Safeguarding Policy & Guidance for Education

Updated for Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Mersey Vale Primary School

At Mersey Vale Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all irrespective of race, gender, ability, religion, socio-economic factors and disability. The achievement of all pupils is monitored and we use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching and learning.

We aim to provide our pupils with a firm foundation which will enable them to fulfil their potential. We seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination. At Mersey Vale we believe that diversity and inclusion are strengths, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Policy author	Catherine Whitehead, Headteacher
Ratified by the governing body/proprietor	19.10.2026
Signed	Mr. I. Patrick Chair of Governors Mrs. M. Aziz Safeguarding Link Governor
To be reviewed	31.10.27
Version	KCSIE 2026 revised template V 1.0

Key safeguarding contacts

Role	Name/contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Catherine Whitehead
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Claire Varetto
Safeguarding Link Governor / Trustee	Mary Aziz
Headteacher / Principal	Catherine Whitehead
Chair of Governors / Trust lead	Iain Patrick
Data Protection Officer	Nusreen Ahmed
Operation Encompass Key Adult	Catherine Whitehead
Designated Teacher - Cared for Children	Catherine Whitehead
HR Provider	SMBC, Human Resources Services

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KCSIE 2026 update summary

This revised template includes the main KCSIE 2026 changes. Schools and colleges must still personalise the document to reflect their own setting, local arrangements, governance structure, curriculum, recording systems and linked policies.

Area updated	Policy treatment
Family Help	Early Help wording updated to include Family Help, local thresholds, Family Help assessments, section 17 and section 47 pathways, and TAS arrangements.
Information sharing	Expanded wording on proactive, proportionate information sharing, lawful sharing without consent where safeguarding requires it, and the Information Sharing Duty when commenced.
Data protection	Updated reference to Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
AI and online harms	Added explicit references to AI-generated nudes/semi-nudes, deepfakes, manipulated imagery, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Area updated	Policy treatment
Operation Encompass	Strengthened the section to reflect the statutory police notification duty and school response.
DSL cover	Added clear expectations for DSL and Deputy DSL availability, cover and escalation when unavailable.
Vulnerability indicators	Added part-time timetables, repeated removals, multiple suspensions, permanent exclusion risk, AP/PRU and parental custody/offending.
Serious violence	Strengthened wording on weapons, intent to carry or use a weapon, safety/support plans and de-escalation.
Gender-questioning children and premises	Added safeguarding decision-making, parental involvement, record keeping, toilets/changing rooms/showers and single-sex sport considerations.
Safer recruitment	Updated regulated activity and volunteer wording to reflect removal of the supervision exemption where relevant.

Foreword by Mr. Iain Patrick, Chair of Governing Body

The school's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of pupils is our highest priority. The ethos at Mersey Vale Primary School is based on inclusion and an atmosphere of mutual support and understanding. Our school community strives to create a warm, caring environment for all children built upon positive and trusting relationships. Our school ethos fosters a culture within Mersey Vale Primary School to ensure that signs and symptoms of abuse are picked up, thus the opportunity for those wishing to cause harm to children is drastically reduced. This policy should describe the culture, values and ethos of the setting, and how leaders, governors, staff, volunteers, pupils/students, parents and partners work together to create a protective and responsive safeguarding culture.

Purpose and principles

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the arrangements that Mersey Vale Primary School has in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils/students. It provides guidance to help staff who may have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child and sets out the school/college's position in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

- This policy has been written in line with the Department for Education statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and other relevant UK legislation and government guidance.
- It applies at all times when the school is providing services or activities directly under the management of school staff, including off-site activities, educational visits, alternative provision and extended/wraparound provision where applicable.
- It is publicly available on the school website and a printed copy can be made available via the school office.
- It should be read alongside the school behaviour policy, staff code of conduct policy, attendance policy, online safety policy, acceptable user policy, low-level concerns policy, confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy, children missing education procedures, complaints policy and any relevant local authority procedures.

This policy includes the school's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding, including procedures to minimise and respond to child-on-child abuse; systems for children to report abuse confidently; arrangements for reporting, recording, investigating and responding to concerns; support for children who have been harmed, children who may have caused harm and other affected children; recognition that abuse may still be taking place even where there are no reports; a zero-tolerance approach to abuse; and linked arrangements for online safety, SEND, attendance, safer recruitment, allegations management and local multi-agency safeguarding procedures.

Additional and more detailed policy guidance published through the Greater Manchester safeguarding procedures will be used alongside this policy to ensure that we are referring to the most up-to-date local guidance. This will include any relevant guidance, procedures or resources published by the Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). To access this information, we will use the following links:

Welcome to the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children...

Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) - Stockport Council

Stockport Multi-Agency Response to Need 2026

Safeguarding and child protection definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

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

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity 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.

Policy statement

This safeguarding policy encompasses child protection.

Statutory and local framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and relevant statutory guidance. As part of our commitment to safeguarding legislation and local arrangements, we refer to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, as amended or updated;
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners;

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, where applicable;
- Education Act 2002 and related statutory safeguarding duties;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, where applicable;
- Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015, where applicable;
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, where applicable;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty where applicable;
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- Local arrangements and procedures published by the Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP);
- Greater Manchester safeguarding procedures and Stockport local threshold guidance.

Safeguarding: our approach

Mersey Vale recognises its statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and all those directly connected with the school, including staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making the setting safe.

We believe that the best interests of children always come first, and we will always seek to understand their lived experience. All children, defined as those under the age of 18, have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account. All children, regardless of age, sex, disability, culture, race, language, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation, have equal rights to protection.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- **Prevention**: positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children and robust safer recruitment procedures.
- **Protection**: following agreed procedures and ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns.
- **Partnership**: timely, appropriate communication and action with children, families and partner agencies.
- **Support**: for all pupils/students, parents/carers and staff, with targeted interventions where children may be at risk of harm.

Language and terminology

Term	Meaning in this policy
Child	All children and young people who have not yet reached the age of 18.
Cared for child/ren	In Stockport, we use the term cared for when referring to looked after children. A cared for child is a child who is in the care of the local authority, either through a care order or by being accommodated by the local authority. This may include children living with parents, foster carers, connected carers, in residential care or another approved placement.

Parent/carer	Birth parents and adults in a parenting role, including stepparents, foster carers, kinship carers, adoptive parents and other adults with parental responsibility or day-to-day care.
Staff	All those working for or on behalf of the school/college in a paid or voluntary capacity, including agency staff, contractors and sessional workers.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead. References to the DSL include a trained Deputy DSL where appropriate.
Early Help	Support provided as soon as a problem emerges, including universal services, community-based support and targeted Family Help services.
Data protection laws	Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
Child sharing something of concern	We use the phrase “a child sharing or telling us something of concern” rather than relying solely on the term “disclosure”, recognising that children may communicate harm, worry or risk in different ways. Staff should remain alert to concerns about welfare and wider indicators of harm, particularly for non-verbal children, children who use alternative communication methods, and children for whom English is an additional language.
Children who have been harmed / children who may have caused harm	In this policy, we will generally use the terms “children who have been harmed” and “children who may have caused harm”. This language recognises that safeguarding concerns can be complex, that children may have multiple needs and vulnerabilities, and that language should avoid unnecessary labelling while still clearly identifying risk, impact and responsibility. Other terms, such as “victim”, “alleged perpetrator” or “perpetrator”, may be used where they appear in statutory guidance, legal processes, external agency records or where they are necessary for clarity.

Information sharing and confidentiality

We take data handling, confidentiality, and information sharing seriously. Effective safeguarding depends on timely, proportionate and appropriate information sharing. Staff have a professional responsibility to be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children.

All staff must understand that they should not assume that a colleague or another professional will take action or share information that may be critical in keeping a child safe. If staff are in any doubt, they must speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

- Information sharing decisions should be relevant, necessary, proportionate, clearly presented and appropriately contextualised.
- Staff should share information on a need-to-know basis with the DSL, children’s social care, safeguarding partners, police, health or other agencies as appropriate.

- Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where there is good reason to do so, including where seeking consent may place a child at increased risk or delay protective action.
- Fears about data protection must never be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children — the welfare of the child is paramount.
- The school will have regard to any statutory Information Sharing Duty and related guidance when it comes into force.

Key message for staff

Data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.

Data protection and safeguarding records

The school complies with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. These are collectively referred to as data protection laws. Safeguarding records are kept confidential and stored securely, separately from the main pupil record.

