

Blackpool Theatre Collective Sixth Form College
Safeguarding and Protection Policy 2024
DSL - Carl Walker and Ian Meeson

Children are also referred to as young people in this document.
All pupils at BTC are referred to as students.

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1. Named personnel with designated responsibility for Safeguarding 2023-2024

Principal	Course Lead	
Carl Walker	Ian Meeson	
Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)		
Carl Walker Ian Meeson		

2. Policy Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people is of paramount importance and is everyone's responsibility. It is the responsibility of **every** member of staff, volunteer and regular visitor to BTC to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of the young people. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which students can learn.

Blackpool Theatre Collective's safeguarding policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with safeguarding issues. The policy also aims to make explicit BTC's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that Safeguarding concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the students wellbeing.

BTC is committed to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of all of its students. We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, including those students with SEND. We recognise that young people who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at BTC, their behaviour may be challenging. We recognise that some students who have experienced abuse may harm others. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all of our students.

We recognise that staff at our school play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for students to prevent concerns from escalating. **All staff are advised to**

maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of children, staff members must always act in the **best interests** of the young person.

BTC will establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Students will be able to talk freely to any member of staff at BTC if they are worried or concerned about something.

All staff and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a student and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any student and we will not keep secrets. Every student will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose.

Throughout our Personal Development curriculum we will provide activities and opportunities for students to develop the skills they need to identify risks and stay safe. This will also include material that will encourage our students to develop essential life skills. This education should help students to be physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and to develop into responsible and informed members of society.

This policy is in line with HM Government's guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of students, **"Working Together to Safeguard Children" (July 2018, updated 2022)** and the DfE's statutory guidance for schools and colleges **"Keeping Children Safe in Education" (September 2023)**, both of which are available to all staff on the T Drive in the Safeguarding folder.

Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a young person in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

'Everyone working in or for BTC shares an objective to help keep students and young people safe by contributing to:

- providing a safe environment to learn and develop in our BTC setting;
- identifying young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our BTC setting'.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually and is available on the BTC website or from the BTC office. **This policy applies to all staff, children, parents, board, volunteers and visitors.**

3. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people is defined as;

- protecting young people from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of young peoples health or development;
- ensuring that young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- and taking action to enable all students to have the best outcomes.
- students health and safety
- the use of reasonable force
- meeting the needs of students with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- educational visits
- intimate care
- internet or e-safety
- appropriate arrangements to ensure BTC security

Safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues such as:

- bullying, including cyberbullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and so on) and prejudice-based bullying
- racist, disability, and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- radicalisation and extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation
- sexting
- peer on peer abuse
- sexual harassment
- substance misuse
- issues that may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
- particular issues affecting children including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Definitions

As in the Children Acts 1989, 2004 and 2006, a **child** is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday.

Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; **Health** includes physical and mental health; **Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and Neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or other young people.

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

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a young person in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children. The sexual abuse of young people by other young people is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development.

It may involve conveying to young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on young people. These may include interactions that are beyond the young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the young person participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying

(including cyberbullying), causing young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a young person, though it may occur alone.

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 and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a young person from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

All staff will be made aware of indicators of abuse and neglect. Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect and specific safeguarding issues such as criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation so that staff are able to identify cases of those who may be in need of help or protection.

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Young people are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. People can also abuse each other online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

It is **not** the responsibility of the BTC staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of students will be recorded and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person) prior to any discussion with parents.

4. BTC procedures

All staff **must** report **any** concerns they have about a child even if these appear to be small concerns. Safeguarding our students is the responsibility of every member of staff.

Identifying children and young people who may be suffering significant harm

Teachers and other adults at BTC are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a young person may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, students, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or staff being alerted to concerns.

Staff must immediately report:

- any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a young person may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play or actions)
- any concerns that a young person may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a young person is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a young person's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk (e.g. living in a household with young people present)

Young people can sometimes show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to. All staff should be aware of this and remain vigilant.

What staff should do if a child is in danger or at risk of harm

If staff are concerned that a young person could be at risk of harm they must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) **immediately**.

