Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (including safer recruitment, allegations against staff and low-level concerns)

Irlam Primary School

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Written by:	Salford Policy Adopted
Written/adopted	September 2026
Ratified by LGB	
Next Review:	October 2027

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Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Elaine Darwin	Elaine.darwin@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Deputy DSL/s	Lindsey Caplan Amanda Power	Lindsey.caplan@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk Amanda.power@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Headteacher	Elaine Darwin	Elaine.darwin@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Operation Encompass Key Adults	Elaine Darwin Joanne Higham Lindsey Caplan	Elaine.darwin@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk Joanne.higham@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk Lindsey.caplan@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Prevent Lead	Elaine Darwin	Elaine.darwin@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Designated Mental Health Lead	Amanda Power	Amanda.power@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Designated Teacher for Cared for Children	Amanda Power	Amanda.power@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
SEND Coordinator	Amanda Power	Amanda.power@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
Named Appropriate Adult/s	Elaine Darwin Lindsey Caplan	Elaine.darwin@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk Lindsey.caplan@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk
The Bridge Partnership, for all contacts concerning the welfare or safety of a child	8.30am to 4.30pm Online referral Worried about a child•Salford City Council	0161 603 4500
Salford Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team	Out of the above hours	0161 794 8888
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Anna Jameson Lorraine Croft	All LADO consultations and referrals go via the Salford Children and Families Portal

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Chair of Governors	Tony Fiefield	Fiefield01@aol.co.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Stacey Antcliff	staceyantcliff@gmail.com
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

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

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

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

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

Part 3 of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school

- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and The Crime and Policing Act 2026), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). 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 a specific group of pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as: sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination
- Operation Encompass statutory guidance, which explains that the police must notify our school of any incidents involving domestic abuse

- The Information Sharing Duty statutory guidance, which supports effective safeguarding through timely, proportionate and lawful sharing of information between relevant agencies and education providers where this is necessary to promote the welfare, safety and protection of children.

- 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 the requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

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

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

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

Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes Making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images involving children under the age of 18. Images include photographs, videos and livestreams and may be taken by the child themselves, taken or created by another person, digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'. The sharing of nude or semi-nude images should always be considered through a safeguarding lens and responded to proportionately in line with UKCIS guidance, whether consensual or non-consensual.

Children means everyone under the age of 18.

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

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

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

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

4. Equality statement

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

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination or prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 14)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or frequently
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 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, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality

- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, honour or faith-based abuse, including forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

5.1 All staff

All staff will:

- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education in full. The governing board will ensure mechanisms are in place to support staff to understand and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. The governing board will ensure that all staff, including those who do not work directly with children, read Part One and understand how safeguarding responsibilities apply to their role.
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have read, reviewed and understood 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 (for example, sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for children who may be vulnerable, including children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual and children who are questioning their gender, to speak out and share their concerns.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems that support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, The LINK Education Trust Staff Code of Conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSL/s, the behaviour policy, online safety that includes the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- Be aware of the school's attendance procedures
- The early help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to The Bridge Partnership and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- The process for community-based Family Help assessments
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, including domestic and sexual abuse (including controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved), as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm, including:
  - Drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
  - Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
  - Serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation

- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, 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 mental health can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- That children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay or bisexual can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying
- The potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender
- That a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time
- That children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination. These experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health and willingness to seek help. Staff will be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and will ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection
- The role information sharing plays in safeguarding children and how to request, share and record safeguarding information in accordance with the Information Sharing Duty.

Staff should understand that safeguarding conversations are not investigative interviews. The purpose of professional curiosity is to understand whether a child may need help or protection, not to investigate whether abuse has occurred.

Appendix 4 of this policy outlines in more detail 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 Elaine Darwin, Headteacher. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety, and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

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

The DSL can be contacted outside of school hours via email – elaine.darwin@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk

When the DSL is absent, the Deputy DSLs, Lindsey Caplan and Amanda Power, will act as cover.

If the DSL and DDSLs are not available or absent, we have cover arrangements in place. This includes:

- Our Safeguarding Team. As well as Elaine Darwin, Lindsey Caplan and Amanda Power, the following members of staff are all part of the school Safeguarding Team and can be contacted via email.

  Joanne Higham Joanne.higham@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk

  Anne MacKenzie Anne.mackenzie@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk

  Clare Rollings Clare.rollings@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk

  Lisa Freer Lisa.freer@thelinkeducationtrust.co.uk

The school will ensure safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted upon without delay during periods when the DSL is unavailable. Cover arrangements will remain operational during absence, illness, leave or other circumstances affecting DSL availability.

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

- 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 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 and review them at least annually
- The DSL is also the Prevent Lead. All staff members are fully trained in Prevent and complete new training bi-annually.