- Records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how it was followed up and resolved, and a note of action taken, decisions reached and outcomes.
- Safeguarding decisions and the rationale for them will be recorded, including occasions where a referral is not made.
- Child protection records will be transferred securely to a receiving school or college as soon as possible and within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term.
- Secure transfer will be separate from the main pupil file, with confirmation of receipt obtained.
- Where appropriate, the DSL will consider sharing information in advance of a child moving setting where this is necessary to support risk management, continuity of support or the safety of the child or others.
- When transferring safeguarding records, the DSL will include a clear chronology or summary which distinguishes current risk, historic context, protective factors, actions taken and unresolved concerns. Where risk is significant, the DSL will speak directly with the receiving setting's DSL to support continuity of safeguarding support. Receiving settings should review transferred information promptly and seek clarification where records are incomplete or unclear.
- We manage all of our electronic files in accordance with the above.
- Mersey Vale Primary School only keeps personal data for as long as is required under legislation or business need. The School refers to a records retention schedule to determine when records no longer need to be retained.
- Once personal data is no longer needed it is confidentially disposed of using secure methods

Prevention and safeguarding culture

We will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel that they belong, that they are safe and secure, and where adults understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Children are encouraged to speak to trusted adults if

they are worried, scared or experiencing difficulty. We strive to develop a culture of professional curiosity, challenge and respectful partnership with families and agencies.

- Staff development and awareness in respect of safeguarding is given the highest priority.
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and filtering and monitoring expectations, at induction and through regular updates, and are supported to understand and apply KCSIE requirements relevant to their role.
- Emerging issues and themes are proactively addressed and fed back to the Local Authority and SSCP through appropriate routes.
- Children are supported through the curriculum to understand relationships, risk, consent, online safety, misinformation, disinformation, reporting routes and how to seek help.

How concerns can be raised

The school will ensure that reporting routes are well promoted, accessible and understood by children, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and visitors. Children will be regularly reminded, in age-appropriate ways, who they can speak to if they are worried about themselves or another child. Parents/carers and visitors will be informed how to raise safeguarding concerns, including concerns about adults working with children. Staff must report concerns about children through the agreed safeguarding recording system and must report concerns about adults through the allegations, low-level concerns or whistleblowing processes as appropriate. Anonymous concerns will be considered carefully and recorded, with action taken according to the level of risk and available information. We will consider any concerns of a safeguarding nature; these will sit outside the complaints policy.

Definitions of abuse, neglect and exploitation

There are different ways of defining abuse, neglect and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy, we have included the definitions below; however, we will exercise professional judgement and work with safeguarding partners when considering concerns, including how abuse is understood, identified and responded to. Staff are trained and supported to understand and recognise indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and multiple harms may overlap.

Type	Policy wording
Abuse	A form of maltreatment of a child. Harm can include ill-treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill-treatment of others. Abuse can take place within or outside the home, online or offline, and may be perpetrated by adults or other children.
Physical abuse	A form of abuse involving physical harm or the fabrication or induction of illness. Staff must report concerns promptly to the DSL.
Emotional abuse	Persistent emotional maltreatment likely to cause severe and adverse effects on emotional development. It can include verbal abuse, bullying, silencing, humiliation or exposure to harmful experiences.

Type	Policy wording
Sexual abuse	A form of abuse involving forcing, enticing or exploiting a child. Staff must not investigate but must report immediately to the DSL.
Neglect	Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development.
Exploitation	A child may be exploited criminally, sexually, financially, online or through coercion, threats, manipulation, grooming or imbalance of power. A child cannot consent to exploitation.

Child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children and that this can happen inside and outside school/college and online. Even where there are no reports, staff must not assume that abuse is not happening. Concerns must be shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

What might we see:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, sometimes known as teenage relationship abuse;
- Physical abuse, serious physical assault, harm or threats involving weapons;
- Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment, including online harassment;
- Consensual, non-consensual or harmful making, sharing or manipulation of nudes or semi-nudes, including AI-generated/deepfake imagery;
- Upskirting and other image-based abuse;
- Misogynistic, misandrist, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, faith-based or other discriminatory abuse;
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

We will respond to child-on-child abuse as a safeguarding concern for both the child who may have been harmed and the child who may have caused harm. Responses will be proportionate, recorded, and informed by risk assessment, children's wishes and feelings, and the need to protect individuals and the wider school/college community.

Where child-on-child abuse **may** involve harmful sexual behaviour, the DSL will consider whether behaviour sits on a continuum from developmentally expected behaviour through to inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent behaviour. The response will consider the ages and developmental stages of the children, any power imbalance, coercion, consent, frequency, previous incidents, wider peer-group dynamics and the safety of all children affected. Support and safety arrangements **may** include separate risk assessments, supervision or timetable arrangements, therapeutic or specialist support, curriculum intervention, parental engagement and referral to children's social care, police or specialist services where required.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment **are never acceptable** and will not be dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or typical behaviour. All reports and concerns will be taken seriously, those harmed will be supported, and those alleged to have caused harm will be supported and managed through safeguarding, and behaviour policies and, where necessary, statutory processes.

- Staff will report concerns to the DSL immediately and will not investigate incidents themselves.
- The DSL will consider the immediate safety of all children involved and the wider school/college environment.
- A risk assessment and support plan will be completed where required.
- Where a report involves harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence, the DSL will consider an immediate risk and needs assessment, including the safety and support needs of the child who has been harmed, any child who may have caused harm, other children who may be affected, the wider school/college community, shared lessons or spaces, transport and online risks.
- Parents/carers and external agencies, including children’s social care and police, will be involved where appropriate.
- Where rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, significant harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, exploitation, serious online abuse or immediate risk is alleged or suspected, the DSL will consider referral to children’s social care and/or police without delay, in line with local procedures.
- The curriculum will teach respectful relationships, equality, consent, online safety and reporting routes in an age-appropriate way.
- When considering whether children should share classes, spaces, activities or transport following a report, leaders will prioritise safeguarding, the wishes and feelings of the child who has been harmed, risk and needs assessment, and the rights and support needs of all children involved. Decisions and rationale will be recorded and reviewed.

Contextual safeguarding and extra-familial harm

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours may be associated with factors outside the school/college and outside the child’s home. Staff, especially the DSL and deputies, will consider the context in which concerns occur, including peer groups, neighbourhoods, transport, online spaces and community locations.

When making referrals or contributing to assessments, we will provide as much relevant information as possible, including information about the child’s lived experience, peer relationships, online activity, attendance, community concerns and any known risks to others.

Family Help, community-based Early Help and Team Around the School

We recognise that children and families may require support at any stage and that effective support before statutory intervention can prevent concerns from escalating. In line with Working Together 2026 and KCSIE 2026, this school/college considers universal services, community-based Early Help and Family Help support as soon as a problem emerges.

All staff are alert to indicators that a child or family may benefit from universal support, community-based Early Help, Family Help, or referral to statutory services. Staff are supported to understand local thresholds, referral processes and pathways, and understand they must share concerns promptly with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

The DSL or Deputy DSL understands the local criteria, thresholds and referral pathways for:

- Family Help, including targeted early help;
- support and services under section 17 Children Act 1989 for children in need;
- section 47 Children Act 1989 where there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm;
- section 20 Children Act 1989 where accommodation may be required;
- section 31 Children Act 1989 care and supervision orders;
- children affected by exploitation, youth secure estate arrangements, disability or additional needs.

Our Team Around the School (TAS) approach is used to bring together relevant school staff and partner agencies to consider support for children and families and to coordinate plans where additional help is required.

Our school seeks consent from parents with regard to discussion and information sharing before explicitly discussing concerns or potential support. The Team around the school consists of professionals from education, social care and health. From education the Headteacher, DSL, SENDCo and Learning Mentor attend. Representatives from social care are the Family Help Coordinator. From health the School Nurse attends. The school's Inclusion Coordinator from Stockport Inclusion Team also attends. Where concerns are raised re: attendance, referrals to the Education Welfare Officer are considered.
The Team meet termly to review outcomes of referrals and consider any further support or referral pathways, however Early Help can be sought by parents/carers at any point throughout the year.

