

# St. Sebastian's R.C. Primary School



## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

(including safer recruitment, allegations against staff and low-level concerns)

Names and Designation of Policy Author(s)	Caroline Doyle Headteacher Jannine Platt, Deputy Headteacher	Is this a Statutory Document?	
		Yes	
Approved by:	FGB		
Date Approved	November 2025	Is this to be published publicly on the school website?	Yes
Review Date	October 2026		
Target audience	Staff, parents, governors		
Links to other strategies, policies, procedures etc.	Attendance Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, AI Policy, Child-on-child Abuse Policy, Online Safety and Mobile Technology, Prevent Duty, Transgender Policy, Pupils with Medical Needs Policy, Children Missing Education, Child Criminal Exploitation, Emotional and Mental Health Policy, Self-Harm, Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment, Safer Working Practice, Educational Visits Policy, Low Level Concerns Policy, Whistleblowing, School Security, Health and Safety Policy. This list is not exhaustive.		

## Contents

Important contacts .....	3
1. Aims .....	4
2. Legislation and statutory guidance .....	4
3. Definitions .....	6
4. Equality statement .....	7
5. Roles and responsibilities .....	7
6. Confidentiality .....	12
7. Recognising abuse and taking action.....	14
8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology .....	26
9. Notifying parents or carers.....	30
10. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues .....	29
11. Pupils with a social worker.....	31
12. Cared for and previously Cared for children.....	31
13. Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning .....	31
14. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies .....	31
15. Record-keeping .....	32
16. Training .....	34
17. Monitoring arrangements.....	35
18. Links with other policies, guidance and Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures.....	36
Appendix 1: Types of abuse.....	38
Appendix 2: Safe Recruitment Working Practices Schools.....	40
Appendix 3: Allegations of abuse made against staff .....	41
Appendix 4: Specific safeguarding issues.....	59
Appendix 5 - Operation Encompass Safeguarding Statement.....	70

## Important Contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME/DETAILS	CONTACT DETAILS
Headteacher	Caroline Doyle	<a href="mailto:caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Caroline Doyle	<a href="mailto:caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Deputy DSL/s	Jannine Platt Caroline Coffey	<a href="mailto:jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:caroline.coffey@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.coffey@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Prevent Lead	Caroline Doyle	<a href="mailto:caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Operation Encompass Key Adults	Caroline Doyle Jannine Platt	<a href="mailto:caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Designated Mental Health Lead	Caroline Doyle	<a href="mailto:caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Designated Teacher for Cared for Children	Jannine Platt	<a href="mailto:jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
SEND Coordinator	Jannine Platt	<a href="mailto:jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
Named Appropriate Adult/s	Caroline Doyle Jannine Platt Caroline Coffey	<a href="mailto:caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.doyle@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">jannine.platt@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:caroline.coffey@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">caroline.coffey@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a> 0161 921 1625
The Bridge Partnership, for all contacts concerning the welfare or safety of a child	8.30am to 4.30pm Online referral <a href="#">Worried about a child•Salford City Council</a>	0161 603 4500
Salford Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team	Out of the above hours	0161 794 8888.

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME/DETAILS	CONTACT DETAILS
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Gemma Williams Kendall Walsh	All LADO consultations and referrals go via the <a href="#">Salford Children and Families Portal</a>  No option for telephone calls.
Chair of Governors	Zoe Ogden	<a href="mailto:chair@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">chair@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a>
Safeguarding Governor	Mary Beardshaw	<a href="mailto:vicechair@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk">vicechair@stsebastiansprimary.co.uk</a>
Salford LA Prevent and Cohesion Lead	Denee Cassidy	<a href="mailto:Denee.cassidy@salford.gov.uk">Denee.cassidy@salford.gov.uk</a>
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

## 1. Aims

The school aims to ensure the following:

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

## 2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), the [Maintained Schools Governance Guide](#) and [Academy Trust Governance Guide](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership. (see section 3).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- › Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- › [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.
- › [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
- › Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

- › [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- › [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- › Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children.
- › [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- › [The Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR).
- › [The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment.
- › [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination.
- › The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#) (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children.
- › This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

### 3. Definitions

#### What does safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children mean?

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

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

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

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following three **safeguarding partners** ([Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)) are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017):

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

They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

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

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

#### 4. Equality Statement

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

We give special consideration to children who:

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

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

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

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

This is underpinned by our:

- › behaviour policy
- › pastoral support system
- › planned programme of relationships, sex and health education, which is inclusive and delivered regularly.

Within the relationships, sex and health education programme, we tackle issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual and criminal exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM as well as how to access support
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they are always unacceptable.

## 5.1 All staff

Staff who work directly with children are expected to read at least part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Staff who work directly with children are also expected to read annex B of KCSIE (about specific safeguarding issues), but

We expect all staff to do the following:

- › Read and understand at least Part One and Annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually. **Staff who work directly with children are also expected to read annex B of KCSIE (about specific safeguarding issues).**
- › Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance.
- › Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online).
- › Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns.

All staff will have an awareness of the following:

- › Our systems that support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff Code of Conduct, [Salford's Code of Conduct for Employees in Schools/PRUs](#), the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSLs, the Behaviour Policy, online safety (including expectations, policy, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- › The [Early Help Assessment process](#) and their role in it, including identifying emerging need, liaising with the DSL Team and sharing information as needed with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.



- › The process for making referrals to The Bridge Partnership and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role that they might be expected to play.
- › What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them that they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- › The signs of different types of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including domestic and sexual abuse (which is inclusive of controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved). These, together with specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines).
- › New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sextortion, radicalization, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm.
- › The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- › The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online.
- › The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children.
- › That a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time.
- › What to look for to identify children who need help or protection.

Section 16 and Appendix 4 of this policy outline how staff are supported to do this.

## **5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

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

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. When the DSL is off site or absent, the deputy DSLs, Miss Jannine Platt and Miss Caroline Coffey, will act as cover. In exceptional circumstances, where no members of the DSL team are available in person, senior leaders, **Mrs Katherine Taylor (Key Stage 2 Lead)** and **Mrs Gemma O'Neill (EYFS Lead)** are the first point of reference and will have contact details of the DSL team.

For emergency contact during the school holidays or out of school hours, the local authority holds the telephone numbers of the DSL and Deputy.

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

- › Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- › Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- › Contribute to the assessment of children.
- › Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body - local authority children's social care (*The Bridge Partnership*), Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police and support other staff who make such referrals directly.
- › Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour.
- › Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school.
- › Undertake more in-depth Prevent awareness training and ensure the school upholds the Prevent Duty, as Prevent Lead.
- › Ensure all staff have appropriate induction and Prevent training.

The Head Teacher has the dual role of DSL and therefore will be informed of any issues. The DSL is also expected to do the following:

- › Liaise with local authority managers, the Safeguarding in Schools Officer, designated officers and social workers for child protection concerns as appropriate.
- › Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies.
- › Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment and be confident as to how to access this support, referring to the Salford Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway *July 24*.
- › Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search.

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

### **5.3 The Governing Board**

The governing board are responsible to carry out the following:

- › Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- › Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.
- › Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

- › Appoint a safeguarding link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board (this is always a different person from the DSL and at our school the named link governor is Ms Mary Beardshaw).
- › Ensure all staff and governors undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners.
- › Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness including the below:
  - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training.
  - Reviewing the [DfE's filtering and monitoring standards](#), and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards.
- › Make sure:
  - the DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support;
  - online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies;
  - the DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place;
  - the school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns, no matter how small, or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors; and
  - this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised.
- › Where another body is providing services/activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these activities are children on the school roll), governors will:
  - seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed;
  - make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate; and
  - make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.