The DSL will also:

- Keep the headteacher informed of any issues
- Liaise with local authority case managers, Safeguarding in Schools Lead and designated officers 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
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search
- Ensure that child protection files are kept up to date
- Ensure that safeguarding considerations relating to alternative provision placements are monitored, including attendance, wellbeing, information sharing and safeguarding arrangements with the provider.
- Where children leave the school, ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school
- Promote effective information sharing across the safeguarding partnership and ensure staff understand their responsibilities under the Information Sharing Duty.

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

5.3 The Local Governing Board (LGB)

The LGB will:

- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Ensure that all governors receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and regularly thereafter, enabling them to provide effective strategic challenge and assurance that safeguarding arrangements are effective

- Ensure that all staff have read and understood Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), including staff who do not work directly with children and that mechanisms are in place to ensure staff understand and can apply safeguarding expectations within their roles
- 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 senior board level (or equivalent) lead or school Governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure the school has a policy in respect of the use of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and which reflects that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy can leave staff unable to fully support and protect pupils
- Ensure the school has appropriate cyber security systems in place
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and review their effectiveness at least once every academic year. This includes:
  - 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
  - Ensuring that reviews are carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the DSL and IT team. The review will include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations. A record of these checks will be kept
  - 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, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure
  - That 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 or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
  - Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
  - Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate

- Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

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

Governors will receive and understand safeguarding training and will ensure they have sufficient knowledge of Keeping Children Safe in Education to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Section 19.3 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

5.4 The headteacher

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

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

5.5 Virtual school heads

Virtual school heads (VSHs) have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils with a social worker.

VSHs also have a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children in kinship care (children who live with a relative or close family friend).

The Education Advisors 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 coordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

6. Confidentiality

All staff will follow the Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership's process and principles for sharing information, and the Headteacher and the DSL understand the statutory guidance regarding information sharing outlined in Working together to safeguard children 2026 The governing board will follow the information sharing procedures detailed in Part 2 of Keeping children safe in education 2026

Information Sharing Duty

The school recognises the statutory Information Sharing Duty and the expectation that safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies share information with education providers where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The school will proactively share information where appropriate and will also seek information from partner agencies where this is necessary to understand a child's circumstances, assess risk, support decision-making, or promote a child's welfare.

The school recognises that information sharing supports not only child protection activity but also wider safeguarding, welfare, early help and Family Help interventions.

Information Requests

The DSL and other safeguarding professionals may request information from safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child. Information requests should be specific, proportionate and linked to identified need, risk or support planning.

The school expects partner agencies to share relevant safeguarding information where there is a lawful basis to do so and will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners to ensure that children receive the right help at the right time.

- Timely information-sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Relevant safeguarding information should be shared proactively and not only in response to requests where there is a lawful basis to do so.
- The school will share information for the purposes of safeguarding, child protection, welfare support, Early Help and Family Help where appropriate.
- Staff should be confident in both requesting and sharing information where doing so supports safeguarding decision-making.
- Arrangements should be in place setting out the processes and principles for sharing information within the school and with local authority children's social care, the safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required
- 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, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and the UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- The school recognises that data protection legislation does not prevent staff from sharing information where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- When deciding what information to share, staff will consider relevance to current safeguarding risk, what information is necessary for the receiving professional or setting to know, and whether information is appropriately contextualised. Professional judgement will be used to ensure information sharing is focused and proportionate.
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
  - There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
  - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
  - The DSL should consider that:
    - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)

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

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

- The government's Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information (including personal information), and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. The school also recognises the Information Sharing Duty and the expectation that safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies share appropriate information with education providers, and that education providers proactively share and request information where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)
- Where a child leaves the school the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. The DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 18, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

Information Sharing Principles

The school recognises that:

- Information sharing is a safeguarding tool.
- Information sharing supports prevention, early intervention and protection.
- Information should be relevant, necessary, proportionate and secure.
- Consent should be sought where appropriate, but consent is not required where safeguarding concerns justify sharing.
- Data protection legislation does not prevent safeguarding information being shared.
- Information should be shared in a timely manner.
- Decisions regarding information sharing should be appropriately recorded.

7. Recognising abuse and taking action

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

- Has a disability or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs

- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- Is bereaved
- Is showing early signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is frequently missing, goes missing from education, care or home
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- Is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called honour-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child

Staff will also recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination. Such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing and mental health and may make them less willing to seek help. Any concerns about prejudice-based harm will be considered through a safeguarding lens and referred to the DSL where appropriate.

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

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

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

Telephone the Bridge Partnership and follow this up with a referral to the Bridge Partnership and/or contact the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral**.

Worried about a child Salford City Council

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

7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

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

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions

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

Bear in mind that some children may:

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

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

We will ensure that staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care. For example, to keep records in English, liaise with other agencies in English, be able to summon emergency help, and understand instructions, for example about the safety of medicines or food hygiene.

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 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, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate.