Roles and responsibilities

Governance and leadership

- The governing body has strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding and must ensure policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with law and statutory guidance.
- The governing body will ensure there is a senior board-level or equivalent lead for safeguarding.
- Governors receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction and through regular updates so they can provide strategic challenge and assurance.
- The headteacher and DSL will ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff.
- Leaders will allocate sufficient time, training, support and resources to enable the DSL and Deputy DSLs to fulfil their responsibilities, including cover arrangements.
- Leaders will ensure pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through a broad, balanced and age-appropriate curriculum.
- The DSL and leaders will ensure allegations, low-level concerns, whistleblowing, filtering and monitoring, attendance, alternative provision and single central record arrangements are monitored and reviewed and appropriately recorded.
- Leaders and the DSL will monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, this policy and associated procedures, including periodic audits of safeguarding and welfare concern files at least annually.
- We will complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at the frequency specified by the Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- We will ensure the annual Section 175/157 safeguarding audit is completed, submitted within required timescales, scrutinised by senior leaders and governors, and used to inform safeguarding improvement planning.

- We will provide regular reports to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff, the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant safeguarding data.
- The DSL, link governors and senior leaders will take lead responsibility for ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in safeguarding arrangements are addressed promptly and effectively.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs

The school has appointed a member of the senior leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems, including online safety. While activities may be delegated, the lead responsibility remains with the DSL and cannot be delegated.

The DSL (or Deputy in their absence) will:

- Act as the central contact point for safeguarding concerns and advice.
- Manage referrals to Family Help, MASSH/children's social care, police, Channel/Prevent and other agencies as required. Allegations that may meet the harm threshold will usually be managed by the headteacher, who will consult or refer to the LADO as appropriate; where the allegation relates to the headteacher, this will be managed by the Chair of Governors.
- Maintain secure, accurate and up-to-date safeguarding records.
- Lead and coordinate safeguarding action, support and risk assessment for individual children.
- Represent the school at multi-agency meetings or ensure appropriate representation.
- Ensure local Stockport/SSCP referral and escalation procedures are followed.
- Ensure appropriate DSL cover during school hours, out-of-hours activities, trips, visits, closures and periods of staff absence.
- Oversee filtering and monitoring arrangements alongside senior leaders and IT leads.
- Promote educational outcomes for children with a social worker, children who are cared for and children with safeguarding or welfare concerns.
- Ensure children's wishes and feelings are considered and recorded appropriately.
- Support staff and promote safeguarding knowledge through induction, training, supervision, updates and reflective practice.

DSL availability and cover arrangements

The DSL or a trained Deputy DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL or Deputy DSL is not available, this must not delay appropriate action. Staff must speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from children's social care/MASSH, police or other relevant safeguarding agencies as appropriate. Any action taken must be shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as practicably possible.

- The DSL cover arrangements are communicated to all staff.
- A secure safeguarding mailbox is monitored by appropriate trained staff.
- Educational visits and out-of-hours activities have named safeguarding contacts and escalation routes.
- Emergency closure or remote learning arrangements include clear safeguarding reporting and monitoring processes.

All staff

All staff play a vital role as they are well placed to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote welfare and prevent concerns from escalating. **All** staff have responsibility to:

- provide a safe environment in which children can learn;
- be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery;
- know what to do if a child tells them they are being harmed or at risk;
- be professionally curious and not wait for proof before sharing concerns;
- identify children who may benefit from universal services, community-based Early Help or Family Help;
- understand local referral and escalation procedures;
- act immediately where there are concerns about a child's welfare;
- maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality and never promise secrecy;
- record concerns accurately and promptly using the school/college system;
- reassure children that they are being taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- follow the staff code of conduct, paying particular regard to safer working practice guidance, whistleblowing and low-level concerns procedures.

When a child says they are being/have been harmed

We support our staff and volunteers to be confident in responding when a child or young person indicates that they have been harmed or are at risk of harm, including significant harm.

Staff are supported to:

- Listen carefully and calmly.
- Be curious but will not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by speaking to you.
- Do not promise confidentiality or secrecy.
- Explain that you need to share the information with the DSL so the child can be supported.
- Avoid asking the child to repeat their account to multiple adults.
- Record the **child's words**, context, time, date, location and who was present as soon as possible.
- Share the concern with the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. If there is immediate danger, seek urgent assistance and follow emergency procedures.

Online safety, AI and emerging technology

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing concerns. Children may be at risk online and offline concurrently. Our online safety approach is integrated into safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour, acceptable use and staff training arrangements.

- Online risks include content, contact, conduct and commerce risks.
- Children may be exposed to misinformation, disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories.
- AI technologies may be misused to create or manipulate images, impersonate others, enable bullying or harassment, produce misleading content or support grooming/exploitation.
- The term nudes and semi-nudes includes photographs, videos, livestreams and images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including deepfakes/deep nudes.
- Any incident involving AI-generated, digitally altered or shared intimate imagery of a child will be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in line with child protection procedures and national guidance.

- Staff and pupils/students will be supported to understand responsible use of technology and how to report concerns.
- We promote the Stockport Online Safety Hub with parents/carers and staff. Please follow this link for more information: Online Safety Hub - Stockport LA.

Filtering and monitoring

The governing body has responsibility for ensuring appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place. The DSL will work with senior leaders, IT staff/providers and governors to ensure systems are effective, proportionate, and **regularly reviewed and tested**.

- Filtering and monitoring arrangements will **be reviewed at least annually** and when there are significant changes to technology, risk or provision.
- Staff will understand their role in reporting filtering or monitoring concerns.
- Monitoring alerts that indicate safeguarding risk will be reviewed and acted upon promptly.
- Filtering and monitoring will not replace professional curiosity, supervision, education and effective safeguarding practice.
- Governors and senior leaders will receive assurance that filtering and monitoring has been tested across school networks, internet-connected devices and relevant locations, including any devices used off-site or through remote access where applicable. Testing, concerns, actions and decisions will be recorded.
- Filtering and Monitoring reports are made available to the Governing Board through termly leadership reports.

Mobile phones, smart technology and personal devices

The school has clear arrangements for the use of mobile phones, smart technology, camera-enabled devices, personal tracking devices and wearable devices. These arrangements should be cross-referenced with the mobile phone policy, acceptable user policy, online safety policy and staff code of conduct.

Students and mobile phones In line with government guidance, the school will be mobile phone-free by default throughout the school day. Pupils must not use mobile phones or personal smart technology during the school day unless a specific exception has been authorised by the headteacher for medical, SEND, safeguarding or other exceptional reasons. The school will specify how devices are stored or restricted, how exceptions are managed, how wearable or camera-enabled devices are treated, and how sanctions, confiscation and parental communication are handled.

- Staff, visitors and pupils will be informed of expectations regarding personal devices.
- Personal devices must not be used to record, photograph or contact children unless explicitly permitted by policy and senior leaders.
- Images of children will be taken, stored and shared only in line with consent, data protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Personal tracking devices or wearable technologies that record location, audio, video or other data must be considered through safeguarding, privacy and data protection risk assessment and are not routinely permitted.
- Any suspected misuse of devices will be reported to the DSL and managed as a safeguarding concern where relevant.

Nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated imagery

The school uses the term "nudes and semi-nudes" to describe the creation, sending, receiving or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under 18. Images include photographs, videos, livestreams and digitally altered or AI-generated content.

- Staff must report concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Staff must not view, copy, print, share, store or forward imagery, except where unavoidable and in line with DSL guidance and national advice.
- Staff must not ask a child to share or download imagery.
- Staff must not delete imagery or ask a child to delete it unless advised by the DSL/police according to guidance.
- Staff will avoid blame or shame for any child involved and will respond in a calm, supportive and safeguarding-focused way.
- The DSL will consider immediate risk, the ages and vulnerabilities of children involved, consent/coercion, whether adults are involved, the role of AI/manipulation, and whether referral to children's social care or police is required.

Mental health and wellbeing

All staff recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, become safeguarding concerns. This may include self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating concerns, significant distress or indicators that a child has suffered or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

- Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions.
- Staff are well placed to observe behaviour, attendance, presentation, relationships and changes over time.
- Where staff have a mental health concern that may also be a safeguarding concern, they must speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- If staff believe a child is in immediate danger, they must follow emergency procedures, including calling 999 or arranging urgent medical help where appropriate.
- Interventions offered by the school/college should be evidence-informed, safe, proportionate and appropriate to need and phase of education.

Where relevant, we will seek to work with named mental health practitioners as part of a multi-agency response to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of individual children.