The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see Appendix 3). All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety. Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

## 5.4 The Headteacher

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

- › Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
  - are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction; and
  - understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.
- › Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- › Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent or off site.
- › Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see Appendix 3).
- › Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL Team members in some cases.
- › Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest of the school are met, where applicable.
- › Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

## 5.5 Virtual School Heads

Virtual School Heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils on Child Protection or Child in Need Plans. The Education Advisor within the Virtual School Team provides advice, guidance and some case oversight work for this cohort and liaises with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

## 6. Confidentiality

All staff will follow the Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership's process and principles for sharing information, [Information Sharing and Confidentiality | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) and the headteacher and the DSLs understand the statutory guidance regarding information sharing outlined in [Working together to safeguard children 2023](#). The governing board will follow the information sharing procedures detailed in Part 2 of [Keeping children safe in education](#).

- › Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- › Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.
- › The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

- › If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- › Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- › If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, the following should be noted:
  - There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies.
  - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.
  - The DSL should consider that:
    - parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk);
    - the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to The Bridge Partnership; and
    - rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.
- › Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
  - be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system;
  - do all they reasonably can, to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved; and
  - consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.
- › The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff with decision making.
- › If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or DSL team).
- › Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 15, and allegations of abuse against staff in Appendix 3.

## 7. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

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

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

All staff will understand Salford's thresholds for support and safeguarding in Salford: [Support and Safeguarding in Salford: Helping Children to Thrive in Salford](#)

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

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

The DSL should be informed without delay. Subsequently, the Bridge Partnership should be contacted. Follow this up with a referral to the Bridge Partnership and/or contact the police **immediately** if a child is believed to be suffering or likely to suffer from harm or is in immediate danger. As the DSL and deputies generally have a holistic picture of children, they are usually best placed to make a referral, however, **anyone can make a referral**.

[Worried about a child•Salford City Council](#)

\*Members of staff should tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible afterwards in the event of making a referral directly.

## 7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

All staff will follow the procedure below if a child discloses a safeguarding issue.

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

Bear in mind that some children may:

- › not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected,
- › not recognise their experiences as harmful; and/or
- › feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened (maybe due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers).

None of this should stop you from exercising [professional curiosity](#) and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.



### 7.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place, or a pupil is at risk of FGM

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

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

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

**Any teacher** who either:

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

**must immediately report this to the police, personally.**

This is a **mandatory statutory duty**, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve The Bridge Partnership as appropriate.

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

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

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is **at risk** of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow Salford’s safeguarding procedures. The Salford FGM Toolkit should be used where a pupil is suspected of being at risk [Female Genital Mutilation | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).

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

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

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

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL or deputies are not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from The Bridge Partnership. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Make a referral to The Bridge Partnership, if appropriate (see ‘Referral’ below). Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.



## **Early Help Assessment**

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

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

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to The Bridge Partnership if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

## **Salford School Partnership**

The most effective way to create a support plan with a family is through collaboration with the Salford School Partnership (SSP). The SSP approach involves a multi-agency partnership discussion, building trust and improving communications across the agencies so that information sharing is effective and appropriate, and the emerging needs identified.

School Coordinators are available for consultations usually with our DSL Team and will advise and support our staff on implementing the next steps for Early Help support.

## **Referral**

If it is appropriate to refer the case to The Bridge Partnership or the police, a member of the DSL team will make the referral or support individuals (including other agencies) to do so. If the DSL team are not available and a member of staff makes a referral directly (see section 7.1), then the DSL must be told as soon as possible.

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

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or referrer must follow [Salford's Effective Challenge and Escalation procedures](#) to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

## **7.5 If you have concerns about extremism**

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

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from The Bridge. Make a referral to the Bridge directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputies as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the police or [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, or The Bridge. [The Prevent Duty](#) works at the pre criminal stage by using early intervention to encourage individuals and communities to challenge extremist and terrorist ideology and behaviour.

The Salford LA Prevent and Cohesion Lead can provide guidance and the DfE has a dedicated telephone helpline, **020 7340 7264**, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that these are **not** for use in emergency situations.

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

- › think someone is in immediate danger;
- › think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group; and/or
- › see or hear something that may be terrorist-related.

## **7.6 If you have a concern about mental health**

All staff at St. Sebastian's understand the importance of positive mental health and emotional well-being. Through the work of the Senior Mental Health Lead (Caroline Doyle), Mental Health First Aider (Caroline Coffey) and Mental Health Champions, the school has a co-ordinated approach to both supporting vulnerable pupils and developing a whole school approach to mental well-being. The Senior Mental Health Lead is also the DSL to ensure that if staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken and the DSL will follow up with appropriate internal/external agencies **or referrals** as necessary.

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

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

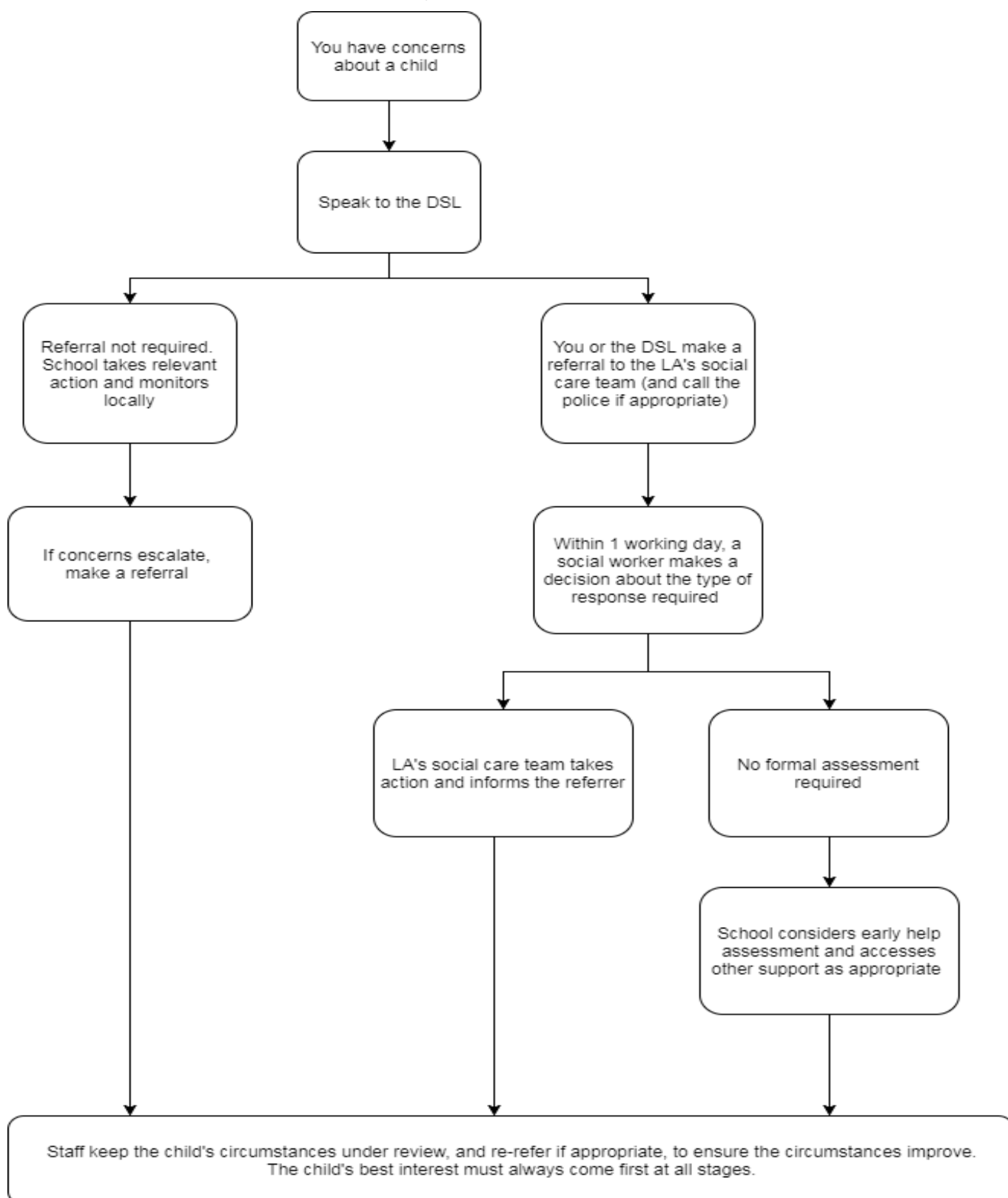
Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour,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