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

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

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is ***at risk*** of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow Salford 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 is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from The Bridge Partnership. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to The Bridge Partnership directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

Community-based Early Help and Family Help

Where a child would benefit from support before statutory intervention, the school will consider universal services and community-based Early Help and, where appropriate, the targeted early help level of Family Help. Where a Family Help assessment is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead liaison with other agencies and support the establishment of an inter-agency assessment. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

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

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

The school recognises the Families First Partnership Programme and will utilise community-based Family Help, targeted Family Help and statutory intervention where appropriate in accordance with local threshold guidance.

Effective Early Help and Family Help interventions depend on timely and appropriate information sharing between agencies. The school will actively contribute information and seek relevant information from partner agencies to support coordinated planning and intervention.

Salford School Partnership

The most effective way to create a support plan with a family is through collaboration with the Salford School Partnership. The Salford School Partnership 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 or pastoral staff, they 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, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

Children's social care (Bridge) should acknowledge and make decisions in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and local threshold procedures. The DSL or person 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 person who made the referral 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 Bridge directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

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

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

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

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

7.6 If you have a concern about mental health

Through the work of the Senior Mental Health Lead, Mental Health Leads and Champions, the school has a co-ordinated approach to both supporting vulnerable pupils and developing a whole school approach to mental well-being. The Mental Health Leads work closely with 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 a referral will be made to the DSL.

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

All staff are aware that mental health problems can also, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns (for example, self-harm).

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise, including:

- Significant changes in behaviour,
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawing from social situations
- Not wanting to do things they usually like
- Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves

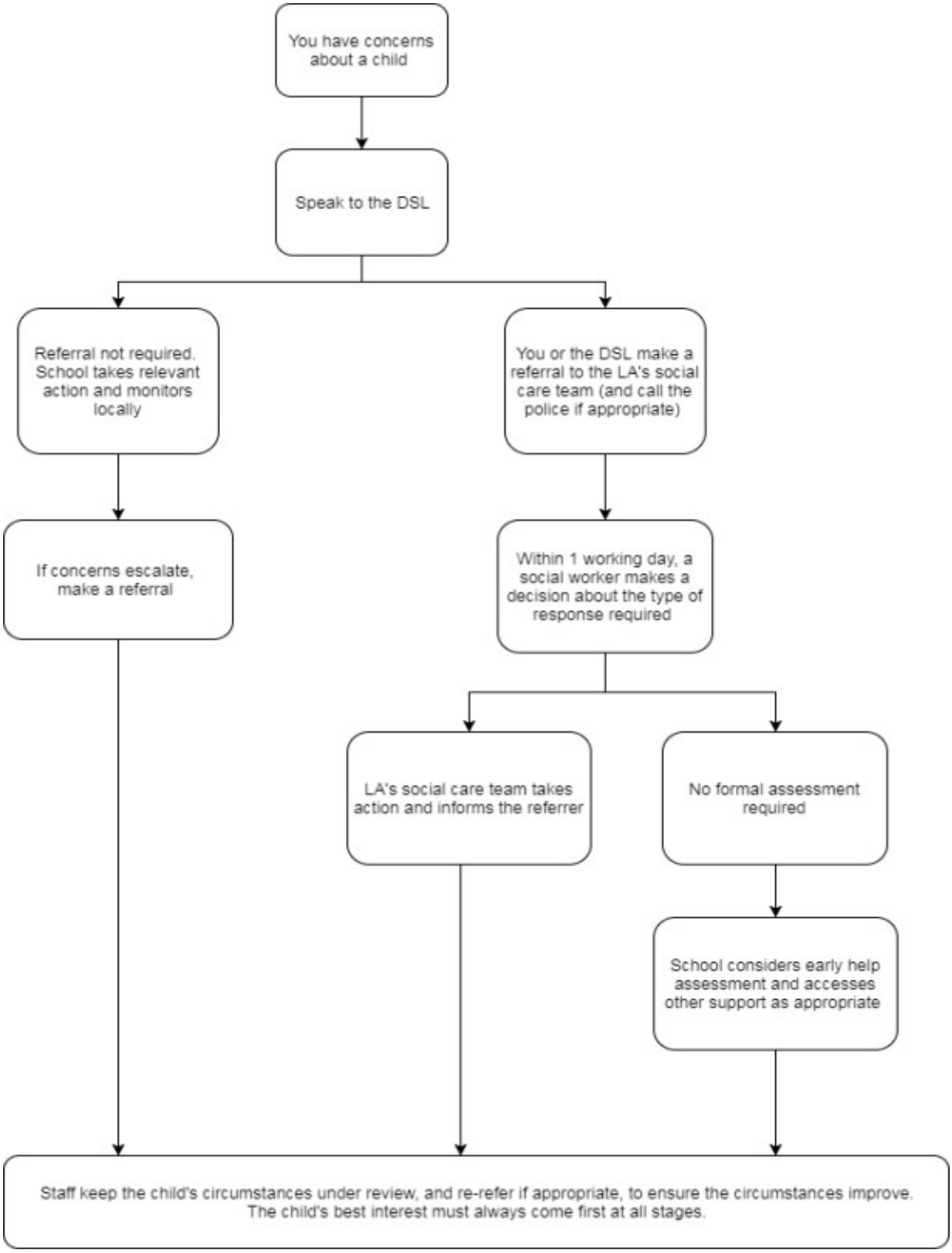
If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4. If you feel that a child is in danger, call 999 or arrange for the child to be taken to A&E immediately by their parent or other suitable person.