Attendance, educational neglect and children missing education

Regular attendance in education is a key safeguarding factor. Absence, particularly when prolonged, repeated, unexplained or combined with other concerns, can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties, unmet SEND needs, family difficulty, or other safeguarding risks.

Staff will remain vigilant for patterns of poor, irregular or falling attendance, including changes in punctuality, unexplained absence, repeated absence, part-day absence, or emerging disengagement. Where staff notice such concerns, they must alert the DSL, Deputy DSL and/or attendance lead so that the child's circumstances can be considered alongside any wider safeguarding, welfare or support needs.

Persistent and severe absence

- Persistent absence and severe absence will be monitored in line with national and local attendance guidance.
- Staff will seek to understand underlying causes and avoid assumptions.
- Patterns of absence will be considered alongside wider safeguarding information.
- Where support does not improve attendance or risk increases, the DSL will consider escalation through universal services, community-based Early Help, Family Help, MASSH/children's social care or other statutory pathways.

Educational neglect

Educational neglect is the failure of a parent or carer to ensure a child's access to appropriate education. The school will consider whether persistent or severe absence, lack of engagement, repeated failure to support attendance or patterns of unmet need may indicate educational neglect. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm, a referral will be made to the MASSH.

Children Missing Education

- The school will follow statutory and local procedures when a child is missing from education or their destination is unknown.
- Robust checks will be completed before removing a child from roll.
- The local authority will be notified in accordance with local procedures.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, the DSL will seek advice from MASSH/children's social care and/or police as appropriate.

As part of our safeguarding duty, we will complete home visits. Further information is available in our attendance policy.

Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer expresses an intention to educate their child at home, the school/college will respond in line with statutory and Stockport local guidance. Leaders will consider safeguarding information, attendance, SEND, child voice, parental capacity and any multi-agency involvement, and will work collaboratively with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Elective Home Education documents - Stockport Council

Alternative Provision safeguarding responsibilities

Where a pupil is placed with an Alternative Provision provider, the school retains overall responsibility for safeguarding, attendance, progress and welfare. Alternative Provision must be quality-assured and monitored.

- Explicit written confirmation will be obtained that required safeguarding checks have been completed for adults working with pupils.
- The provider must notify the school of safeguarding risks, incidents, absence and changes in arrangements.
- Attendance and location will be monitored accurately during school hours.
- The placement will be reviewed at least half-termly, and more frequently where risk, attendance, wellbeing or safeguarding concerns require it.
- Regular visits will be undertaken and measures taken to support the child's sense of belonging with school.
- Safeguarding concerns may result in immediate review, suspension or termination of the placement.

- The DSL will ensure relevant safeguarding information is shared with the provider where necessary and proportionate.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention. Staff should remain particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for children who:

- have disabilities, certain health conditions or specific additional needs;
- have special educational needs, whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- have a mental health need;
- are young carers, pregnant or parents themselves;
- show early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviours;
- are being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, gangs, organised crime or county lines;
- are frequently missing from education, home or care;
- have been repeatedly removed from classrooms, experienced multiple suspensions, are on a part-time timetable, are at risk of permanent exclusion, or are in Alternative Provision or a PRU;
- are at risk of exploitation, modern slavery or trafficking;
- are at risk of radicalisation;
- have a parent/carer in custody or are affected by parental offending;
- live in family circumstances involving drug or alcohol misuse, adult mental health, domestic abuse or other pressures;
- are misusing alcohol or drugs;
- are at risk of honour or faith-based abuse, FGM or forced marriage;
- are privately fostered.
- are living in temporary accommodation, homeless, at risk of homelessness, or affected by housing instability, including where the school/college receives notification from a housing authority or other partner agency.
- have medical conditions, allergies or essential medication needs where repeated failure to support treatment, medication access, dietary safety or reasonable adjustments may become a safeguarding concern.

Young carers may require additional support where caring responsibilities affect attendance, punctuality, concentration, learning, wellbeing, social development or ability to participate fully in school life. Staff should recognise potential indicators of caring responsibilities and share concerns with the DSL or pastoral lead so that support, assessment and referral routes can be considered.

Children with SEND or disabilities

Staff recognise that additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse, neglect or exploitation in children with SEND or disabilities. These can include assumptions that indicators relate to disability, communication barriers, dependency on adults for care, reduced opportunities to disclose, and increased vulnerability to bullying, coercion or exploitation.

- Concerns will be explored with professional curiosity and not attributed automatically to SEND or disability.
- The child's preferred communication method will be considered.
- The DSL will liaise with the SENCO/named SEND lead as appropriate while maintaining confidentiality.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made so children can report concerns and access support.

Where a child has a medical condition, allergy or requires essential medication, the school will consider whether concerns about repeated missed medication, avoidable exposure to allergens, untreated symptoms, refusal or failure to follow agreed healthcare plans, or lack of reasonable adjustments may indicate neglect or another safeguarding concern. Staff must share concerns with the DSL and relevant medical/SEND leads so that proportionate support, advice or referral can be considered.

Serious violence, weapons and safety planning

Serious violence is a safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons, peer conflict, bullying, exploitation or violence linked to criminal activity. Staff must report concerns about a child carrying, using or expressing intent to carry or use a weapon to the DSL immediately.

- The DSL will assess risk to the individual child and others.
- A safety and support plan will be developed where appropriate.
- Plans may include trusted adult support, supervision arrangements, de-escalation strategies, curriculum/pastoral support, referral to specialist services, police advice and multi-agency planning.
- The school will be alert to times when risk may increase, including immediately after school, transitions, journeys to and from school, exclusions/suspensions and movement in or out of Alternative Provision.
- Children involved in violence may also have been harmed themselves and will be considered through a safeguarding lens.

- Knife Crime and Youth Violence Protocol for Education.

Extremism and radicalisation

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Protecting children from this risk is part of the school's wider safeguarding approach. The school has due regard to the Prevent duty and treats concerns about radicalisation, extremism or terrorism as safeguarding concerns.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to legitimise support for, or the use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism includes action or threats designed to influence government or intimidate the public for a political, religious or ideological cause, and which endanger or cause serious violence, serious damage to property, or serious interference with an electronic system.

The school is subject to the Prevent duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and will have due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent duty is treated as part of the school's wider safeguarding duties. The DSL, Deputy DSLs and relevant senior leaders will be familiar with current Prevent duty guidance and local procedures for making Prevent referrals. Staff should use professional judgement, be alert to changes in children's behaviour or circumstances, and share concerns with the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Staff should be alert to violence fixation, including escalating interest in weapons, attacks, mass harm, extremist material or harmful online content, whether or not this appears linked to a clear ideology. Concerns must be shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL and considered through safeguarding, Prevent, Channel, police and local multi-agency procedures.

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme for people who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are first assessed by police and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will consider whether support is required. A school representative may be asked to contribute to the Channel process. Where a child receiving Channel support moves to another school or college, the DSL will consider, in line with information-sharing principles, whether relevant information should be shared in advance to support continuity of safeguarding support.

- We build resilience through a balanced curriculum, critical thinking, online safety and inclusive practice.
- We have filtering and monitoring systems in place, including real-time alerts, and record all follow-up actions and interventions.
- We monitor the use of school premises and external speakers to ensure compatibility with safeguarding duties.
- We work with local safeguarding partners where concerns arise.
- We ensure staff and governor training is current and up-to-date to ensure all staff recognize indicators including violent fixated individuals.
- We have a PREVENT risk assessment in place which is reviewed regularly and at least annually.

School premises and non-school activities

When the school premises are used for non-school activities, leaders will seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. Safeguarding clauses will be included in hire agreements and concerns will be reported to relevant agencies, including the local authority and/or LADO, where appropriate. Site safety arrangements include signing visitors in and out, supervision, identity checks, acceptable conduct expectations and emergency procedures.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another organisation, leaders will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies, safer recruitment arrangements and procedures for liaising with the school where concerns arise. Safeguarding requirements will be included in hire or transfer-of-control agreements, and failure to comply may lead to termination of the agreement.

The school receives a range of visitors, including parents/carers, contractors, professionals, speakers, performers and others attending events or activities. We will manage visitors proportionately, checking identity and **seeking assurance about appropriate checks** where a visitor attends in a professional capacity. We will not request DBS checks, barred list checks or DBS certificates for children's relatives or other visitors attending one-off events such as sports days. Headteachers will use professional judgement about supervision or escorting arrangements, and leaders will consider the suitability, educational value and age appropriateness of external organisations, speakers or resources before they are used.