Responding to Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from students, parents or other members of the public. BTC recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated person.

Principles

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated person in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a young person may be at risk of harm
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff
- clarify the information
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgments regarding any person alleged to have harmed the young person
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
- reassure and support the person as far as possible. Reassure them that they will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe.
- Listen to and take into account (wherever possible) the persons wishes and feelings about the current situation and future plans
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate
- Ensure that there is appropriate support made available
- Write down the concern and date in the safeguarding report book

The DSL should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in BTC. Any member of staff or visitor to BTC who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a young person is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the deputy. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff. All concerns should be reported without delay and recorded in writing using the agreed procedures.

Following receipt of any information that raises concern, the DSL will consider what action to take and seek advice from children's social care as required. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing.

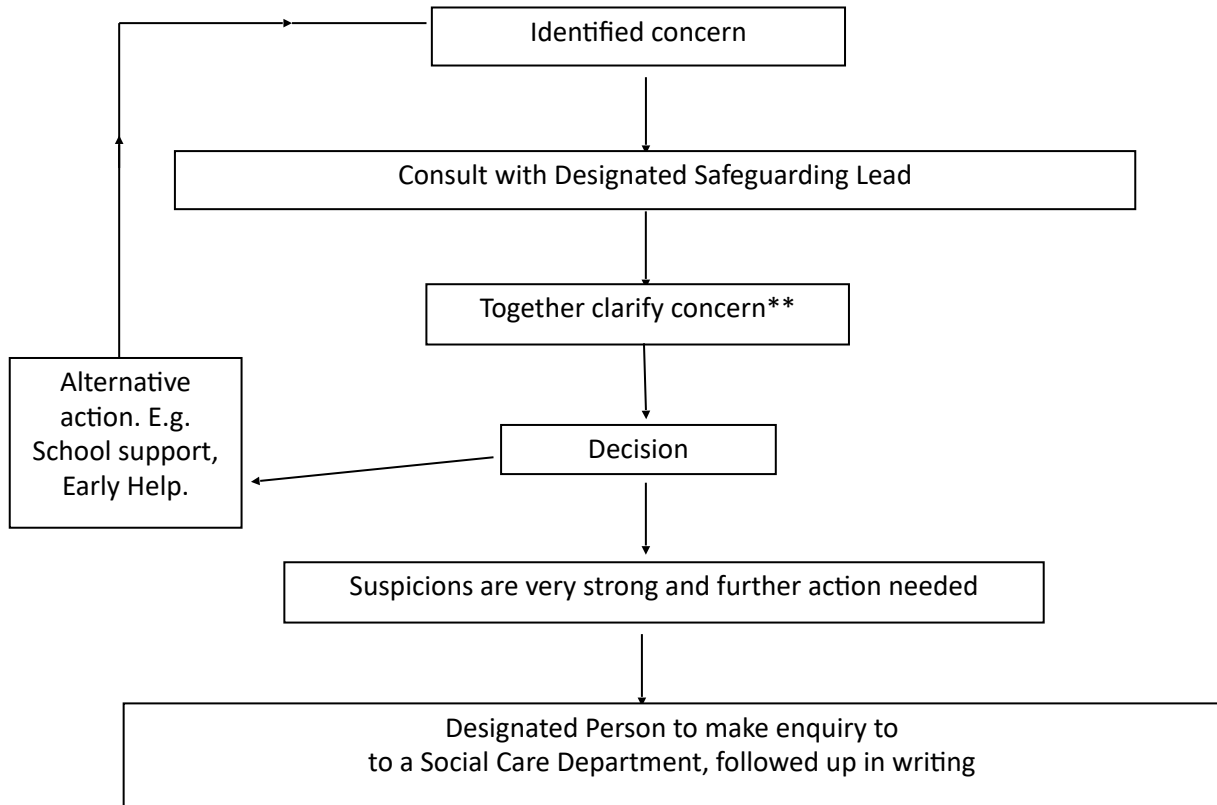
It is *not* the responsibility of staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with these procedures. All referrals will be made in line with local social care procedures.

BTC are aware of the Blackpool Safeguarding site.