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

If an adult has a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

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

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



## **7.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor**

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, contractor, Chair of Governors), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher as soon as possible. This includes low level concerns in line with the allegations against staff policy in Appendix 3. **If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the chair of governors.**

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

If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

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

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

## **7.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils**

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. The school takes a zero-tolerance approach and abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils. We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

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

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

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

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

Procedures below should be followed if a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil.

- › You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it.
- › The DSL will follow the procedures detailed in the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and/or the **Salford Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway** (Refer to Section 17, links with other policies).
- › The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s).
- › The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate.

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

As appropriate, the school will record on CPOMS any investigation, dealings with allegations and the support made available for the victim, perpetrator and any other children affected.

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

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents and will achieve this by doing the following:

- › Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images.
- › Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys.
- › Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent.
- › Ensure pupils are able to report abuse using our reporting systems easily and confidently (as described in section 7.10 below).
- › Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously.
- › Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners.
- › Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed.

- › Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.
- › Ensure staff are trained and have an understanding of the following:
  - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, know how to identify it and respond to reports.
  - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here.*'
  - That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example,
    - children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to;
    - a friend may make a report;
    - a member of staff may overhear a conversation; and/or
    - a child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.
  - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
  - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
  - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.
  - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns.
  - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side.

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

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

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

## 7.9 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes ('sexting')

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

### Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

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

You must **not** do any of the following:

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

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

### Initial review meeting

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

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



In the instances below, the DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care.

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

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

### **Further review by the DSL**

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

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

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

### **Informing parents/carers**

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

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through GMP Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU) (0161 856 5171 [parklane.ppiu@gmp.police.uk](mailto:parklane.ppiu@gmp.police.uk)), by completing an online report or dialling 101.

### **Recording incidents**

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

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our Computing, RSE and PSHE programmes. Age-appropriate teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:



- › What it is and how it is most likely to be encountered.
- › The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment.
- › Issues of legality.
- › The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation.

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- › specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- › the receipt of such images

The policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

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

- › putting safeguarding first
- › approaching from the perspective of the child
- › promoting dialogue and understanding
- › empowering and enabling children and young people
- › never frightening or scare-mongering
- › challenging victim-blaming attitudes

## **7.10 Reporting Systems for our Pupils**

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

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations. We will achieve this by doing the following:

- › Foster a school ethos where children know that there are trusted adults in school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty by establishing and communicating clear, child friendly procedures to them.
- › Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse, be aware of, and adapt to the difficulties some children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances.
- › Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood, child friendly and easily accessible for pupils, including sharing a safeguarding leaflet identifying the DSL Team and actions to take when wishing to report an issue.
- › Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback.
- › Proactively educate our pupils about relationships, respect and boundaries through the PHSE, RSE and PSHE programmes.
- › Include material in our curriculum that will equip children with the skills they need to stay safe, communicate their fears or concerns about abuse and teach them about safeguarding and online safety.

- › Ensure staff are given suitable guidelines to respond correctly to a disclosure, ensuring their approach is child centred and contextual and that the child is reassured following a disclosure that the adult will act in their best interests.

## 8. Online Safety and the use of Mobile Technology

KCSIE outlines that our policies on online safety and the use of mobile and smart technology should be reflected in our child protection and safeguarding policy (including among other things, filtering and monitoring on school devices and the school network). Our online safety and mobile phone use policies explain our processes and systems in more detail.

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Our school aims to address this by doing the following:

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

### The 4 key categories of risk

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

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

### **To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:**

- › Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example,
  - the safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - keeping personal information private
  - how to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - how to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim.
- › Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year.
- › Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them, so they know how to raise concerns about online safety.
- › Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone, smart watches and cameras, for example:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present.
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.
- › Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology.
- › Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones.
- › Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).
- › Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems. **Our online safety policy covers filtering and monitoring procedures, including the use of generative AI in more detail.**
- › Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community.
- › Provide regular safeguarding and child protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively.
- › Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our school's policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policies, which can be found on our website: [Policies](#)

## 8.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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

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

We will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our anti-bullying and behaviour policy.

Staff are aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. **Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.c**

**Incidents or concerns involving AI will be treated with the same seriousness as all other safeguarding matters, e.g. where indecent or harmful content has been created or shared using AI technologies. The school's response will include:**

- Immediate internal reporting in line with safeguarding procedures;
- Informing parents/carers, unless doing so would place a pupil at further risk;
- Referral to the appropriate external agencies, such as the police or children's social care, where required;
- Careful handling of information and evidence, including the confiscation and isolation of devices where appropriate;
- Risk assessment and safety planning to prevent any ongoing or future harm;
- Prioritising the wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved and providing appropriate pastoral support;
- Delivering a strong educational response, including teaching about safe and responsible use of AI and digital technologies.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will act in accordance with statutory guidance and follow local safeguarding partnership procedures at all stages.**

## 9. Notifying Parents or Carers

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

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

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the Bridge Partnership before doing so.

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

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

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

## **10. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues**

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

- › Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- › Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- › The potential for pupils with SEND, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- › Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- › Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequences of doing so.

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils. This includes:

- › referring individuals to other agencies including the school's Place2Be mental health practitioner on site or the school nurse if appropriate;
- › giving individuals opportunity to be supported by the Family Liaison Officer either one to one or in a small group intervention, as appropriate;
- › use of picture resources, social interventions and stories, journalling and comic strip conversations to overcome communication barriers.

Any abuse involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputies) and the SENCO.

## 11. Pupils with a Social Worker

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

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

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

- › responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks; and/or
- › the provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

## 12. Cared for and previously Cared for Children (*Salford have adopted the term Cared for Children. KCSIE refers to this cohort as Looked after Children*)

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

- › appropriate staff have relevant information about a child's cared for legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements; and
- › the DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads.

We have appointed a designated teacher, Jannine Platt (Deputy DSL), who is responsible for promoting the welfare and educational achievement of cared for children and previously cared for children in line with [statutory guidance](#).