Domestic abuse and Operation Encompass

Children can be victims of domestic abuse where they see, hear or experience its effects. Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on health, wellbeing, safety, attendance and learning. Young people can also experience abuse in their own relationships. Where we have concerns we will follow local and national guidance and policies.

Operation Encompass

The school participates in Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is an information-sharing arrangement through which police notify education settings when they have attended a domestic abuse incident where a child may have been affected. This supports education settings to provide timely, informed support.

- The DSL or trained Operation Encompass Key Adult receives and reviews notifications.
- Information is recorded securely and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Support is considered in light of the child's needs, behaviour, voice and circumstances.
- Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals to children's social care where those are required.
- The school will communicate its participation in Operation Encompass to parents/carers through appropriate local documentation.
- Notifications may be received where a child has been affected by domestic abuse even if they were not physically present. Notifications may include sensitive information about the child's circumstances, voice and context and will be handled sensitively, securely and in line with data protection laws. Operation Encompass will not be used as a substitute for professional judgement, will not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals where a child may be at risk of harm, and notifications will not include information or reference to sexual offences disclosed at the domestic abuse incident. The school will maintain a reliable route for receiving notifications, such as a monitored safeguarding inbox with a named Key Adult arrangement.

Honour-based abuse, forced marriage and FGM

Staff are alert to the possibility of honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. These concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately. Teachers have a specific mandatory reporting duty where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, but all staff **must** act to promote and safeguard the welfare of our students.

Reasonable force and restrictive practice

There are limited circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children. Reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time in the circumstances. It may include guiding a child to safety, preventing injury, preventing serious damage to property, or preventing serious disruption where there is an immediate safeguarding, safety or welfare risk.

- Any use of reasonable force or restrictive intervention must be lawful, proportionate, necessary, reasonable in the circumstances and for the shortest time possible.
- Staff must consider the child's age, needs, SEND, disability, medical conditions, trauma history, communication needs and any known risk assessment or support plan.
- Reasonable force must never be used as a punishment or to cause pain, humiliation or degradation.
- Where restrictive intervention is used, the incident must be recorded, reviewed and reported in line with the behaviour policy and any local reporting requirements.
- Parents/carers should be informed where appropriate, unless doing so would increase safeguarding risk.
- Leaders will review incidents to identify learning, reduce the likelihood of recurrence and consider whether additional support, reasonable adjustments, behaviour planning or safeguarding action is required.
- This section should be read alongside the behaviour policy, SEND policy, health and safety procedures and any restrictive intervention or positive handling policy used by the school.

Gender-questioning children, social transition and single-sex spaces

The school will respond sensitively, professionally and lawfully where a child, or their parent/carer, raises a request for support relating to gender-questioning or social transition. The school will not initiate action relating to social transition. Individual members of staff must not adopt changes relating to social transition, such as changes to names, pronouns, uniform, records or day-to-day arrangements, unless a school decision-making process has taken place and parents/carers have been involved, unless involving them would create a safeguarding risk.

Staff will take time to understand the child's thoughts and feelings and will be professionally curious about the full range of the child's experiences, including family relationships, peer relationships, bullying, mental health, SEND, neurodiversity, online influences and wider wellbeing.

Any request for support with social transition will be considered carefully and on an individual basis. Social transition will be treated as an active intervention that may have significant implications for the child and for other children. The first consideration will be the best interests and safeguarding of the child and all children affected. The child's wishes and feelings will be listened to and taken seriously, but any decision may not be the same as the child's wishes.

Parents/carers will usually be involved as a matter of priority and their views will be treated with importance. Where involving parents/carers may place the child at greater risk, the DSL will be involved before parents/carers are contacted or decisions are made. Relevant professional advice may be sought, including from the SENCO/named SEND lead, pastoral staff, health professionals, the local authority, trust, HR or legal advisers where appropriate.

Decisions and rationale will be documented and records will be kept. Arrangements will be reviewed regularly, including where circumstances change, safeguarding concerns emerge, a child is living in stealth, or a child wishes to fully or partially reverse a previous request. The school will keep accurate records, including accurate recording of biological sex where this is recorded, and will ensure relevant staff have appropriate information where needed for safeguarding, safety, privacy, dignity, fair participation or legal compliance.

The school will be a respectful place where bullying is never tolerated. All forms of bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour, including bullying related to sex, gender-questioning, perceived difference or any protected characteristic, will be challenged and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

Toilets, changing rooms, showers and PE/sport

- The school will maintain single-sex toilet and changing provision in line with legal requirements and safeguarding guidance.
- Children will not be permitted to use toilets/changing provision designated for the opposite biological sex.
- Where a gender-questioning child does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider whether suitable alternative arrangements can be made, provided that these do not compromise single-sex provision or the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child or any other child.
- Alternative arrangements may include self-contained individual facilities where available or supervised access at an alternative time where appropriate.
- Requests relating to PE or sport will be considered in light of safety, fairness, safeguarding, equality duties, and guidance on support with social transition.
- Records of arrangements will be clear, appropriately communicated and regularly reviewed.
- Any arrangements will be determined on a case-by-case basis, having regard to safeguarding, the best interests of the child, the impact on other children, and the school's statutory obligations.

Safer recruitment and safer working practice

The school pays full regard to KCSIE 2026 and relevant legislation when recruiting staff, volunteers, contractors and others working with or around children. Safer recruitment is part of a wider culture of safer practice.

- Recruitment processes include appropriate identity, DBS, barred list, right to work, qualification, prohibition, section 128, overseas and reference checks as applicable.
- Online checks may be undertaken as part of due diligence in line with KCSIE and recruitment procedures.
- The single central record is maintained and reviewed at least termly by a named senior leader, who in turn provides assurance to the governing board.
- Supply, agency and third-party staff are subject to written confirmation of checks and appropriate induction.
- Staff and volunteers receive safeguarding induction and understand the staff code of conduct, which specifically includes safer working practice guidance, acceptable use, online safety, low-level concerns and whistleblowing procedures.
- Adults working in school understand professional boundaries, safe use of technology, and expectations for conduct inside and outside work.

Regulated activity and volunteers

The school will ensure arrangements for volunteers and others undertaking teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children reflect current statutory requirements. Where applicable and in line with KCSIE 2026, the removal of the previous supervision exemption for regulated activity will be reflected in recruitment approaches, DBS/barred list decision-making and volunteer risk assessments. The school will keep written records of volunteer risk assessments, identity checks, induction, supervision arrangements and any barred list or DBS decisions. Existing volunteers, work experience arrangements, contractors, self-employed workers, supply staff and trainee teachers will be reviewed to ensure the correct checks, written confirmations and safeguarding induction are in place. HR and legal advice will be sought where uncertainty exists via our contracted provider.

Allegations, concerns and low-level concerns about adults

The school has processes to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations about staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors. Concerns that may meet the harm threshold will be referred to the headteacher, Chair of Governors where the concern is about the headteacher, and the LADO as appropriate.

Low-level concerns are concerns about an adult working in or on behalf of the school that do not meet the harm threshold but may indicate behaviour inconsistent with the staff code of conduct. Low-level concerns must be shared, recorded, reviewed and responded to appropriately to identify patterns and maintain a culture of openness and safety.

- Low-level concerns will be shared confidentially with Catherine Whitehead, Headteacher and DSL**.**
- The headteacher is the ultimate decision maker for low-level concerns, unless the concern relates to them.
- Concerns about supply staff and contractors will be shared with their employer so patterns can be identified.
- If there is doubt about whether the harm threshold is met, advice will be sought from the LADO or relevant Local Authority safeguarding lead.
- Where a person is dismissed, removed from regulated activity, would have been removed had they not left, or otherwise meets the referral criteria, the school will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Where a teacher is dismissed, ceases to be used, or would have been dismissed for serious misconduct, the school will consider whether referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency is required.

- Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation; decisions will be proportionate, risk-assessed, recorded and reviewed. The school will consider welfare support for the child, the adult who is the subject of the allegation and any other children or staff affected.
- Records will be kept securely and in line with HR, data protection and retention requirements.
- At the conclusion of any allegation or low-level concern process, leaders will consider whether there are lessons for safer recruitment, induction, supervision, staff conduct, site management, culture or policy, and will record actions taken.
- The Governing Board regularly reviews it's Low-Level Concern policy.