If, at any point, there is a **risk of immediate serious harm** to a young person, a referral should be made to social care **immediately** and **if a criminal offence has been committed contact the police.**

Actions when a concern is identified

Channels of communication should be quick and clear:



Any member of staff who is unhappy with the joint decision made with the Designated Safeguarding Lead can consult with the Headteacher/Board of Advisors or seek advice from key staff within the Local Authority.

Action by the Designated Senior Lead (or other senior person in their absence)

Following any information raising concern, the designated senior person will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the young person
- making an enquiry to find out if the young person is subject to a Protection Plan
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Safeguarding Adviser and/or Social Care
- the young persons wishes

Then decide:

- wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
- whether to make a protection referral to social care because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately

OR

- not to make a referral at this stage
- talk with parents/young person
- seek advice from professionals working with the family

- if further monitoring is necessary
- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g. CAF) and/or make a referral for other service

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to social care will be followed up in writing within 24 hours using the referral book, or on line.

Action following a protection referral

The designated senior person or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with the Social worker involved to stay informed
- wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Protection Conference
- if the young person is made the subject of a Protection Plan, contribute to the Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Conferences
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings
- If they move from the BTC or go missing, immediately inform the key worker in Social Care

Statutory children's social care assessments and services

Concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to the local authority children's social care by the DSL. **Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) will be made immediately.** Referrals will follow the local authority referral process. Where a child in school has a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection plan, the school will liaise with children's social care, attend meetings and provide comprehensive and detailed reports.

The DSL should be aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult while a child is being questioned by the police. The appropriate adult will "support, advise and assist" the young person, and also "observe whether police are acting properly and fairly to respect [the young person's] rights and entitlements, and inform the officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not".

All reports for Child in Need / Child Protection conferences will be prepared in advance. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate. In order to complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child at BTC. All staff should be prepared to contribute to the report writing process.

Early help Assessment

Early help assessment is organised early intervention to provide support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL (or deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment, as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment and, in some cases, where education is the fundamental factor, act as the lead practitioner. Early help assessments should be kept under review and referred to children's social care for assessment if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

5. Vulnerability

Staff should consider children who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may require early help.

This could include:

- Any child with additional needs including children with Special Educational Needs / Disabled children (SEND)
- Children facing housing issues such as frequent moves and homelessness

- Those living in families with chaotic lifestyles
- Families with increased stress, parental mental ill health and/or drug and alcohol dependency
- Those children living elsewhere, with friends, relatives, privately fostered, in care or are leaving care
- Asylum seekers / refugees
- Those vulnerable to discrimination on the basis of a protected characteristic
- Children living in households with domestic abuse
- Children at risk of so called 'honour'-based abuse including FGM and forced marriage
- Children with communication difficulties
- Children without adequate parenting / supervision which could lead to abuse, risk-related behaviour and sexual exploitation.
- Children will be provided with a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

A child who is:

- A young carer
- Showing signs of being drawn into anti-social and / or criminal behaviour / involved in gangs
- Frequently missing from school / home / care home
- Misusing drugs or alcohol
- At risk of being radicalised
- At risk of being exploited (criminal / sexual)
- Showing signs of neglect and abuse
- At risk of modern slavery / trafficking

This is not an exhaustive list but merely an example of vulnerabilities that staff must consider when identifying safeguarding concerns.

6. Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

BTC recognises that students with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges and understand that further barriers may exist when determining abuse and neglect in this group of students. Children with SEND are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will be aware of the following:

- Certain indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, may relate to the student's disability without further exploration; however, it should never be assumed that a child's indicators relate only to their disability
- Students with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers may exist, as well as difficulties in overcoming these barriers

When reporting concerns or making referrals for students with SEND, the above factors will always be taken into consideration. When managing a safeguarding issue relating to a student with SEND, the DSLs will liaise with the school's SENDCO, as well as the student's family where appropriate, to ensure that the student's needs are effectively met.

7. Recording, record keeping, monitoring and information sharing

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing.