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

As part of their role, the designated teacher will undertake the following:

- › Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding cared for and previously cared for children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- › Work with the Virtual School Head and the [Salford Virtual School Team](#) to promote the educational achievement of cared for and previously cared for children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support cared for children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans.
- › Ensure the Virtual School are ([virtualschoolteam@salford.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolteam@salford.gov.uk)) made aware of any cared for child who is at risk of exclusion and is notified of any suspension as soon as possible.



### **13. Pupils who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning**

The section of KCSIE 2025 on gender questioning children remains under review, pending the publication of revised guidance.

We recognise that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. See our Behaviour Policy for more detail on how we prevent bullying **based on gender or sexuality**. We also recognise that (LGBTQ+) children may be more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL who will act accordingly, including providing suitable pastoral support for the child.

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

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

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

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

### **14. Complaints and Concerns about School Safeguarding Policies**

#### **14.1 Complaints against staff**

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

#### **14.2 Other complaints**

All staff have a duty to make the DSL/headteacher aware of any organisational (including premise related), personal or professional difficulties that could potentially get in the way of protecting children, who will subsequently take the most appropriate action.

Policy and procedural guidance about physical contact with pupils and working in a one-to-one situation with a child is shared with and should be adhered to by all staff.

Complaints related to pupils are to be brought to the attention of the class teacher in the first instance who will follow the relevant policy and procedure, e.g. behaviour policy, child on child abuse policy and alert the headteacher. If complaints are related to parents, then the headteacher will be notified and relevant policies will be followed, e.g. parent code of conduct, if appropriate. Parents are directed to the school's Complaints Policy should they wish to make a formal complaint.

Even when our school is not the employer of a member of staff, we will ensure complaints are dealt with appropriately and will liaise with all relevant parties, employers and agencies to determine a suitable outcome.

### 14.3 Whistleblowing

Our School has adopted the Salford Whistle Blowing Policy (refer to Section 18 of this policy).

If staff are concerned about the way safeguarding is carried out in the school, they should refer to the Whistleblowing policy.

Safeguarding and child protection concerns are taken very seriously. Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership have developed an [escalation procedure](#) that compliments the Whistleblowing Policy. Accessing the escalation procedure does not prevent anyone from raising a whistleblowing concern where there are genuine concerns about practices.

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

- › a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- › financial fraud or mismanagement
- › failure to comply with any legal obligation or regulatory requirements
- › there has been a miscarriage of justice
- › the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- › the environment has been damaged
- › information about any of the above has been concealed

### 15. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule. Child Protection records must be retained by all educational establishments until the child's 25th birthday unless the records are transferred to a new establishment when the child transfers to a new provision. We will consider whether we need to retain a copy of the records (for example, if a sibling continues to attend our school). If a copy is retained, the reason for this will be recorded.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made **and** the rationale for those decisions, must be recorded in writing and stored on our CPOMS system. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as The Bridge Partnership or the Prevent programme, etc. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records made by all staff will include:

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

These are recorded systematically in the format *What happened? What I did? What next?* We are constantly mindful of the language that we use when writing about a child or referring to family members. We ensure we use language that cares and that is trauma informed. We stick to describing factually what is presented to us, actions and outcomes.



Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child. These along with all confidential information and records will be held securely and only accessible to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children who have left the school will immediately be archived and retained for a reasonable period of time after leaving.

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

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

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

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school (and SENDCO, if appropriate) and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child. Confirmation of receipt of any written documentation will be obtained from the receiving school.

If a child leaves with no forwarding information, the CME guidelines will be followed.

CPOMS is used by all staff to report concerns electronically. This includes concerns related to behaviour or welfare, child on child sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexually inappropriate language and actions.

Should there be any paper notes, i.e. minutes of meetings, these are to be scanned into the CPOMS system promptly. Once incidents have been submitted, the DSL Team are alerted and can retrieve, view, monitor and review records and ensure appropriate action is taken or further action is implemented where evidence suggests incidents of concern or patterns of behaviour are repeated or becoming common themes. A caseload register of children/families is kept and reviewed at least half-termly by the DSL Team. Governors are kept informed of case numbers on record via termly headteacher reports. All forms of bullying are reviewed by the DSL Team and used to inform the whole school approach to anti-bullying strategies.

Should staff (e.g. supply staff) be unable to access CPOMS, then they are asked to provide a handwritten account of an incident given directly to the DSL, respecting confidentiality. This will then be scanned onto CPOMS.

Any necessary original paper documents are kept securely in a locked cabinet in the DSL's office. Other confidential records are stored securely on the HT drive with access available to the DHT or SBM, as appropriate. CPOMS records and confidential pupil documents are passed on to receiving schools when appropriate, as above.

Information related to attendance/exclusions of a child can be retrieved on SIMS, which is password protected.

The school shares information with other agencies when this is appropriate, in line with [Information Sharing and Confidentiality | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) and [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition,

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

## **16. Training**

### **16.1 All staff**

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistleblowing procedures, low-level concerns and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- › be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning;
- › be in line with the recommendations from Salford Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (Refer to the SSCP School Training Requirements in Section 18);
- › include online safety and an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring; and
- › have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
  - manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment; and
  - have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

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

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

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

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

## 16.2 The DSL and Deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake formal training to meet the requirements of the role. The DSL and deputies will then undertake child protection and safeguarding refresher training at least every 2 years (refer to the SSCP Training Requirements in Section 18).

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

They will attend the Salford DSL termly forums and read and digest the half-termly DSL Safeguarding newsletter.

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

## 16.3 Governors

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated to ensure the following:

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

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

## 16.4 Recruitment – interview panels

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

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

## 17. Monitoring Arrangements

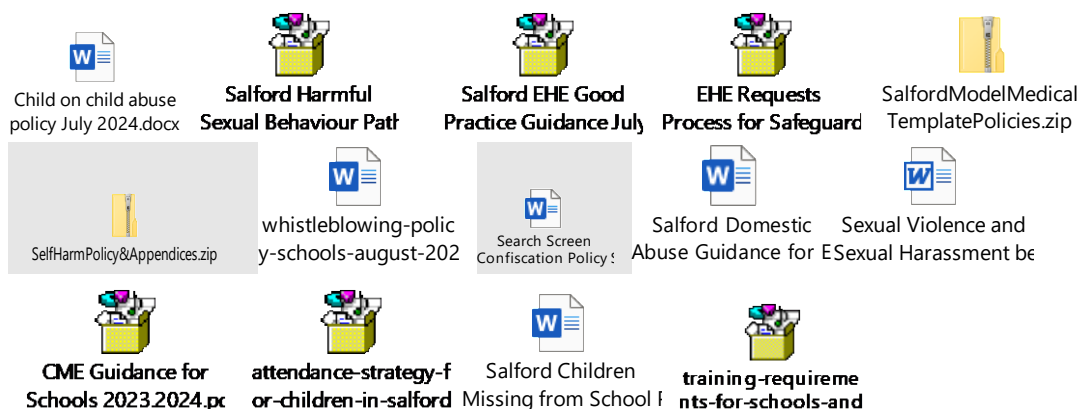
This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the deputy DSL, Miss Jannine Platt. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## 18. Links with other Policies, Guidance and Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti Bullying [Bullying \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Bullying)
- AI (Artificial Intelligence)
- Appropriate use of Technology [Use of Social Media Sites by Social Care and Safeguarding... \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Use%20of%20Social%20Media%20Sites%20by%20Social%20Care%20and%20Safeguarding...)
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Cared for and previously Cared for Children
- Child on Child Abuse, (embedded below)
- Children Missing Education [Children missing education Salford City Council](https://www.salford.gov.uk/children-missing-education)
- [Children Missing Education \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Children%20Missing%20Education)
- Complaints
- Curriculum Policy/Programmes/Practices
- Domestic Abuse Guidance for Salford Educational Settings, (embedded below)
- Elective Home Education Guidance [salford-ehe-good-practice-guidance-july-2024.pdf](https://www.salford.gov.uk/salford-ehe-good-practice-guidance-july-2024.pdf)
- Equality [Guidance for Culturally Appropriate Practice \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Guidance%20for%20Culturally%20Appropriate%20Practice)
- FGM [FGM Mandatory Reporting - procedural information nov16 FINAL.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation-multi-agency-protocol) [Female Genital Mutilation Multi-Agency Protocol \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Female%20Genital%20Mutilation%20Multi-Agency%20Protocol)
- First Aid
- Forced Marriage [Forced Marriage \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Forced%20Marriage)
- Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual [Welcome to the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children... \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Welcome%20to%20the%20Greater%20Manchester%20Safeguarding%20Children...)
- Health and Safety
- [Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who Work with Children and Young People](https://www.gmsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/managing-allegations-of-abuse-made-against-adults-who-work-with-children-and-young-people) GM Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual
- [Managing allegations against adults who work with children | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.salford.gov.uk/managing-allegations-against-adults-who-work-with-children)
- Mobile Phone Use
- Online safety [Online Safety \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/Online%20Safety)
- PREVENT [What is Prevent?•Salford City Council](https://www.salford.gov.uk/what-is-prevent)