Whistleblowing and professional challenge

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in safeguarding provision. Such concerns will be taken seriously by senior leaders. Where staff feel unable to raise a concern internally, or feel that genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are available, including the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line: Whistleblowing Advice Line | NSPCC.

The school also recognises the importance of professional challenge and escalation where there are disagreements between agencies or where a child's situation is not improving. Staff should speak to the DSL if they believe escalation is required.

Information on escalation procedures is available here: Resolving Professional Differences/Escalation Policy.

Searching, screening and confiscation

Searching, screening and confiscation will be managed in line with the school behaviour policy and DfE guidance. The DSL or Deputy DSL will be informed without delay where a search reveals or suggests a safeguarding risk, involves prohibited items such as weapons, drugs or harmful imagery, or where a child's welfare is otherwise at risk. Any risks will be managed in line with local guidance and with consideration given to all involved.

The headteacher and DSL understand the requirement for an Appropriate Adult where a child is subject to police detention, treatment or questioning under PACE Code C. The headteacher or deputy headteacher, in their absence, will be **immediately alerted** to these circumstances.

Staff learning, induction and training

Safeguarding learning is an essential part of staff development and supports our culture of safeguarding. All new staff, volunteers, agency and third-party staff receive safeguarding induction. Induction includes:

- KCSIE 2026 Part One for all staff, with any role-specific additional information or relevant guidance provided as appropriate;
- any KCSIE Part One overview, school/college summary or quick-reference material used to support understanding, noting that these do not replace reading Part One itself;
- this safeguarding and child protection policy;
- behaviour policy;
- staff code of conduct policy – safer working practice;
- child-on-child abuse procedures;
- children absent/missing from education procedures;
- online safety, filtering and monitoring expectations;
- low-level concerns, allegations and whistleblowing procedures;

- categories of abuse;
- What to do if you are worried about a child, or if they share a concern;
- how to record and report concerns, including outside normal DSL availability.

All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including online safety and an understanding of the school's expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Training will be regularly updated. In addition, all staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety updates, as required and at least annually, for example through email, e-bulletins, staff meetings, briefings or training sessions, so that they have the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard children effectively. Training records will be maintained and reported to governors. Governors will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction and through regular updates.

Other related policies

This policy is the overarching safeguarding policy and should be read alongside linked policies including:

- Attendance policy;
- Accessibility plan;
- Behaviour policy;
- Anti-bullying policy;
- Staff code of conduct policy;
- Low-level concerns policy;
- Confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy;
- Online safety and acceptable use policies;
- Mobile phone use policy;
- Data protection and records management policies;
- Health and safety
- Lone working and personal safety policy
- Site security policy;
- Educational visits policy;
- Equality policy
- Inclusion policy;
- Intimate care policy, where applicable;
- Complaints policy;
- Critical incidents policy;
- Volunteers in school policy

All policies can be found here. Policies specific to staff can be found here.

Appendices notice

The appendices have been added to support schools and colleges with implementation, personalisation and staff understanding. Schools and colleges may choose to remove, adapt or retain all or some of the appendix content before final publication, provided the published policy remains accurate, compliant, locally relevant and clearly reflects the setting's agreed safeguarding arrangements.

Appendix 1: Supporting our culture – recognise, respond, report, record

Step	What staff should do
Recognise	Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, harm, vulnerability, attendance concerns, peer abuse, online harm or changes in behaviour.
Respond	Take concerns seriously, listen, reassure, avoid leading questions and do not investigate.
Report	Share concerns immediately with the DSL or Deputy DSL. If unavailable and risk is urgent, seek senior leader and external safeguarding advice.
Record	Make a clear, factual, timely record using the school/college safeguarding system. Include the child's words where relevant and the rationale for decisions.

Appendix 2: Concern about a child – action chart

Step 1 — Recognise a concern or receive a disclosure	School staff should be alert to indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or wider safeguarding concern, including unexplained injuries, changes in behaviour, poor hygiene, hunger, inappropriate clothing, withdrawal, anxiety, concerning sexualised knowledge or behaviour, attendance concerns, online harm or changes in presentation. Staff may also receive a direct or indirect disclosure, observe a concern, or receive information from another child, parent/carer, professional or member of the community.
▼	
Step 2 — Consider immediate safety	If the child is in immediate danger, call 999 and notify the DSL, Deputy DSL or senior leader as soon as possible. Staff should take timely proportionate action to help keep the child safe while following the school reporting process.
▼	
Step 3 — Inform the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay	Share concerns promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the DSL is unavailable, report to a Deputy DSL or senior leader in line with the school's cover arrangements. Do not delay action where a child may be at risk.

▼

Step 4 — Record concerns factually	Record observations carefully, including dates, times, context, the child's exact words where relevant, who was present, and any immediate actions already taken. Records should be factual, concise, timely and stored securely within the school safeguarding system.

▼

Step 5 — DSL action and referral decision	The DSL will assess the concern in line with KCSIE, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Stockport threshold guidance and SSCP procedures. The DSL will consider the child's wishes and feelings, known vulnerabilities, family context, previous concerns and whether support or referral is required. **Important note:** Anyone can make a safeguarding referral. If the DSL or Deputy DSL is not available, or if emergency action is required, staff must not delay and should contact MASSH, children's social care, police or emergency services directly as appropriate. Any referral or action taken must be recorded and shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as practicably possible. **DSL contact details: Catherine Whitehead; 0161 4427535;** **headteacher@merseyvale.stockport.sch.uk** **Deputy DSL contact details: Claire Varetto; 0161 4427535;** **headteacher@merseyvale.stockport.sch.uk**

▼

Family Help / Team Around the School Consider internal pastoral support, Early Help, Family Help, Team Around the School arrangements or other early support where needs are below statutory safeguarding thresholds.	**MASSH / children's social care / police** Refer to MASSH, children's social care or police where there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm, immediate risk, criminality, exploitation or the need for statutory assessment or protection.	**LADO route** Where the concern relates to an adult working or volunteering with children, follow the school/college allegations procedure and seek LADO advice as appropriate.

▼

Step 6 — Follow up, monitor and record outcomes	The DSL will record decisions, rationale, actions and outcomes. The DSL will monitor with colleagues and relevant partners whether the child is safer and whether support is improving the child's situation. Parents/carers should usually be involved and central to this work unless doing so may place the child at increased risk or undermine a safeguarding response.
▼	
Step 7 — Review, escalate or re-refer if concerns remain	If the child's situation does not improve, risk increases, information changes, or there is professional disagreement, the DSL/referrer will review the plan, seek further advice, escalate through Stockport/Greater Manchester procedures, or make a further referral as appropriate.

Appendix 3: Local Stockport contacts

Service	Contact details
MASSH online referral	Make a referral to the MASSH: urgent support or response - Stockport Council
Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH)	Tel: 0161 217 6028 and select option 1
Out of hours emergencies	Tel: 0161 718 2118.
Greater Manchester Police	101 for non-emergency / 999 in emergency.
Safeguarding Children Unit	Tel: 0161 474 5657.
LADO referral	Professionals only – Contact the LADO - Stockport Council

Appendix 4: Possible indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation

Indicators are provided as a guide only. Concerns and context should be discussed with the DSL. The presence of an indicator does not prove abuse; absence of indicators does not mean a child is safe.

If you notice something, record it and report it.

Area	Possible indicators	Cross-cutting indicator
Neglect	Poor presentation, hunger, untreated medical/dental needs, persistent tiredness, lack of basic care, poor attendance or repeated unmet needs.	Across any category, staff should be alert to changes in a child's behaviour, language,

Emotional harm	Developmental changes, anxiety, withdrawal, fearfulness, low self-esteem, self-deprecation, sudden behaviour changes or running away.	aggression/dysregulation, withdrawal or appearance. Changes may be sudden or gradual and should be considered alongside the child's context, lived experience, attendance, relationships and previous concerns.
Physical harm	Unexplained injuries, injuries inconsistent with explanations, repeated injuries, injuries in unusual places, or injuries in babies/non-mobile children.	
Online harm	Secretive device use, distress after online activity, new unexplained contacts/gifts, exposure to harmful content, coercion, harassment or sharing of images.	
Exploitation	Missing episodes, unexplained money/gifts, new older peers/adults, travel patterns, changes in behaviour, debt, fear, coercion or involvement in criminal activity.	
Serious violence	Weapon-related language, threats, fear of peers, injuries, gang association, changes in travel routes or possession of concerning items.	
Radicalisation	Changes in views, language, behaviour, friendship groups or online activity; increased secrecy about internet use; fixation on extremist, violent or conspiracy-based content; isolation from family/peers; intolerance of others; or comments suggesting support for violence, hatred or extremist ideology. Concerns should be shared with the DSL and considered in line with Prevent and local Channel processes.	
Mental health	Significant changes in mood/behaviour, sleep difficulty, withdrawal, self-harm indicators, suicidal ideation or significant distress.	