Each record should include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of each action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- Information from a child written verbatim
- Date and signature / record of who completed the record

If there is any doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL

All concerns should be passed to the DSL **without delay**, either written or verbal (followed as soon as possible by a written report on cause for concern form)

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All documents will be retained separate from the child's main file. This will be only accessible to the designated safeguarding leads. Records of concern, copies of referrals, invitations to Child Protection conferences, core groups and reports will be stored here. Child Protection files will be the responsibility of the DSL. Child Protection information will only be shared with relevant staff / agencies on a 'need to know' basis, in the child's interests and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential.

When a child leaves BTC, the DSL will make contact with the DSL at the new school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving school in an agreed secure manner. This should be as soon as possible and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days at the start of a new term to allow a college to have support in place for when a child arrives. We will retain evidence to demonstrate we have acted accordingly when dealing with safeguarding matters and how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of electronic records or a written confirmation. If the child goes missing from education or is removed from roll to be educated at home then any Child Protection file should be copied and the copy sent to the Local authority. Original copies will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

8. Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents

BTC is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area. BTC recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, however good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The Designated Senior Person will determine which members of staff "need to know" personal information and what they "need to know" for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child. We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child. Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age & understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.

When new students join BTC, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the BTC website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to children's social care.

In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, BTC requires parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives
- Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- Emergency contact details (if different from above); wherever possible BTC will hold more than one emergency contact for each child
- Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above)

- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- If the child is or has been on a Child Protection Plan or subject to a care plan

BTC will retain this information on the young persons file. The school will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a child or where a parent has given permission and BTC has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing. When there are safeguarding concerns, BTC may also have to share details with the police and children's services.

9. Child on Child Abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is now referred to as child on child abuse and can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of an educational venue. There may also be reports where the children concerned attend two or more different study centres.

Child on child abuse will not be tolerated. All staff will take a zero tolerance approach to any abusive behaviours and will stop and challenge inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which may be sexual in nature. We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse that such abuse may still be taking place and all staff should be vigilant. A difficult feature of child on child abuse is that the perpetrators could be victims themselves and possibly are being abused by other family members, other adults and children.

In cases where child on child abuse is identified we will follow our procedures for dealing with concerns, recognising that both the victim and perpetrator will require support.

BTC takes the following steps to minimise the risk of child on child abuse:

- Promoting an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries
- Using the Relationship, Sex and Health Education and Personal Development Programme to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, discussions, role play etc.
- Ensuring the BTC studio is always supervised, especially in areas where children may be vulnerable
- Ensures staff are aware of the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse and how to identify them
- Addresses inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively minor)
- Has clear robust policies on dealing with key issues of behaviour such as cyber bullying
- Ensures staff and students are aware of the policies
- Takes steps to prevent isolation
- Separates children if needed
- Where risk is identified, a student risk assessment is put in place

The following systems are in place to enable children to confidently report any abuse:

- All children know who they can report to in school
- Assemblies signposting children to key actions / people
- Personal Development Programme lessons

Each alleged incident will be recorded, investigated and dealt with on an individual basis based on the following principles:

- All information will be recorded in writing using the agreed procedures
- All children involved (victim and alleged perpetrator) will be spoken to separately by the DSL
- Where the incident also involves a child at a different establishment the DSL will ensure effective liaison and information sharing
- All children involved (victim and alleged perpetrator) will be appropriately supported throughout the process
- The DSL will balance the child's wishes against their duty to protect the child and other children
- The school will work with our local safeguarding partners where appropriate

- The DSL may need to go against the victim's wishes and make a referral to children's social care or the police. This will be handled sensitively, the reasons explained to the victim and appropriate support made available
- Parents will be informed of the incident and how their child will be dealt with and supported (unless this would put a child at greater risk)

Victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child on child abuse will be supported in the following ways:

- Support will be bespoke on a case-by-case basis
- All children involved will be supported by an allocated member of staff
- The needs and wishes of the victim will be taken into account, along with protecting the child.
- Wherever possible, the victim and witnesses will be able to continue their normal routine.
- The victim will never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report
- All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment
- Adequate measures will be put in place to protect the children involved and keep them safe
- A needs and risk assessment will be made and a safety plan put in place when required
- Early help, children's social care and other agencies will support where appropriate

Research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by other children, and girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. There is an increasing evidence base emerging about the sexual exploitation of boys (both by adults and children). We recognise that both boys and girls experience child on child abuse but can do so in different ways.