- Pupils with Medical Needs, (embedded below)
- Privacy notices
- [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#) (statutory from Sept 2026 although schools may start to implement now if they choose)
- RSE/ PSHE Policy [RSE Policy](#)
- Safe Recruitment [Safe recruitment working practices](#) (May 2025)
- [Guidance for Safe Recruitment, Selection and Retention...](#) (trixonline.co.uk)
- Safe Working Practices [Professional and Personnel Relationships \(cimpres.io\)](#)
- Salford Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway
- Salford Schools' Whistle Blowing Policy, (embedded below)
- Search, Screen and Confiscation Policy, (embedded below)
- Self-Harm Policy, (embedded below)
- Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct



**These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and local procedures.**

## **Appendix 1: Types of Abuse**

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

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

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

Emotional abuse may involve any of the following:

- › Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- › Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- › Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- › Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- › Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve any of the following:

- › Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- › Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

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

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

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

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

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



## Appendix 2: Safe Recruitment Working Practices Schools

Salford City Council

[Safe Recruitment Working Practices \(salford.gov.uk\)](https://salford.gov.uk)

Organisations who work with or on behalf of children, young people and other vulnerable client groups need to be vigilant in their recruitment and selection of staff.

Abusers may target these organisations and can be extremely skilled at presenting themselves as caring and trustworthy individuals. Some indicators of abusive behaviour can emerge through inappropriate attitudes or inconsistent reactions and a vigorous recruitment and selection process provides important opportunities to identify these and deter and prevent offenders from gaining access to children, young people and vulnerable adults through their work.

[This Policy](#) has been updated and prepared to provide information and support to all recruiting managers within schools who recruit new employees and outlines the key requirements expected in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of people. It is expected that the same principles will also be applied when engaging volunteers, contractors or via agencies.

Safe recruitment is a key priority for Salford City Council and schools to ensure our staff, pupils, clients, customers and service users are not subject to any risk whether it is through their day-to-day duties and responsibilities or access to the services we are depended upon to provide. The guidance has been designed to help ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection decisions are made in line with best practice, regulatory and legal guidance and the Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Safe Recruitment Policy and Good Practice Guide.

The purpose of the document and overall approach to recruitment is to encourage the continuous improvement of safer recruitment practices across the City Council and schools to help deter, identify and reject unsuitable individuals and to safeguard all who access council services. Safe recruitment is not solely for those individuals who work with vulnerable people, i.e. adults, children and young people but ensures best practice in recruitment across the council.

### Safe Recruitment in Salford

Salford Council including schools, have a corporate social responsibility to account for the safety and protection of every individual it deals with as an employer, as a service provider and as a corporate parent. We therefore need to be confident that our recruitment practices embed this culture of safety and protection throughout the council and schools.

For those individuals who will work and/or come into contact with children and young people, the recruitment practice requires managers to meet existing regulatory and legal requirements. Whilst there are specific mandatory regulatory and legal requirements for children, young people and vulnerable adults, safe recruitment should not be considered to be exclusive to these service groups or staff. Implementing mandatory best practice across the council and schools to engage safe recruitment practices and processes will encourage the continuous improvement in practice that will help to deter, identify and reject people who are unsuitable to work for Salford Council. [The full policy can be read here](#) [Safe recruitment working practices](#)

## **Appendix 3: Allegations of Abuse made against Staff**

### **Allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) policy**

#### **Section 1: allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and has been approved by the Salford LADO.

If there are concerns about an adult working with children, we will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via the online [Salford Children and Families Portal](#).

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- › behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- › possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- › behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- › behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school.

If we are in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO) using the online portal.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse or suitability quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection whilst also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation and initial fact finding to be completed within 5 days for the allegation taking place. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. **If the subject of the allegation is the chair of governors, HR will decide who the case manager will be. This could be a representative from the National Governance Association.** The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

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

If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO using the online portal implementing a safety plan as soon as possible to minimise harm.

In all cases of physical or sexual harm, the police will be notified within one working day via 101 online reporting [Contact us | Greater Manchester Police \(gmp.police.uk\)](#)

## **Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved**

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

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

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

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's HR personnel adviser and the LADO as well as the police and local authority children's social care where they have been involved.

## **Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations, criteria and outcomes.**

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- **Substantiated** — there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation.
- **False** — there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Malicious** — there is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false.
- **Unfounded** — there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.
- **Unsubstantiated** — this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

## Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- › Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below.
- › Online portal form to be completed for LADO discussion regarding the allegation with the LADO. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or local authority children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).
- › Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or local authority children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or local authority children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.
- › Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or The Bridge Partnership, as appropriate.
- › Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to local authority children's social care.
- › **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the LADO. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within one working day and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.
- › **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the LADO information to be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.
- › **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care services as appropriate.

Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a suitable named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate, e.g. Place2Be Practitioner if immediately available in school, trade union representatives or Salford's staff counselling service.

- › Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with local authority children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.
- › Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member).
- › Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

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

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

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

[lado-guide-for-employers-april-2025.pdf](#)

### **Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff**

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- › We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome.
- › The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation.
- › We will involve the agency fully but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required.

- › We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary).

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations and keep them updated about our policies as necessary. We will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

## **Specific actions**

### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or local authority children's social care services.

### **Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated**

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

### **Individuals returning to work after suspension**

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

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

### **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

If a report is found to be any of the following:

- › Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the headteacher will consider the appropriate next steps supported by HR if necessary. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate.
- › Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it.



## **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is found to be any of the following:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation needs help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate.
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it.

## **Confidentiality and information sharing**

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

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

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

## **Record keeping**

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

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with local authority children's social care or the police as appropriate.

We will retain all records at least until the accused individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.



## References

When providing employer references, we will:

- › not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious.
- › include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions.