Appendix 5: The Designated Officer/LADO

A LADO consultation/referral should be considered where information suggests an adult working with children may have behaved in a way that harmed a child or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Key responsibilities for staff

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about adults who work or volunteer with children. Staff should:

- Be aware of the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the types of concerns that require consultation or referral.

- Report immediately to the Headteacher, DSL or an appropriate senior leader if they become aware of information suggesting that an adult working with children may have:
    - harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
    - committed a possible criminal offence against or related to a child;
    - behaved in a way that suggests they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
    - behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Understand that concerns may relate to behaviour in the workplace, the community, or an individual's home or personal life where there may be an impact on children's safety.
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid discussing allegations with colleagues who do not need to know. Good safeguarding practice includes limiting information sharing to those directly involved in managing the concern.
- Record concerns factually, accurately and promptly, avoiding opinion or speculation.
- Not investigate allegations themselves or seek further evidence from the child, adult or witnesses. The matter should be referred through the appropriate management and safeguarding processes.
- Cooperate fully with any internal, external or multi-agency processes arising from a LADO consultation or referral.
- Understand that making a LADO referral should never delay immediate action to safeguard a child. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services and safeguarding procedures must be followed without delay.

Staff must remember

If in doubt, report the concern. Staff are not expected to decide whether an allegation meets the LADO threshold; they are expected to share concerns promptly with senior leaders so that appropriate advice or consultation can be sought or a referral can be made.

For more information and details of how to make a referral, visit: Contacting the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) - Stockport Council.

Appendix 6: The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL role includes managing referrals, working with others, information sharing and managing child protection files, raising awareness, training and knowledge, supporting staff, understanding children's views, holding and sharing information, overseeing online safety and filtering/monitoring, ensuring DSL cover, and contributing to strategic safeguarding governance. The DSL and Deputy DSL each have a job description which appropriately defines their role in school. This is held in their personnel file. As part of their duties, they will:

- Manage referrals to Family Help, MASSH/children's social care, police, Channel/Prevent and other agencies, and support the headteacher/principal with LADO processes where appropriate.
- Help staff to understand local criteria for action and thresholds.
- Ensure child protection files are accurate, secure and transferred within statutory timescales (5 days).
- Ensure safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately.
- Support staff through advice, training, supervision and reflective practice.
- Keep abreast of local and national developments and ensure updates are disseminated.
- Ensure Operation Encompass notifications are received, recorded and acted upon.

- Ensure arrangements for DSL cover are robust and communicated.
- Ensure concerns about children in AP, part-time timetables, suspensions/exclusions or attendance risk are monitored.

Appendix 7: Safeguarding statement of commitment for display or website publication

Our safeguarding commitment

Mersey Vale Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We want every child to feel safe, listened to, respected and supported. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and all adults in our school have a role in helping children to be safe and well.

We will take concerns seriously, respond promptly and work with children, families and safeguarding partners to help keep children safe. We are alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harm, child-on-child abuse, poor or falling attendance, and other concerns that may affect a child's welfare.

Children can share worries or concerns in different ways. We will listen carefully, avoid judgement, record concerns accurately and take appropriate action. We use language that avoids unnecessary labelling and recognises both children who have been harmed and children who may have caused harm as children who may need support, boundaries and safeguarding oversight.

If you are worried about a child, please speak to a member of our safeguarding team as soon as possible. You do not need to be certain that a child is being harmed to raise a concern.

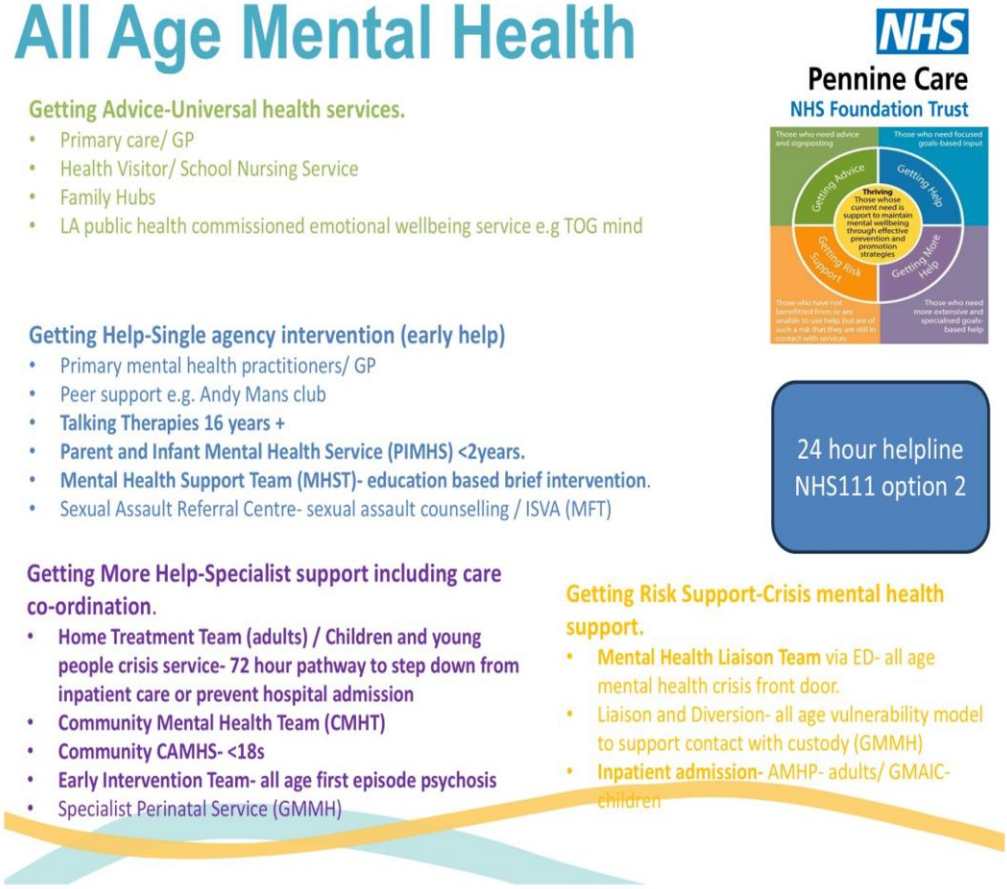
Designated Safeguarding Lead	**Catherine Whitehead; 0161 4427535; headteacher@merseyvale.stockport.sch.uk**
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	**Claire Varetto; 0161 4427535; headteacher@merseyvale.stockport.sch.uk**
Safeguarding Governor	**Mary Aziz;** **0161 4427535**

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. If the DSL or Deputy DSL is not available and urgent safeguarding action is needed, anyone can contact children's social care, MASSH, the police or emergency services directly. Any action taken should be recorded and shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible.

Our full safeguarding and child protection policy is available on our website and from the school office. We review our safeguarding arrangements regularly and work in line with KCSIE 2026, local Stockport safeguarding procedures and multi-agency guidance.

Appendix 8: Mental health support

- Mental Health Lead: Catherine Whitehead, Headteacher supported by Amanda Cropper, Learning Mentor
- Deputy DSL and SENDCO: Claire Varetto
- School Nurse: Victoria Hudson



Appendix 9: Additional Advice and Support Resources

This appendix provides a selection of national guidance, statutory documents, specialist organisations, and practical resources that may support schools and colleges in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities. The list is drawn from the resources referenced within *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and is intended as a helpful starting point rather than a comprehensive directory. Schools and colleges should ensure they access the most current versions of guidance and seek local advice where appropriate.

The resources listed below were current at the time of publication. Readers should refer to the relevant organisation's website for the most up-to-date guidance, resources and contact information.