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation / Child Criminal Exploitation
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Physical abuse
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate friendships / relationships
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Gang associated and serious violence
- Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and /or videos
- 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
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence)

There are a number of factors that make children more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse:

- Experience of abuse within their family
- Living with domestic violence
- Young people in care
- Children who go missing
- Children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities).

Some of the reasons why children abuse other children:

- The child may have been emotionally, physically, or sexually abused themselves
- The child may have witnessed physical or emotional abuse
- The child may have viewed sexually explicit / violent movies, video games or other materials
- The child may have just acted impulsively without meaning to harm anyone

10. Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos

The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by children under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by children and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes can happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and closed social media accounts. Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one child.

The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by children who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a child in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner.

Incidents may also occur where:

- Children find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from another child
- Children digitally manipulate an image of a child into an existing nude online
- Images created or shared are used to abuse other children e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame

Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents involving children complex. There are also a range of risks which need careful management from those working in education settings.

Many professionals may refer to 'nudes and semi-nudes' as:

- Youth produced sexual imagery or 'youth involved' sexual imagery indecent imagery. This is the legal term used to define nude or semi-nude images and videos of children under the age of 18.
- 'Sexting'. Many adults may use this term, however some children interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know' rather than sharing images.
- Image-based sexual abuse. This term may be used when referring to the non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

Initial response

When an incident involving nudes and semi-nudes comes to the attention of any member of staff:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL (or deputy) as soon as possible.
- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. This may include the staff member(s) who heard the disclosure and the safeguarding or leadership team who deal with safeguarding concerns.
- There will be subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate).
- Parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process in order to best support the child unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put the child at risk of harm.
- A referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately if there is a concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of immediate harm at any point in the process.

A disclosure may not be a single event and the child may share further information at a later stage.

Any direct disclosure by a child should be taken seriously. A child who discloses they are the subject of an incident of sharing nudes and semi-nudes is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in an education environment is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

Initial review meeting

The initial review meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to establish:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to any child
- If a referral should 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 child – **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 as 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 children involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another education, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the children involved - in most cases they should be involved

An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care through the MASH or equivalent will be made if at this initial stage:

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special educational needs).
- What you know 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 images involve sexual acts and any child in the images or videos is under 13.
- You have reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, for example, they are presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

The DSL should be aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult while a child is being questioned by the police. The appropriate adult will "support, advise and assist" the child, and also "observe whether police are acting properly and fairly to respect [the child's] rights and entitlements, and inform the officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not".

If none of the above apply, the DSL may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. They can still choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.

The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care will only be made in cases where the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to any child involved and the risks can be managed within BTC's support and disciplinary framework and, if appropriate, their local network of support.

Assessing the risks

The circumstances of incidents can vary widely. If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL (or equivalent) should conduct a further review (including an interview with any child involved) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

When assessing the risks and determining whether a referral is needed, the following should be also considered:

- Why was the nude or semi-nude shared? Was it consensual or was the child put under pressure or coerced?
- Has the nude or semi-nude been shared beyond its intended recipient? Was it shared without the consent of the child who produced the image?
- Has the nude or semi-nude been shared on social media or anywhere else online? If so, what steps have been taken to contain the spread?
- How old are any of the children involved?
- Did the child send the nude or semi-nude to more than one person?
- Do you have any concerns about the child's vulnerability?

- Are there additional concerns if the parents or carers are informed?

The DSL will decide whether a child is at risk of harm, in which case a referral will be appropriate, whether additional information or support is needed from other agencies or whether the education setting can manage the incident and support any child or young person directly. The DSL will always use their professional judgement in conjunction with that of their colleagues to assess incidents.

Supporting the child involved

The DSL or another member of staff (who the child feels more comfortable talking to) will discuss future actions and support with the child. This discussion will take into account the views of the child as well as balancing what are considered to be appropriate actions for responding to the incident.