## Learning lessons

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

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- the duration of the suspension
- whether or not the suspension was justified
- the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated and how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

## Non-recent allegations

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

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

## **Section 2: Low Level Concerns Policy**

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

Chapter 4 of [Working together to safeguard children 2023](#) sets out the guidance on safeguarding children from people in a position of trust and further detail is provided in Part Four of [Keeping children safe in education](#)

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection and staff Code of Conduct Policies.

We acknowledge that having completed a comprehensive Vetting and Barring Check confirms that an individual has not been discovered to present a risk to children; it is not predictive about potential risk. Research shows that the majority of organisational child sex offenders did not have a previous criminal record at the time they offended although they may subsequently be found to have had numerous previous victims. We must therefore continue to have an ongoing culture of vigilance and maintain a mind-set of 'it could happen here'. All new staff will receive a copy of this policy.

### **Summary**

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but their conduct is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, contractor who, on reflection, recognises that their actions could have been viewed as a risk should inform the headteacher/DSL about their concern using the Low-Level Record of Concern Form (included in this document). If the headteacher/DSL cannot be contacted, inform the Chair of Governors using the Low-Level Record of Concern form.

### **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

At St. Sebastian's, we will always respect the personal data of staff (and others, where they may be identifiable) in implementing the Low-Level Concerns Policy and in keeping records of low-level concerns secure.

The Data Protection Act 2018 includes a specific provision which permits organisations to process even the most sensitive personal data where necessary for the purposes of protecting children from harm. Although sharing of low-level concerns will not always involve legally sensitive categories of data, the safeguarding purpose is the same as that under the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In each report being considered, in order to support the safeguarding concern and, to ensure the information is accurate, fair, and as far as possible recorded without bias in neutral terms, a proportionate approach must be taken when considering what personal data is necessary to share and record by way of low-level concern(s).

If a member of staff who raises a low-level concern does not wish to be named, then the school will respect their wishes as far as possible. However, staff should be aware that in certain circumstances this anonymity may need to be waived.

All staff are entitled, under data protection law, to ask to see the content of any low-level concern(s) retained by the school under the Low-Level Concerns Policy as it relates to them personally and to make any reasonable objection as to the fairness or accuracy of that content. The school will process such requests within the period prescribed by law, subject always to any necessary protection of the rights of third parties and unless any other relevant exemptions apply (including if complying with the request would be likely to prejudice the safeguarding purpose of the Low-Level Concerns Policy). If the content of a low-level concern is disputed, it may not be appropriate for school to delete or alter the original record, but a note may be recorded alongside reflecting the staff member's alternative account or objection(s).

All personal data processed in connection with the Low-Level Concerns Policy will be processed in accordance with the school's privacy policies.

### **Should staff who share low-level concerns be able to remain anonymous?**

Staff are encouraged to consent to be named when sharing low-level concerns, as this will help to create a culture of openness and transparency. If the staff member who raises a low-level concern does not wish to be named, we will respect that person's wishes as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where the staff member will need to be named (for example, where disclosure is required by a court or local authority, or under a fair disciplinary process) and, for this reason, St. Sebastian's R.C. Primary School will not promise anonymity to members of staff who share low-level concerns.

### **Should staff share concerns about themselves (i.e. self-report)?**

Occasionally, a member of staff may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others. Equally, a member of staff may, for whatever reason, have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standard set out in the school's Staff Code of Conduct. Self-reporting in these circumstances can be positive for several reasons (as below) and staff are encouraged to self-report.

- It is self-protective, in that it enables a potentially difficult issue to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- It demonstrates awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the member of staff's own actions or how they could be perceived.
- Crucially, it is an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

At St. Sebastian's, our aim is to create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer.

### **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education and identifies what may be considered behaviour relating to a low-level concern.

### **What is a low-level concern (LLC)?**

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

- is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion, complaint, or disclosure made by a child, parent/carer, or other adult within or outside of the organisation or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

## Clarity around Allegation vs Low Level Concern vs Appropriate Conduct

### **Allegation:**

Any adult linked to our school who has,

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

### **Low Level Concern:**

Any adult linked to our school who has behaved in a way that,

- is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to LADO.

### **Appropriate:**

- Behaviour which is entirely consistent with our school's Code of Conduct and the law.

## **Organisations or Individuals using our School Premises**

If St. Sebastian's is used for non-school activities, the providers (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities) are expected to meet the guidance in [After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition - safeguarding guidance for providers](#)

If St. Sebastian's receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using our school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, as with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

## **How should low-level concerns be shared and recorded?**

The concern will be shared in writing using the Low-Level Concern form with the headteacher. Details of all low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the headteacher and stored electronically in a confidential file, complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Records will be made either contemporaneously or immediately following the discussion/receipt of the low-level concerns form and the headteacher will exercise sound professional judgment in determining what information is necessary to record for safeguarding purposes. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted.

If the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor, that concern will be raised with their employers by the headteacher, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. How an organisation responds to a low-level concern may be different depending on the employment status of the individual who is the subject of the concern - i.e., whether they are an employee, or worker to whom the organisation's disciplinary procedure would apply; or a contractor, governor or volunteer who may be subject to alternative procedures.

Adults must inform the headteacher of all low-level concerns and **within one working day** according to the nature of each particular low-level concern. The headteacher will be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns.

### **Storing and use of Low-Level Concerns (LLC) and follow up information**

LLC forms and follow-up information will be stored securely within the school's safeguarding systems, with access only by the Head Teacher who is also the DSL. This will be stored in accordance with the school's GDPR and data protection policies. The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the headteacher/DSL.

Low-Level Concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures. Whenever staff leave St. Sebastian's, any records of low-level concerns which are stored about them will be reviewed as to whether or not that information needs to be kept.

Consideration will be given to:

- whether some or all of the information contained within any record may have any reasonably likely value in terms of any potential historic employment or abuse claim so as to justify keeping it, in line with normal safeguarding records practice; or
- if, on balance, any record is not considered to have any reasonably likely value, still less actionable concern, and ought to be deleted accordingly.

### **How we will respond to a Low-Level Concern**

Once the low-level concern has been received, the headteacher will *(not necessarily in the below order but in an appropriate sequence according to the nature and detail of the particular concern shared)*:

- speak to the person who raised the low-level concern (unless it has been raised anonymously);
- speak to any potential witnesses;
- speak to the individual about whom the low-level concern has been raised;
- seek advice from the LADO or the Safeguarding in Schools Officer, if the headteacher is in any doubt;

- review the information and determine whether the behaviour in question is, entirely consistent with the school's Staff Code of Conduct and the law
- constitutes a low-level concern;
- determine (if not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO) whether it may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO or Safeguarding in School Officer;
- when considered with any other low-level concerns previously raised about the same person, decide if it could now meet the threshold of an allegation and should be referred to the LADO/other relevant external agencies, and in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy, Part 4 of KCSIE, and the relevant procedures and practice guidance stipulated by Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership; *or*
- in and of itself meets the threshold of an allegation and should be referred to the LADO/other relevant external agencies, in accordance with the school Safeguarding Policy, Part 4 of KCSIE 2024, and the relevant procedures and practice guidance stipulated by the Salford Children's Safeguarding Partnership [Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who... \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://www.trixonline.co.uk/Managing%20allegations%20against%20adults%20who%20work%20with%20children%20Salford%20Safeguarding%20Children%20Partnership) [Managing allegations against adults who work with children | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.trixonline.co.uk/Managing%20allegations%20against%20adults%20who%20work%20with%20children%20Salford%20Safeguarding%20Children%20Partnership)
- ensure that appropriate and detailed records are kept of all internal and external conversations regarding the concern, their determination, the rationale for the decision and any actions taken and retain records in accordance with the Low-Level Concerns Policy; and/or
- consider whether the concern also potentially raises misconduct or capability issues – taking advice from Human Resources (HR) or Legal Services on a named or no-names basis where necessary – and, if so, refer the matter to HR, Legal Services.

