or medication is repeatedly not provided, the school will respond in accordance with its safeguarding procedures.

Pupils will be supported in accordance with the schools Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions Policy.

17. Alternative Provision (AP)

The school will remain responsible for a pupil’s welfare during their time at an alternative provider. When placing a pupil with an alternative provider, the school will obtain written confirmation that the provider has conducted all relevant safeguarding checks on staff and will satisfy itself that the placement is meeting the pupil’s needs.

Those responsible for the commissioning of AP will be aware that pupils in AP will often have complex needs – they will be mindful of the additional risk of harm that these pupils may be vulnerable to.

The school will obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment. This will include written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the school of any arrangements that may put the pupil at risk.

The school will continue to carry out safeguarding checks and conduct its own due diligence to ensure that the AP is appropriate for meeting each pupil’s individual needs.

The school will ensure that the location of pupils placed at AP is always known and will maintain records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the pupil may attend.

AP placement reviews will take place at least half termly to ensure that pupils are regularly attending and the placement continues to be safe and meets their needs.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

18. Complaints and Concerns About School Safeguarding Policies

18.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3).

18.2 Other complaints

Please refer to our Complaints Policy, which is available at Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

18.3 Whistle-blowing

Please refer to the CDAT Whistleblowing Policy, which can be accessed at Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

19. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our Records Management Policy, which can be found at Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme, etc. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

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

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child. This will be held in electronic format using the platform CPOMs.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or within
- **The first 5 days** of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

In addition:

- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-appointment checks
- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

20. Training

20.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation or neglect. CDAT training on safeguarding and child protection is provided through the Smartlog system – which all staff have access to – and there may be further training provided at individual schools.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff are required to update Safeguarding and Prevent training annually. Members, Trustees and members of Local Governance Committees are also required to undertake this training. The training will be delivered through the Trust's 'Smartlog' system, which allows training to be accessed online at a time convenient to the individual. The system also logs completion and issues reminders where training is outstanding.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
    - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
    - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually. This includes the training accessed through the Smartlog portal.

The school will ensure that all staff and relevant volunteers receive safeguarding and child protection training in accordance with current statutory guidance and applicable Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership training requirements. Training will be regularly updated to ensure staff remain aware of their responsibilities and local safeguarding procedures.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

20.2 The DSL and DDSL

The DSL and any appointed DDSL(s) will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every two years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They, or any other designated Prevent lead, will also undertake more in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies.

20.3 Local Governance Committee

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. CDAT training on safeguarding and child protection is provided through the Smartlog system – which all governors have access to – and there may be further training provided at individual schools. This is to make sure that members of the Local Governance Committee (LGC):

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

20.4 Recruitment – interview panels

At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See appendix 2 of this policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

21. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the CDAT Trust Board. Following every review, it will be approved by the Local Governance Committee of each school.

The trust will ensure that any child protection incidents at any of its schools will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within that school and a prompt report to the governing board. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the LADO will assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the school's procedures.

If any concerns are raised by the LADO or Ofsted about safeguarding issues, the following actions will be taken:

- The DSL conducts an investigation as a priority and comply with any deadlines given
- The Chair of the Governors reports to the LADO or Ofsted on the findings of the investigation and sets out any action to be taken
- The school endeavours to comply as soon as possible with any recommendations from the LADO or Ofsted

22. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to a number of other policies and procedures, including:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Equalities Policy and Trust Equality Objectives
- RHE Policy
- SRE Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Privacy Notices
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy

These can be accessed on the school website or, for Trust policies, at Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

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

Appendix 1: Types of Abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- 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 participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

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
- 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 (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

Appendix 2: Safer Recruitment Policy

The Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy can be found at: Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

Appendix 3: Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff

The Trust's Allegations Against Staff Policy can be found at: Policies - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

Appendix 4: Specific Safeguarding Issues

Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents

This section of our policy is based on annex A of the UK Council of Internet Safety's advice for education settings.

All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must immediately be referred to police/social care. However, as adult-involved incidents can present as child-on-child nude/semi-nude sharing, it may be difficult to initially assess adult involvement.

There are two types of common adult-involved incidents: sexually motivated incidents and financially motivated incidents.

a) Sexually motivated incidents

In this type of incident, an adult offender obtains nude and semi-nudes directly from a child or young person using online platforms.

To make initial contact, the offender may present as themselves or use a false identity on the platform, sometimes posing as a child or young person to encourage a response and build trust. The offender often grooms the child or young person on social media, in chatrooms or on gaming platforms, and may then move the conversation to a private messaging app or an end-to-end encrypted (E2EE) environment where a request for a nude or semi-nude is made. To encourage the child or young person to create and share nude or semi-nude, the offender may share pornography or child sexual abuse material (images of other young people), including AI-generated material.

Once a child or young person shares a nude or semi-nude, an offender may blackmail the child or young person into sending more images by threatening to release them online and/or send them to friends and family.

Potential signs of adult-involved grooming and coercion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications, which may include the offender sharing unsolicited images
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Coerced/pressured into doing sexual things, including creating nudes and semi-nudes
- Offered something of value such as money or gaming credits
- Threatened or blackmailed into carrying out further sexual activity. This may follow the child or young person initially sharing the image or the offender sharing a digitally manipulated image of the child or young person to extort 'real' images

b) Financially motivated incidents

Financially motivated sexual extortion (often known as 'sextortion') is an adult-involved incident in which an adult offender (or offenders) threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they pay money or do something else to benefit them.

Unlike other adult-involved incidents, financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by offenders working in sophisticated organised crime groups (OCGs) overseas and are only motivated by profit. Adults are usually targeted by these groups too.

Offenders will often use a false identity, sometimes posing as a child or young person, or hack another young person's account to make initial contact. To financially blackmail the child or young person, they may:

- Groom or coerce the child or young person into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them

- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person taken through hacking their account
- Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child or young person

The offender may demand payment or the use of the victim's bank account for the purposes of money laundering.

Potential signs of adult-involved financially motivated sexual extortion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. They may be contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications which may include the offender sharing an image first
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Pressured into taking nudes or semi-nudes
- Told they have been hacked and they have access to their images, personal information and contacts
- Blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details after sharing an image or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated images of the child or young person

Children who are absent from education

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

In line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, each school within the trust will ensure it informs their LA of all deletions from the admissions register when a pupil is taken off roll. Where a parent has expressed their intention to remove a pupil from a school within the trust for EHE, the school, in collaboration with the trust, LA and other key professionals, will coordinate a meeting with the parent, where possible, before the final decision has been made, particularly if the pupil has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend

- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the 2.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment

that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and any appointed DDSL(s) will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to local authority children's social care.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

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

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

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

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

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
    - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
    - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
    - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
    - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
    - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
    - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period

- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

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

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
    - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
    - Having limited level of integration within UK society
    - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
    - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
    - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
    - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
    - Being unexpectedly absent from school
    - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

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

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing Radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence
- **Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to**:**
    - Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
    - Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
    - Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points
- **Terrorism** is an action that:
    - Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
    - Causes serious damage to property; or
    - Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. The DSL, or designated Prevent lead, will undertake in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies. They'll make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy

- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or X (formerly Twitter)
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

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

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between two children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

Serious Violence

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

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

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to follow any processes or procedures in place at the time of the visit. This may include switching off their mobile 'phone.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in using the school system and to wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the local authority or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.