If the child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

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

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

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

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

Where appropriate, the school will inform Ofsted of the allegation and actions taken, within the necessary timescale (see appendix 3 for more detail).

7.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

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

For some (but not all) forms of child-on-child abuse it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys’ perpetrators. 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 making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI), which may include or be driven by misogyny/misandry

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

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

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

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will follow the procedures detailed in the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and the Salford Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway (Refer to Section 17, Links with other policies)
- The DSL will contact the Bridge and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. Risk assessments will be recorded, reviewed regularly and updated whenever new information becomes available. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

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

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

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

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting, making 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 easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 7.10 below)
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Recognise the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. We will actively identify, challenge and address how misogynistic/misandrist attitudes contribute to the normalisation of inappropriate behaviour and increases the risk of leading to child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, within our school environment
- Be alert to the prevalence of harmful online material and extreme misogynistic/misandrist ideologies, including misogynistic influencers, and recognise the impact this content could have on shaping pupils' attitudes
- 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
- Recognise that harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum and may escalate from inappropriate behaviour, including misogyny, to sexual harassment and sexual violence if not addressed early.
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
  - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
  - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
  - That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report
    - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
    - A child's behaviour may indicate 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
- That exposure to misogynistic/misandrist content online can indicate a safeguarding concern and requires early discussion with the DSL

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, such as by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

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

7.9 Making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

All incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual, require a safeguarding response. The sharing of nude or semi-nude images should always be considered through a safeguarding lens and responded to proportionately in line with UKCIS guidance, whether consensual or non-consensual. If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nude or semi-nudes, including where generated by AI, you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

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

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

Initial review meeting

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

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care

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

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or The Bridge if:

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident. See appendix 4 for more information on assessing adult-involved incidents
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to their 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 making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

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

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or The Bridge, 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 The Bridge 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 dialing 101 and giving all relevant details to the police.

Recording incidents

All incidents of making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 18 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

Curriculum coverage

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our relationships education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- 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. This also includes making such images, including where generated by AI
- 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 make, provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the making or 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.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils
- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback
- Pupils know who to go to if they have any concerns. They know that the Headteacher is the DSL. There are posters around school of the Safeguarding Team with photographs also. There are also worry boxes around school for pupils who struggle to talk openly.
- As well as talking to children as part of the PSHE/Relationships education, we also talk to children in assemblies about Safeguarding and procedures.
- Staff are fully trained in safeguarding. They know how to treat disclosures and reassure children afterwards.

8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

The LINK Education Trust recognises the safeguarding risks associated with smart technology, internet enabled devices and wearable technology. Risks can include but are not limited to inappropriate harmful content, image sharing, and the misuse of artificial intelligence.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), clear expectations are in place for the safe and appropriate use of smart technology in our schools. Pupils are taught about online safety and the potential risks.

All schools in The LINK Education Trust will maintain clear expectations regarding the possession and use of smart technology on the school site and during the school day. Any misuse or concerns will be managed in accordance to the schools safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community, including the expectation that our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default
- 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, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images including those generated using AI and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

Online safety is a running and interrelated theme throughout the school's whole-school safeguarding approach. The school will consider online safety when developing policies, staff training, curriculum content, parental engagement and safeguarding procedures.

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 cyberbullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering

and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year

- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them, so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be informed by the school's safeguarding risk assessment and reviewed when new technologies or online risks emerge.
- Carry out an annual review of our filtering and monitoring effectiveness. This will be conducted by [insert member of SLT responsible for filtering and monitoring] with the support of our DSL and IT support
- The outcome of filtering and monitoring reviews will be reported to governors and recorded as part of the school's safeguarding quality assurance arrangements.
- 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 www.irlamprimaryschool.co.uk

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.

All schools in The LINK Education Trust 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 (for example, 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.

All schools in The LINK Education Trust will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our Artificial Intelligence policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while 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 (KCSIE).

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.

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

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

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

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, for example, moving them out of classes with 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 both online and offline. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- The need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others
- That these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or being unable to understand the consequences of doing so.

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

Support from our Learning Mentor

Support from the DSENCO/Inclusion Manager

Pupil Voice activities

PSHE curriculum

Assemblies

Extra support from Teaching Assistants

Any abuse involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO. The school will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, and ensure any appropriate support for communication is in place.