The purpose of the discussion is to:

- Identify, **without viewing wherever possible**, what the image contains and whether anyone else has been involved.
- Find out whether the image has been shared between two people or shared further. This may be speculative information as images or videos may have been shared more widely than the child or young person is aware of.
- Discuss what actions and support might be needed, including preventing further distribution.

When discussing the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, the DSL/member of staff will:

- Reassure the child that they are not alone, and BTC will do everything that they can to help and support them. They should also be reassured that they will be kept informed throughout the process.
- Recognise the pressures that children can be under to take part in sharing an image and, if relevant, support their parents and carers to understand the wider issues and motivations around this.
- Remain solution-focused and avoid any victim-blaming questions such as 'why have you done this?' as this may prevent the child from talking about what has happened. For example, they will use questions such as 'describe what happened' or 'explain to me who was involved'.
- Help the child to understand what has happened by discussing the wider pressures that they may face and the motivations of the person that sent on the image(s).
- Discuss issues of consent and trust within healthy relationships. Explain that it is not ok for someone to make them feel uncomfortable, to pressure them into doing things that they do not want to do, or to show them things that they are unhappy about. Let them know that they can speak to the DSL or equivalent if this ever happens.
- Explain the law on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes. It is important to highlight that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them and should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them
- Signpost to the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation) and [Childline's Report Remove tool](#). Report Remove helps children and young people to report an image shared online, to see if it is possible to get the image removed. This must be done as soon as possible in order to minimise the number of people that have seen the picture.

Informing parents and carers

Parents or carers will be informed and involved in the process at an early stage unless informing them will put a child or young person at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform the parents or carers will be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the police, who would take the lead in deciding when they should be informed.

Supporting parents and carers

Children and young people can be involved in an incident in several different ways. They may lose control of their own image, receive an image of someone else or share an image of another person. In any of these

situations, parents and carers may find it difficult to know how to deal with the knowledge that their child has been involved in an incident and may display differing emotions.

Whatever their feelings, it is important that we listen to their concerns and take them seriously. We will also help to reassure parents and carers by explaining that it is normal for young people to be curious about sex.

In all situations, parents or carers will be:

- Given information about the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, what they can expect to happen next, and who will be their link person within BTC.
- Given support to deal with their own feelings of upset and concern including signposting to further resources that can help them to understand the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes or support services they can contact, where appropriate.
- Given support on how to speak to their child about the incident.
- Advised on the law around the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
- Kept updated about any actions that have been taken or any support that their child is accessing, unless the child involved has specifically asked for this not to happen and is judged to be old enough to make that informed decision.

Searching devices, viewing and deleting nudes and semi nudes

Staff and parents or carers must not intentionally view any nudes and semi-nudes unless there is good and clear reason to do so as outlined below. Wherever possible, responses to incidents will be based on what DSLs have been told about the content of the imagery. The decision to view any imagery will be based on the professional judgement of the DSL. Imagery will never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to any child or young person involved. If a decision is made to view imagery, the DSL would need to be satisfied that viewing is:

- The only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies because it is not possible to establish the facts from any child involved.
- Necessary to report it to a website, app or suitable reporting agency (such as the IWF) to have it taken down, or to support the child or parent or carer in making a report.
- Unavoidable because a child has presented it directly to a staff member or nudes or semi-nudes have been found on an education setting's device or network.

If it is necessary to view the imagery, then the DSL will:

- Never copy, print, share, store or save them; this is illegal. If this has already happened, we will contact the local police for advice and to explain the circumstances.
- Discuss the decision with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL or another member of the safeguarding team with delegated authority or a member of the senior leadership team.
- Ensure viewing takes place with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team. This staff member does not need to view the images.
- Wherever possible, make sure viewing takes place on the premises, ideally in a member of the senior leadership team's office.
- Ensure wherever possible that they are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the child or young person in the images.
- Record how and why the decision was made to view the imagery in the safeguarding or child protection records, including who was present, why the nudes or semi-nudes were viewed and any subsequent actions. This will be signed and dated.
- If any devices need to be taken and passed onto the police, the device(s) will be confiscated and the police will be called. The device will be disconnected from Wi-Fi and data, and turned off immediately to avoid imagery being removed from the device remotely through a cloud storage service. The device will be placed in a secure place, in a locked cupboard until the police are able to come and collect it.