### **What action will be taken if it is determined that the behaviour constitutes a low-level concern?**

The headteacher will respond in a sensitive and proportionate way – on the one hand maintaining confidence that such concerns when raised will be handled promptly and effectively, whilst on the other hand protecting staff from any potential false allegations or misunderstandings. Any investigation of low-level concerns will be done discreetly and on a need-to-know basis.

Most low-level concerns may be innocuous. Some will not give rise to any ongoing concern and, accordingly, will not require any further action. Others may be most appropriately dealt with by means of management guidance and/or training. This will often involve informing the member of staff's line manager, who may in some instances provide ongoing guidance or training, as well as the Salford HR department. In many cases, a low-level concern will simply require a conversation with the individual about whom the concern has been raised, considering the following:

- any such conversation with individuals in these circumstances will include being clear with them as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate;
- what change is required in their behaviour;
- enquiring what, if any, support they might need in order to achieve and maintain that change; and



- being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question.

Ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour may be appropriate. An action plan or risk assessment which is agreed with the individual and regularly reviewed with them, may also be appropriate. This approach will be managed by Salford HR department in most instances.

Some low-level concerns may also raise issues of misconduct or poor performance. The headteacher will also consider whether this is the case – by referring to the school's disciplinary and/or capability procedure and taking advice from Salford HR or taking specialist advice as necessary on a named or no-names basis where necessary.

If the headteacher considers that the school's disciplinary or capability procedure may be triggered, they will refer the matter to HR. If HR advise that the school's disciplinary or capability procedure is triggered, the individual will have a full opportunity to respond to any factual allegations which form the basis of capability concerns or a disciplinary case against them.

Staff should be aware that when they share what they believe to be a low-level concern, the headteacher will speak to the adult who is the subject of that concern no matter how 'low' level the concern may be perceived to be, to gain the subject's account – and to make appropriate records (as above), which may be referenced in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

How St. Sebastian's responds to a low-level concern may be different depending on the employment status of the individual who is the subject of the concern - i.e., whether they are an employee or worker to whom the school's disciplinary and/or capability procedure would apply, or a contractor, governor, or volunteer. The school's response will be tailored accordingly.

**What action will be taken if it is determined that the behaviour whilst not sufficiently serious to consider a referral to the LADO nonetheless merits consulting with and seeking advice from the Safeguarding In Schools Officer/LADO,** then action (if/as necessary) will be taken in accordance with the Safeguarding in Schools Officer/LADO's advice; or

**When considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been shared about the same individual, could now meet the threshold of an allegation, or in and of itself meets the threshold of an allegation?** Then it will be referred to the LADO/other relevant external agencies, and in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy, Part 4 of KCSIE and the relevant procedures and practice guidance stipulated by the Salford's Safeguarding Childrens Partnership [Managing allegations against adults who work with children | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) and [Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who... \(trixonline.co.uk\)](#)

## **How should low-level concerns be held?**

At St. Sebastian's, we will retain all records of low-level concerns (including those which are subsequently deemed by the headteacher to relate to behaviour which is entirely consistent with the school's Staff Code of Conduct) in the school safeguarding files.

Where multiple low-level concerns have been shared regarding the same individual these will be kept in chronological order as a running record, and with a timeline alongside. These records will be kept confidential and held securely with access afforded only to a limited number of individuals such as the headteacher, Chair of Governors, Safeguarding Governor and HR as necessary.

## **How often should the central low-level concerns file be reviewed?**

The headteacher will review the central low-level concerns file periodically to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately, and that any potential patterns of concerning problematic or inappropriate behaviour are identified. A record of these reviews will be made. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified in respect of a specific individual, the headteacher will also consider whether any wider cultural issues are at play that may have enabled the behaviour and/or whether the school should arrange for additional training or a review of any of its policies to reduce the risk of it happening again.

## **How long should records of a low-level concern be kept?**

Low-level concerns will be retained securely at St. Sebastian's for as long as deemed relevant and necessary for a safeguarding purpose unless the school is required to disclose by law (for example, where the threshold of an allegation is met in respect of the individual in question). In most cases, once a staff member leaves the school, any low-level concerns which are held relating to them will:

- be retained until the individual leaves the school and as required by law;
- not be included in any onward reference, except as set out below; and
- be retained on the school's central low-level concerns file (securely and applying appropriate access restrictions) unless and until further guidance provides otherwise.

## **References**

Part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education is clear that schools should only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations (including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual) that meet the harm threshold in references. Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues that would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern relating exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference.

## **What is the role of the Governing Body?**

The headteacher will regularly inform the governing body, via the appropriate sub-committee, about the implementation of the Low-Level Concerns Policy and any evidence of its effectiveness, e.g., by including reference to it in any safeguarding reports and providing any relevant data so that trends and patterns can be identified. The governing body will also review an anonymised sample of low-level concerns at regular intervals, to ensure that these concerns have been responded to promptly and appropriately.

## **Low Level Concerns Form**

This form should be used to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with St. Sebastian’s Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose and details which are chronological, and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident(s). The record should be signed, timed, and dated. This document does not replace suspension/formal disciplinary investigations in the event that concerns are either categorised as more serious than low level or when formal disciplinary procedures are required in relation to the low-level concern.

## Low Level Concern Form

<p>1. Name of individual raising the concern</p> <p><i>Leave blank if concern was raised anonymously or the individual wishes to remain anonymous</i></p>	
<p>2. Date the concern was raised</p>	
<p>3. Name and role of individual about whom concern has been raised</p>	
<p>4. Details of the concern(s) reported (give description and context)</p> <p><i>A 'low level' concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct but does not meet the allegations threshold set out in Section 1 of Part 4 Keeping Children Safe in Education.</i></p>	
<p><b>5. Head Teacher to Complete.</b> Details of steps that have been taken to investigate this concern</p> <p><i>Steps should include speaking to the individual who raised the concern, the individual about whom the concern is raised and any witnesses. You will need to review the Code of Conduct and safeguarding policies, including Allegations of Abuse Against Adults, to determine if there has been a breach.</i></p>	

6. Set out the Individual's response to the concern	
<p>7. Is this concern 'low level' or should it be treated as an allegation against staff and managed in accordance with <a href="http://trixononline.co.uk">Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who...</a> (<a href="http://trixononline.co.uk">trixononline.co.uk</a>)</p> <p><i>To reach this decision, consider the information set out in 5 and 6 above. If you are unsure, seek advice from LADO and inform HR. Set out your reasons for reaching your conclusion, including the advice provided by your advisors and any discussions with your LADO.</i></p>	
<p>8. Have 'low level' or other concerns been raised about this individual previously?</p> <p><i>If so, please provides dates, brief details, and relevant file/document reference for the concern(s). Also consider whether previous concern(s) raised coupled with this new concern meet the threshold of harm</i> <a href="http://trixononline.co.uk">Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who...</a> (<a href="http://trixononline.co.uk">trixononline.co.uk</a>)</p>	<p>Yes [ ]                      No [ ]</p>
<p>Details of further action required</p> <p><i>Action could range from no action or a conversation to discuss the concern, to being clear why the behaviour is concerning and formal disciplinary action.</i></p>	

<p>Completed by:</p> <p><i>Low-level concerns must be dealt with by the Headteacher or the Governor if the LLC is regarding the Head Teacher.</i></p>	Name	
	Position	
Date:		
Signature:		

This record will be stored securely in the headteacher's confidential filing system. Where multiple low-level concerns have been shared regarding the same individual, these should be kept in chronological order as a running record, and with a timeline alongside, kept confidential and held securely, with access afforded only to a limited number of individuals such as the Headteacher/DSL or Chair of Governors.