11. Pupils with medical conditions

An incident relating to the management of a child's medical condition (including allergies) does not itself warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners.

A safeguarding referral will be made where an incident highlights concern that the child might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family because of their medical condition. For example, information about the child's medical condition might be withheld from the school, or the child may be repeatedly sent to school without essential medication, putting them at risk.

12. Young carers

The school recognises that caring responsibilities can impact on a child's attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing, and early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health service.

13. Pupils with a social worker

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

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

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

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

14. Cared for and previously Cared for 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 children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher, Amanda Power (Inclusion Manager), who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of cared for and previously cared for children in line with statutory guidance.

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

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding cared for and previously cared for children are quickly and effectively responded to

- Work with virtual school heads 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) made aware of any cared for child who is at risk of exclusion and is notified of any suspension as soon as possible.
- The designated teacher and DSL will ensure appropriate staff understand a child's legal status, care arrangements and delegated authority arrangements where relevant.

The designated teacher and DSL will work together to consider safeguarding vulnerabilities, attendance, mental health, exploitation risks and educational outcomes.

15. Pupils who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

The school recognises that a child being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm. However, pupils who are (or who are perceived by other children to be) lesbian, gay, or bisexual can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. See our behaviour policy for more detail on how we prevent bullying based on sexuality.

Any concerns should be reported to the DSL/ DDSLs. Any concerns will be treated sensitively and on an individual basis. Support will be offered by the Learning Mentor/ Inclusion Lead as appropriate.

16. Pupils who are questioning their gender

16.1 Supporting pupils who are questioning their gender

We are aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, such as relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment.

We will take a strong, proactive stance on all forms of bullying based on gender. See our behaviour policy for more detail. The school will ensure that children and their families are aware that, while the school will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, it must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or belief.

When supporting a pupil questioning their gender, we will take into account the principle of taking a careful approach.

The DSL will lead in these cases.

16.2 Involving parents/carers in cases of pupils questioning their gender

Where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school, we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority.

However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might put a pupil at greater risk than not involving them, the DSL will determine a course of action needed to safeguard the child before contacting parents/carers or any decisions are taken.

Where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school to make changes to how they are treated, the school will only break any confidence if there is a related safeguarding risk.

16.3 Considering requests for support with social transition

The school will not initiate any action regarding social transition. However, when a pupil or their parent/carer requests that the school makes changes or puts support in place to facilitate the pupil presenting as the opposite biological sex ("social transition"), we will work together with parents/carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child and other children.

Members of staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the school and a child's parents/carers have been involved (as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education)

In making decisions about supporting social transition, the school will ensure compliance with its obligations in respect of safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by the school's evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children. The schools will make decisions in line with the following principles:

- The school has statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children: the first step when considering a child's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child's wishes
- Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance: (except in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them) where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school parents/carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views will carry great weight and be properly considered
- Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so the school will take a very careful approach: social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes
- The school will comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition

The school will ensure that the decision-making process is documented and records are kept.

The circumstances or needs of a child may change over time, and the school may need to review its original decision and will involve the DSL in doing so.

16.4 Rules on single-sex spaces

For pupils aged 8 and over, the school will provide separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, except where a toilet is provided in a room that can be secured from the inside and is intended for use by one pupil at a time. Pupils aged 8 and over will not be permitted to use toilet facilities designated solely for the opposite biological sex.

For children under the age of 8, schools are not subject to the same statutory requirement to provide separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. The school will determine appropriate arrangements having regard to the age and needs of the children and their safeguarding, supervision, privacy and dignity.

Suitable changing accommodation and showers will be provided separately for boys and girls who are aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year. Pupils will not be permitted to use changing rooms or showers designated solely for the opposite biological sex.

Where a pupil does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider whether suitable alternative arrangements can be provided. These may include a self-contained individual toilet or changing/washing facility, or access to facilities at an alternative time. Such arrangements must not compromise the provision of single-sex facilities or the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the pupil or any other child.

Boarding and overnight residential accommodation, including shared bedrooms, dormitories and tents, will be designated according to biological sex. Where a pupil does not wish to use accommodation designated for their biological sex, the school will consider whether suitable alternative arrangements can be provided. Such

arrangements must not result in a child sharing sleeping accommodation with a child of the opposite biological sex and must not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of any child.

16.5 Rules on single-sex sports

The school may teach and play some sports or games, or activities of a competitive nature, in single-sex groups where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or vice versa). The school can separate children according to their biological sex in these circumstances.

Some sports may need to be played in single-sex groups from a certain age to ensure children's safety. Where single-sex sports are implemented for safety reasons, there are no exceptions and pupils must not be allowed to participate in sports designed for the opposite sex.

17. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies

17.1 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).