Topic	Resource	Link
Abuse	Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse – Signs and indicators of child sexual abuse	https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/signs-and-indicators-child-sexual-abuse/
Abuse	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2
Abuse	Domestic Abuse Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/domestic-abuse-bill
Abuse	Faith-Based Abuse National Action Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief
Abuse	Forced Marriage Resource Pack	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack
Abuse	Disrespect NoBody Campaign	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disrespect-nobody-campaign
Abuse	Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-abuse-strategy
Bullying	Preventing Bullying (including Cyberbullying)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
Children Missing Education	Children Missing Education	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education
Children Missing from Home or Care	Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care
Child Exploitation	Modern Slavery Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery
Child Exploitation	Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit
Child Exploitation	County Lines Toolkit for Professionals	https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk
Child Exploitation	SafeCall Support Service	https://www.safecall.co.uk
Confidentiality	Gillick Competency and Fraser Guidelines	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/children/
Drugs	From Harm to Hope	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives
Drugs	Talk to Frank	https://www.talktofrank.com
Drugs	Drug and Alcohol Education	https://pshe-association.org.uk
FGM and Forced Marriage	Female Genital Mutilation Information	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation

Topic	Resource	Link
Health and Wellbeing	Medical Conditions in Schools	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3
Health and Wellbeing	Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2
Information Sharing	Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice
Information Sharing	ICO Data Sharing Hub	https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/
Online Safety	Childnet	https://www.childnet.com
Online Safety	Educate Against Hate	https://educateagainsthate.com
Online Safety	NSPCC Online Safety Hub	https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety
Online Safety	UK Safer Internet Centre	https://saferinternet.org.uk
Online Safety	CEOP Safety Centre	https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/
Private Fostering	Private Fostering Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-fostering-local-authority-guidance
Radicalisation	Prevent Duty Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
Radicalisation	The Prevent Duty	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation
Serious Violence	Serious Violence Strategy	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence	NSPCC	https://www.nspcc.org.uk
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence	Barnardo's	https://www.barnardos.org.uk
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence	Lucy Faithfull Foundation	https://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence	Marie Collins Foundation	https://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence	Rape Crisis	https://rapecrisis.org.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework	https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/frameworks-assessment-tools/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework

Topic	Resource	Link
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Stop It Now!	https://www.stopitnow.org.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Contextual Safeguarding Network	https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk
Support for Victims	Victim Support	https://www.victimsupport.org.uk
Support for Victims	Childline	https://www.childline.org.uk
Toolkits	Peer-on-Peer Abuse Toolkit	https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/addressing-child-on-child-abuse-a-resource-for-schools-and-colleges/
Toolkits	STAR SEND Toolkit	https://www.childnet.com/resources/star-send-toolkit/
Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes	UKCIS Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people
Support for Parents and Carers	CEOP Education	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

Additional DfE guidance and useful documents

The following Department for Education documents should be read alongside this policy and the school/college's local procedures where relevant.

Area	DfE guidance/documentation	Use alongside
Searching, screening and confiscation	Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK	Behaviour policy, safeguarding procedures, mobile phone/device policy, prohibited items procedures, recording/reporting processes and police liaison arrangements where relevant.
Attendance	Working together to improve school attendance Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK	Attendance policy, safeguarding procedures, early help/family help pathways and local authority attendance arrangements.
Suspensions and permanent exclusions	Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK	Behaviour policy, SEND policy, safeguarding risk assessment, reintegration planning and alternative provision arrangements.
Children missing education	Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK	Attendance procedures, admissions and removal from roll processes, safeguarding records and local CME referral routes.

Restrictive interventions, physical intervention and reasonable force	Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance	Behaviour policy, positive handling/restrictive intervention policy, SEND plans, risk assessments, recording/reporting processes and staff training records.

Appendix 10: Right to Ask and Right to Know – DVDS and CSODS

This appendix briefly describes two police disclosure schemes referenced in government guidance: the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)**, often known as **Clare's Law**, and the **Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS)**, often known as **Sarah's Law**. Both schemes provide routes through which the police may consider sharing information to help protect an adult or child from harm. Disclosure is not automatic and remains a police decision, made in line with the relevant government guidance and legal tests.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) — Clare's Law

The **DVDS** enables the police to consider disclosing information about a current or former partner's previous abusive or violent behaviour where this may help protect a person from domestic abuse. The scheme has two routes:

- **Right to Ask:** an individual, or a relevant third party, can ask the police to check whether a current or former partner has an abusive or violent past.
- **Right to Know:** the police may proactively consider disclosure where they receive information suggesting a person may be at risk from a current or former partner.

  See: Domestic violence disclosure scheme 'Clare's Law'

  Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) application | Greater Manchester Police

The distinction is how the process begins: **Right to Ask** is application-led; **Right to Know** is police-initiated. Any disclosure must be lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS) — Sarah's Law

The **CSODS** allows a person to ask the police whether someone who has contact with a specific child has a record for child sexual offences or may pose a risk to that child. If the police decide that disclosure is necessary to protect a child, information will usually be shared with the person best placed to safeguard the child, which may not be the person who made the application.

See:Child sex offender disclosure scheme: police guidance (accessible) - GOV.UK
Sarah's Law (Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme) | Greater Manchester Police
These schemes do not replace normal safeguarding procedures. Where there is immediate risk, staff must call **999**. Where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, staff must report these to the **DSL or Deputy DSL** without delay and follow local referral procedures.

Appendix 11: Publication checklist for schools/colleges – internal use only

Pre-publication action	Completed
All school names, roles, contacts, governance details, review dates and version-control information have been completed.	✓
All red prompts, template guidance notes, empty headings and placeholder text have been personalised or removed.	✓
The policy has been checked against KCSIE 2026, Working Together and current Stockport/SSCP procedures.	✓
Local Stockport contact details, MASSH referral routes, LADO information, Operation Encompass arrangements and emergency contacts have been checked for accuracy.	✓
The policy reflects the Mersey Vale's actual safeguarding recording system, reporting routes, DSL cover arrangements, escalation routes and out-of-hours/visit arrangements.	✓
Family Help, TAS, attendance, CME, EHE, AP, part-time timetable and educational neglect arrangements have been personalised.	✓
Online safety, filtering and monitoring, AI, mobile technology and image-use arrangements have been checked against local practice and linked policies.	✓
Safer recruitment, regulated activity, volunteers, supply/agency staff, contractors, work experience and trainee teacher arrangements have been checked with HR/recruitment procedures.	✓
Allegations, low-level concerns, whistleblowing and professional escalation arrangements align with local procedures and named roles.	✓
Single-sex spaces, gender-questioning support processes and any legally sensitive wording have been reviewed by appropriate senior local authority, HR or legal advisers where required.	✓
Linked policies, website links and document references are current, accessible and consistent with the policy wording.	✓
Staff induction and training arrangements have been updated so staff know how to access the policy, read KCSIE Part One and report concerns.	✓

Pre-publication action	Completed
The final version has been proofread for spelling, grammar, formatting, heading consistency, table layout and UK English.	✓
The contents page has been updated after all headings and appendices have been finalised.	✓
Governors have reviewed, challenged and ratified the final policy, and the approval date has been recorded.	☐
The published version is available on the website and staff have been informed where to find it and what has changed.	☐

Appendix 12: Whole-school/college safeguarding approach – assurance checklist- internal use only

This checklist is for governors/trustees, proprietors, senior leaders and DSLs to use before ratification, publication or annual review. It supports assurance that the safeguarding policy reflects a whole-school/college approach and is clear, accessible, understood and implemented in practice. It does not need to be published.

✓	Assurance question	Evidence/action
	Does the policy reflect a whole-school safeguarding culture, with the best interests of children at its heart?	
	Are children's wishes, feelings and lived experiences considered in safeguarding decision-making?	
	Are reporting routes clear, accessible and well promoted to children, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and visitors?	
	Does the policy align with linked policies, including behaviour, attendance, online safety, SEND, staff conduct, safer recruitment, low-level concerns and whistleblowing?	
	Are induction arrangements clear for permanent staff, temporary staff, volunteers, contractors and third-party staff, proportionate to role and risk?	
	Are child protection files maintained, transferred, quality assured and reviewed in line with policy and local procedures?	
	Has safer recruitment, the single central record and DBS/barred list decision-making been checked and reported to governors/trustees?	
	Does the setting hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil/student where reasonably possible?	
	Is the final policy publicly available, reviewed at least annually, and updated when statutory guidance, local procedures or safeguarding themes change?	

Document control and review

This policy should be reviewed at least annually and whenever statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures, school/college provision or risk profile changes. Records of review, governor/proprietor approval and staff communication should be retained.