## **Appendix 4: Specific Safeguarding Issues**

This appendix is mostly based on the advice in KCSIE, in particular Annex B.

Annex B also includes information on further issues to be aware of, including child abduction and community safety incidents, children's involvement in the court system, children with family members in prison, county lines, modern slavery and cybercrime. The DSL will provide training as needed and work with external agencies, where relevant.

### **Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents**

This section is based on annex A of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the UK Council of Internet Safety's [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

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

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

#### **Sexually motivated incidents**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Financially motivated incidents (sextortion)**

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

Unlike other adult-involved incidents, financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by offenders working in sophisticated organised crime groups (OCGs) overseas and are only motivated by profit. Adults are usually targeted by these groups, too. Offenders will often use a false identity, sometimes posing as a child or young person, or hack another young person's account to make initial contact. To financially blackmail the child or young person, they may do any or all of the following:

- › Groom or coerce the child or young person into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them.
- › Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person taken through hacking their account.
- › Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child or young person.

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

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

- › Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. They may be contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person.
- › Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications which may include the offender sharing an image first.
- › Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform.
- › Pressured into taking nudes or semi-nudes.



- › Told they have been hacked and they have access to their images, personal information and contacts.
- › Blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details after sharing an image or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated images of the child or young person.

### **Children who are absent from education**

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

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

- › are at risk of harm or neglect
- › are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- › come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- › come from the families of service personnel
- › go missing or run away from home or care
- › are supervised by the youth justice system
- › cease to attend a school
- › come from new migrant families

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

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

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

### **Child criminal exploitation**

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

and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

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

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

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- › appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- › associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- › suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing, self-harming
- › misusing drugs and alcohol
- › excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- › going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- › secretiveness
- › regularly missing school or education
- › not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger our safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the Bridge and the police, if appropriate.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

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

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

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

- › A child can never consent to their abuse.
- › Children are often unable to recognise themselves as victims.
- › A child is not responsible for protecting themselves against abuse and lack control in these situations.

- There are often threats of violence made against the child and/or their family/friends.
- Children may be fearful, ashamed and/or embarrassed about what has happened to them.

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

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

- › having an older boyfriend or girlfriend; and/or
- › suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger our safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the Bridge and the police, if appropriate.

### **Child-on-child abuse**

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

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

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to any of the behaviours below:

- › Bullying, including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- › Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- › Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- › Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- › Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- › Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- › Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

- › Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- › Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

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

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

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

## **Domestic abuse**

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

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

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

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

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the DSL) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This procedure is [Operation Encompass](#). Sharing this information in a timely manner via Operation Encompass enables the provision of immediate early intervention through silent or overt support, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child. The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances. Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8 am to 1 pm, Monday to Friday on **0204 513 9990** (charged at local rate).

Operation Encompass does not replace or supersede existing safeguarding processes or protocols, rather it seeks to support these operationally.

## **Homelessness**

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

The DSL and deputies are aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so that they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

[Public duty to refer homelessness•Salford City Council](#)

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to The Bridge.

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

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

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

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

## **FGM**

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

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

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- › a pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place;
- › a mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out;
- › a family/pupil already known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues; and
- › a girl who displays any of the following behaviours:
  - having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable;
  - finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously);
  - spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating;
  - having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems;
  - avoiding physical exercise or missing PE;

- being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period;
- demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour;
- being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations;
- asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem; and/or
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

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

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

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

### **Forced marriage**

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

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

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

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

The DSL will carry out the following actions:

- › Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place.
- › Activate safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the LADO.
- › Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmf@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmf@fco.gov.uk).
- › Refer the pupil to an Attendance Officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor or school counsellor, as appropriate.

### Preventing radicalisation

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

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

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

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



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

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

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

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

- › refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- › becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- › changes in friendship groups and appearance
- › rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- › converting to a new religion
- › isolating themselves from family and friends
- › talking as if from a scripted speech
- › an unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- › a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- › increased levels of anger
- › increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- › expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- › accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- › possessing extremist literature
- › being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations.

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

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

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

Further reference to our school's our pupils and prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures, e.g. online safety policy.

## **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- › between two children of any age and sex
- › through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- › online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

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

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

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

When supporting victims, staff will:

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

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

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

## **Serious violence**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors, including volunteers will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings in a safe place during their visit. A safeguarding information leaflet will be shared with visitors which includes guidance on the prohibition of mobile phones whilst in the presence of children.

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

Visitors are expected to sign in on entry and wear a visitor's sticker on site.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists or therapists, will be asked to show photo ID and their DBS certificate which will be checked together. If the organisation sending the professional such as the LA or educational psychology service has provided written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out, the school will not ask to see the DBS certificate.

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## **Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will do the following:

- Contact parents/carers/additional contact numbers provided by parents at enrolment to determine pickup arrangements.
- Supervise the pupils in the school's Homework Club if unable to make contact with parents/carers (note an additional cost will be charged for supervision beyond the school day).
- Sign out as a late collection on the SIMS system when parent/carer arrives.
- Contact the Duty Officer at Children's Services if pupils have not been picked up beyond 4:30 pm and parents/carers have not been in contact with the school.
- Record late collection on CPOMS and any communication with Children's Services.

## **Missing pupils/Missing from School**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. In the event of a child going missing, we will take appropriate action referring to Salford's Children Missing Education protocol.

## **Appendix 5 - Operation Encompass Safeguarding Statement**

Our school is part of Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children who experience domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass is in place in every police force in England and Wales, the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar.

Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

There is a legislative requirement for police forces to share information with educational settings through Operation Encompass, therefore, through Operation Encompass the police will share information with our school about ALL police attended domestic abuse incidents which involve any of our children who are related to either of the adults involved in the incident. This sharing of information will occur prior to the start of the next school day. The notification will inform us about the context of the incident and will include the Voice of the Child.

Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputy/deputies (DDSLs) have completed the free National Online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other staff. All staff are encouraged undertake the online training.

The DSL, Caroline Doyle, undertook training on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

The DDSLs, Jannine Platt and Caroline Coffey, undertook training on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Our Safeguarding Governor, Mary Beardshaw, undertook training on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

A further 21 staff have completed the training on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Our parents/carers are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass setting and we ensure that when a new child joins our setting the parents/carers are informed about Operation Encompass. We display the Operation Encompass posters.

The Operation Encompass notification is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

The Key Adult/s (DSLs) have led training for all staff and governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of domestic abuse and the impact of this abuse on children.

As a school, we have discussed how we can support our children who are experiencing domestic abuse on a day-to-day basis and particularly following the Operation Encompass notification. We have used the free Operation Encompass Handbooks to inform our thinking. [Resources for educational settings : Operation Encompass](#). We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.

If the headteacher/DSL or DDSL leaves our setting and other staff are appointed, we will ensure that all Operation Encompass log in details are shared with the new head teacher /Key Adults and that the new member of staff will undertake the Operation Encompass online training.