17.2 Other complaints

- **Admissions** - referred to the appeals process outlined in admissions
- **Exclusion** - referred to the procedures outlined in the Behaviour Policy and Suspension and Exclusion Policy.
- **Whistleblowing** - referred to the internal whistleblowing procedures outlined in the whistleblowing policy.
- **Staff grievances** – referred to the internal grievance procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.
- **Staff Conduct** – referred to internal disciplinary procedures.
- **Third - party suppliers using school premises or facilities** – referred to separate complaint procedures. The school will ensure any third party supplier using school premises or facilities to offer community facilities or services has its own complaints procedures in place and such complaints and such complaints do not fall within the scope of the policy.

17.3 Whistleblowing

Our School has adopted the Salford Whistle Blowing Policy (Refer to Section 21 of this policy)

If staff are concerned about the way safeguarding is carried out in the school they should refer to the Whistle-blowing policy.

If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of reprisal as a result. The harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, known as the "Whistleblowing Act" provides protection for workers against detrimental treatment or dismissal for disclosing information because they reasonably believe it is in the public interest to do so, specifically in relation to:

- a criminal offence that has, is being, or is likely to be committed
- financial fraud or mismanagement
- miscarriages of justice
- danger to health and safety
- damage to the environment

- failure to comply with any legal obligation or regulatory requirements
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

Child Protection /Safeguarding concerns - Safeguarding concerns are taken very seriously. Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership have developed an escalation-procedure which compliments this whistleblowing policy. Accessing the escalation policy does not prevent you from raising a whistleblowing concern where you have genuine concerns about practices.

Whilst not within the scope of the Act, individuals not employed by the school, for example those providing contracted services or volunteering, may also raise concerns under this policy.

18. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

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

Records will include:

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

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child and should only be accessed by those who need to see it.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained in accordance with the school's records retention schedule and applicable data protection requirements.

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.

Child protection records should include concerns, discussions, actions taken, decisions reached and the rationale for those decisions.

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

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

The DSL will ensure that safeguarding records are clear and factual and distinguish between observed concerns, professional opinion and historic information.

When a child protection file is transferred, secure transit will be used and confirmation of receipt will be obtained. The transferring school will include a clear, structured summary identifying current safeguarding concerns, relevant context and any ongoing support needs. Historic information will be presented with appropriate context and distinguished from current safeguarding concerns.

When receiving a child protection file, an appropriately trained member of staff will review the safeguarding information promptly so that key risks and needs are understood. Safeguarding information will be used to support, and not disadvantage, the child. Where information received is unclear or incomplete, the school will seek clarification from the previous setting.

The DSL will ensure relevant staff, including the SENCO where appropriate, are made aware of information they need in order to safeguard and support the child. Where information indicates a risk to the child and/or

others, the DSL will assess that risk and ensure that an appropriate safety and support plan is in place before or when the child starts.

The DSL will also consider whether information should be shared with the receiving school in advance of transfer, particularly where this will enable the receiving setting to assess risk and put appropriate safeguarding support in place. Where there are significant safeguarding concerns, it is good practice for the DSLs in both settings to speak directly.

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

Recording Information Sharing Decisions

Where safeguarding information is shared or requested, the school will record:

- the information shared or requested
- the purpose of sharing
- who information was shared with or requested from
- the lawful basis for sharing where relevant
- any rationale where information is not shared
- outcomes arising from the information obtained

Records will be stored electronically on the school's safeguarding recording system, CPOMS, and access restricted to authorised safeguarding staff.

- These records are electronic and transferred digitally.
- All records are stored on the CPOMS system.
- CPOMS is a secure, safe safeguarding platform.
- Information is transferred once a child moves to another school.
- Records are only shared with individuals who need to know in order to safeguard the child.

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

19. Training

19.1 All staff

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

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 Children's Partnership
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
  - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
  - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

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 and staff meetings).

Staff training will include information sharing responsibilities, including the Information Sharing Duty and how to make, record and respond to information requests appropriately.

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.

19.2 The DSL and DDSLs

The DSL and DDSLs will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

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

They 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.

19.3 Governors

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

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

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

19.4 Recruitment – interview panels

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

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

19.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families

All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervision, which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

20. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by Elaine Darwin (Headteacher).At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

21. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance
- Online safety
- AI
- Mobile phone use
- Equality
- Relationships and sex education
- First aid
- Curriculum
- Designated teacher for cared for and previously cared for children
- Privacy notices
- Whistle Blowing
- Anti Bullying
- IT Acceptable Use

These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others.

This can be particularly relevant in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.

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

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

Emotional abuse may involve:

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

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including acts of penetration, whether with part of a person's body or an object (for example, rape or assault by penetration), and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching over clothing.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online as well as offline, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. Sexual abuse by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of the school's policy and procedures for responding to it.

Children under the age of 13 can never provide valid consent to sexual activity. There are also specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

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

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

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

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

Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

Salford City Council

Safe recruitment working practices July 2026

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 document has been 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 (SSCO) 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 viewed here Safe recruitment working practices

Following the Crime and Policing Act 2026, any volunteer engaged in teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently, on more than three days within a 30-day period, or overnight, is considered to be undertaking regulated activity. The school will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information for volunteers who undertake regulated activity. Volunteers who do not undertake regulated activity will be subject to risk assessment and appropriate vetting arrangements

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework contains its own requirements for safer recruitment (see paragraph 3.13 to 3.27).

Where the school is subject to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, an individual will not be permitted to begin working or volunteering within provision covered by the EYFS framework until the school has received the individual's enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information where applicable.

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

If you have concerns about an adult working with children, please 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, trainee 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're 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 quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. 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.

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 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:

- 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 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 LINK Education Trust.

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

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded**: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation being made

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 Managing allegations against adults who work with children | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership 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. 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 local authority children's social care services, 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 The Bridge Partnership
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with 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 1 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 designated officer what information should 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 named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate
- 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

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

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.

Additional considerations for supply teachers, trainee 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, trainee teacher, or contracted staff member provided by an agency, the school shares safeguarding responsibilities with the employment agency or business. We will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures. The school remains responsible for gathering facts and managing safeguarding processes, while working closely with the employment agency or provider, which will normally lead any employment or disciplinary 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, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate. Teacher training providers are expected to follow the same procedures as supply agencies.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

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:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. 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:

- 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 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

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 that 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. We will consider 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 The LINK Education Trust we aim to create an open and transparent culture where all 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 2026 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead about their concern using the Low-Level Record of Concern Form. (Page 9 of this document) If the Designated Safeguarding Lead cannot be contacted, the Chair of Governors should be contacted instead. If the concern is regarding the head teacher, inform the Chair of Governors using the Low-Level Record of Concern Form.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

All schools in The LINK Education Trust 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, this School 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, The LIN Education Trust 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 a number of reasons, and staff are encouraged to self-report on the basis that,

- 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 and
- crucially, it is an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

The LINK Education Trust's 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 or college 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 and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges 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 Irlam Primary School 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 Irlam Primary School 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 Form on page 9 of the Policy with the DSL/DDSLs.
All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the DSL/DDSLs either contemporaneously or immediately following the discussion/receipt of the Form and 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 Head Teacher, 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.

The DSL will inform the Head Teacher of all low-level concerns as soon as practicable and, where appropriate, within one working day. The Head Teacher 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 schools safeguarding systems, with access only by the Head Teacher and 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 Head Teacher or the 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 Irlam Primary School, any record 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 DSL/DDSLs have received the low-level concern, we 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
- if the Head Teacher is in any doubt, they will seek advice from the LADO or the Safeguarding in Schools Officer
- 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.
- is not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO but 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, 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 2026, 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, and in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy, Part 4 of KCSIE 2026, 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)

Managing allegations against adults who work with children | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership

- 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
- 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.

- 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
- 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher 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 Irlam Primary School 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

What action will be taken if it is determined that the behaviour……

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 Children's 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?

Irlam Primary School will retain all records of low-level concerns (including those which are subsequently deemed by the Head Teacher 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 DSL, DDSLs, Chair of Governors, Safeguarding Governor.

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

The DSL/DDSLs 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 DSL/DDSLs 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 by the Irlam Primary School 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
- will not be included in any onward reference, except as set out below
- Low-level concerns will 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 and colleges 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 which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference.

What is the role of the Local Governing Board?

The DSL/DDSLs 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, in order to ensure that these concerns have been responded to promptly and appropriately.

Low Level Concerns Form

Please use this form 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 Irlam Primary School'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 to 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.

1. Name of individual raising the concern *Leave blank if concern was raised anonymously or the individual wishes to remain anonymous*	
2. Date the concern was raised	
3. Name and role of individual about whom concern has been raised	
4. Details of the concern(s) reported (give description and context) *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.*	
5. Head Teacher to Complete. Details of steps have been taken to investigate this concern *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.	
6. Set out the Individual's response to the concern	
7. Is this concern 'low level' or should it be treated as an allegation against staff and managed in accordance with Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who... (trixonline.co.uk) *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.*	
8. Have 'low level' or other concerns been raised about this individual previously? *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* Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who... (trixonline.co.uk)	Yes [ ] No [ ]
Details of further action required *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.*	

Completed by: *Low level concerns must be dealt with by the Headteacher or the Governor if the LLC is regarding the Head Teacher*	Name	
	Position	
Date:		
Signature:		

This record will be stored securely in CPOMS Staff Safe. 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. These records should be kept confidential and held securely, with access afforded only to a limited number of individuals such as the DSL, Headteacher, Governors.

Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues

This appendix is mostly based on the advice in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026), in particular part 1 – you'll need to adapt it to reflect your context and any locally agreed procedures.

Part 1 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. If you wish to cover these in the policy, consider including:

- An explanation of what the issue is and how your school approaches it (e.g. any preventative measures in place, training you provide for staff)
- What staff should be aware of and actions they should take
- How your school works with external agencies, where relevant

You should also make sure your policy reflects any locally agreed procedures put in place by the Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents

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

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

Sexually motivated incidents

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

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

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

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

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

Financially motivated incidents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Children who are absent from education

A child being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions 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 of becoming missing from education. These include children who:

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

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the 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.

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts.

We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use our professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged.

Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

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

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

Child criminal exploitation

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

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can be perpetrated by organised networks or gangs, and the victim may identify as part of this group.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. It can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

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

Child sexual exploitation

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

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim. It can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. Victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take while under coercion.

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. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim.

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. It can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

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

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

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

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

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. Child-on-child abuse may also involve prejudice-based harm and discrimination. The school will consider the safeguarding impact on both the child who has experienced the harm and the child alleged to have caused it.

Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both victim and alleged perpetrator, it is preventable and it may involve serious physical harm or threats involving weapons.

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

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse and other prejudice-based incidents

- 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)
- Physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- Harmful sexual behaviour (an umbrella term widely used in child protection, and which applies to behaviour occurring online, face-to-face, or both), sexual violence and sexual harassment, which may include misogyny/misandry
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI
- Upskirting, which is a criminal offence, 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 nude or semi-nude 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 if a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

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

Domestic abuse

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

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking) 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.

Homelessness

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

The DSL/ DDSLs will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures). 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 Partnership. Where children are living independently from their parent/carers (e.g. if they've been excluded from their family home), we will work with the local authority children's social care team to support them.

Temporary accommodation

The school recognises that children living in temporary accommodation may experience additional vulnerabilities and disruption to their education, attendance, wellbeing and safeguarding outcomes. The DSL will be alert to information received about pupils being placed in temporary accommodation and will consider whether this creates or increases any safeguarding, attendance, welfare or support needs.

The school will work with the local authority and other relevant agencies and will act on notifications received under the temporary accommodation notification arrangements, sharing information and providing support where appropriate. Where information indicates that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, normal safeguarding and referral procedures will be followed without delay.

Honour-based abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

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

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

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

FGM

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

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

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
  - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
  - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
  - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
  - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
  - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
  - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
  - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
  - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
  - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

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

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

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

Forced marriage

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

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

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

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

The DSL will:

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

Preventing radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs **Terrorism** is an action that:

- Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
- Causes serious damage to property; or
- Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

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

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

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

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

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

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

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

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on social media
- 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 information on the school's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures, including the behaviour policy, online/e-safety policy.

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

The school will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. This includes incidents occurring outside of the school premises, and/or online.

Sexual violence refers to specific sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving:

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

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, and can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, and each time activity occurs. A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity, the age of consent is 16, and sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

HSB can occur:

- Between 2 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)

HSB exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. It can occur online or face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable. Sexual violence and sexual harassment may overlap.

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

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

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt

- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay and bisexual children, or children questioning their gender are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them
- Recognising the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. It's important not to dismiss issues that may seem minor at first, such as derogatory language, as behaviours can escalate into more severe forms of child-on-child abuse

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

Serious violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern which may involve:

- Physical assault
- Carrying, threatening with or using weapons (often in the context of peer conflict or bullying)
- Criminal exploitation

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:

- Having been frequently absent, suspended, spent time in alternative provision, or permanently excluded from school
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- Being male

- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence
- Having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors and will be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school).

If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, including a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so), they will report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Assess the risk to both the individual pupil and others in the school, consider wider information or concerns and take appropriate action
- Put in place a safety and support plan for the pupil (depending on the risk)
- Where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict
- Where a child is found in possession of a knife or bladed article, the school will also have regard to the Home Office and Ministry of Justice guidance on child knife possession offences. Government guidance for child knife possession offences (accessible) - GOV.UK This guidance emphasises the need for a swift, robust, evidence-based and thorough response so that the child receives timely and appropriate support and the risk of further offending is reduced.

Alternative Provision

Where pupils attend Alternative Provision, the school will continue to maintain responsibility for safeguarding oversight. The DSL will ensure that:

- Appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed on the provider.
- Attendance is monitored.
- The child's welfare remains under review.
- Information is shared appropriately between settings.
- Any safeguarding concerns are communicated promptly.
- Regular quality assurance of safeguarding arrangements is undertaken.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

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 the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

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

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

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

Non-collection of children

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

- telephone parents/emergency contacts
- contact Children's services if a child has still not been picked up by 4.30pm

Missing pupils

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

- Contact the police
- Contact parents
- Alert the safeguarding team

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, Elaine Darwin undertook training in September 2026

The DDSLs, Lindsey Caplan and Amanda Power undertook training in September 2026

Our Safeguarding Governor, Stacy Antcliff, undertook training in September 2026

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 (DSL) 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.

When the Head Teacher, 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.