If nudes or semi-nudes have been viewed by a member of staff, either following a disclosure from a child or young person or as a result of a member of staff undertaking their daily role (such as IT staff monitoring

school systems), the DSL will make sure that the staff member is provided with appropriate support. Viewing nudes and semi-nudes can be distressing for both children and adults and appropriate emotional support may be required.

In most cases, children and young people will be asked to delete the imagery and to confirm that they have deleted them. They will be given a deadline for deletion across all devices, online storage or social media sites. They will be reminded that possession of nudes and semi-nudes is illegal. They will be informed that if they refuse or it is later discovered they did not delete the imagery, they are continuing to commit a criminal offence and the police may become involved.

All incidents relating to nudes and semi-nudes being shared will be recorded using the school's procedures. Copies of imagery should not be taken.

It is important that children and young people understand the school's policy towards nudes and semi-nudes. The content of this policy and the protocols the school will follow in the event of an incident will be explored as part of teaching and learning. This will reinforce the inappropriate nature of abusive behaviours and reassure children that school will support them if they experience difficulties or have concerns.

11. Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- Unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded.
- Denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources.
- Making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

12. Mental Health Concerns

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following our child protection policy, and staff **MUST** speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

We will ensure that our staff understand the support they can provide to pupils who may be experiencing mental health concerns, and we will ensure that staff follow the following principles as set out in ‘Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools 2018’. We recognise that early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial. BTC’s role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

Prevention: we will seek to create a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos;

Identification: we will support staff and pupils to recognise emerging issues as early and accurately as possible;

Early support: we will support and help pupils to access evidence based early support and interventions wherever possible and seek access to specialist support for those students who require such interventions.

We aim to work in partnership with pupils, parents / carers and establish effective relationships with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

13. Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff should be considering the context within such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Geographical factors	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a close proximity to the city centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are taught about the dangers of getting involved in gang activity. Students are taught about the dangers of drugs/alcohol in pastoral programme lessons. Students are also taught about anti-social behaviour and the consequences of criminal behaviour. Students are taught about keeping themselves safe in a range of different situations they might find themselves in outside of BTC.
Social and economic factors	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We teach pupils about personal safety and making the right decisions to keep themselves safe regarding their behaviour beyond BTC. Students are also taught about anti-social behaviour and the consequences of criminal damage. Students are taught about the dangers of drugs/alcohol in pastoral programme lessons. Students are taught about keeping themselves safe in a range of different situations they might find themselves in outside BTC. Updates from Nexus/Police are shared with students if problems arise in local areas and advice given to students.
Peer Group factors	Response

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils have older siblings who may be influential to younger family members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Personal Development Programme curriculum teaches pupils about the issue of 'peer pressure'. We encourage any child feeling pressurised to talk to someone in BTC and we give regular reminders to students of who the DSLs are.
Home factors	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our students are connected to the internet at home and regularly use devices/social media to communicate with peers at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through our Personal Development Curriculum, pupils are taught about online safety. All students are taught about e-safety in Personal Development lessons.

14. Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online. The BTC approach to online safety which will empower, protect, and educate our learners and staff in their use of technology is ever present, and we establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

We will ensure online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies. Online safety is considered as a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing our policies and procedures and when planning our curriculum, staff training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement.

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

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

We recognise that technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly.

Policies and Procedures

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within BTC but will liaise with other members of staff, for example IT technicians, HoDs, HoYs etc. as necessary.

The DSL will respond to online safety concerns reported in line with our child protection and other associated policies, including our anti-bullying and behaviour policies. Sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate. Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.

Our students use their own personal laptops only.

Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring

The leadership and relevant staff are:

- Aware of all internet monitoring and filtering systems
- Manage them effectively
- Know how to escalate concerns when they are identified

The following statement is SCL's responsibility unless BTC affiliated with a school

We will do all we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to online risks through school provided IT systems and will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place. Settings should list details of how this is established and achieved e.g. which filtering and monitoring systems or approaches are in place and why these decisions have been made. To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published [filtering and monitoring](#) standards.

If children or staff discover unsuitable sites or material, they are required to turn off monitor / screen and report the concern immediately to a member of staff, who will report the URL of the site to technical staff / services. All users will be informed that use of our systems can be monitored, and that monitoring will be in line with data protection, human rights, and privacy legislation. Filtering breaches or concerns identified through our monitoring approaches will be recorded and reported to the DSL who will respond as appropriate. Any access to material believed to be illegal will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies, such as the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) and the police.

When implementing appropriate filtering and monitoring, we will ensure that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

We acknowledge that whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of our online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to online safety. Children will use appropriate search tools, apps and online resources as identified following an informed risk assessment. Children's internet use will be supervised by staff according to their age and ability. Children will be directed to use age appropriate online resources and tools by staff.

Information Security and Access Management

BTC and SCL Creative are responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place, in order to safeguard our systems as well as staff and learners. Further information can be found at [sCL Creative site](#).

We will review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies.

Staff Training

We will ensure that all staff receive online safety training as part of induction and that ongoing online safety training and updates for all staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of our overarching safeguarding approach. Amongst other things, this includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

Remote Learning

We will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements.

All communication with children and parents / carers will take place using BTC provided or approved communication channels; for example, BTC provided email accounts and phone numbers and agreed systems e.g. Teams and Microsoft 365. Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL.

Staff and children will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our behaviour policy / code of conduct and acceptable use policies. Staff and children will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies. When delivering remote learning, staff will follow our remote learning policy.

Parents / carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access. We will continue to be clear who from the SCL or BTC (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

15. Procedures for dealing with concerns about staff

If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation of abuse is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children this should be reported to a member or members of our Advisory Board. However, if it is a low level concern this should be reported to the DSL.

The school will maintain a safeguarding culture which encourages all staff and volunteers to feel able to raise concerns. Where staff have concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding systems, these should be raised following BTC's whistleblowing policy. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with BTC, or feels their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are available, such as the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line.

16. Managing allegations against staff, volunteers and contractors

All allegations will be investigated thoroughly and as a matter of urgency. They will be dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently. Protection will be provided for the child and the person subject to the allegation will be supported.

Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely.

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of BTC that he or she has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- Has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

The last bullet point includes behaviour that may have happened outside of BTC, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works will be undertaken

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

Initial Action

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the DSL or Board and make a record
- The DSL will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children

- The DSL will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation
- The DSL may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however no person will be interviewed at this stage
- The DSL will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by BTC or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or the police for investigation. All discussions, agreed actions and communications will be recorded in writing.
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of students, parents and staff
- The DSL will inform the board of any allegation.

If the initial discussion leads to no further action, the DSL will record the decision and justification for it and agree on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned.

The DSL will ensure that the individual who is subject to the allegation is informed as soon as possible explaining the likely course of action. The DSL will keep the person informed about the progress of the case and consider any appropriate support.

The DSL will ensure that parents of the child or children involved are formally told about the allegation as soon as possible and kept informed of the progress of the case, only in relation to their child. They will be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers whilst investigations are in progress.

The DSL will monitor the progress of the case to ensure that it is dealt with as quickly as possible in a thorough and fair process.

The DSL will carefully consider whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at BTC until the allegation is resolved. It will be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious it might be grounds for dismissal. The board, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

The headteacher will discuss with the board whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) should be made where an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services.

BTC has a legal obligation to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required; where it considers an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person poses a risk to a child.

In the case of a member of teaching staff, the DSL must consider making a referral to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

If an allegation is made against a guest teacher or contractor, the DSL will ensure that any allegations are dealt with following the school's procedures and in liaison with the LADO.

If an allegation is made against a governor, the DSL will follow local authority arrangements for managing allegations, liaising with the LADO.

Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false will be removed from personnel records, unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information. For all other allegations a written record of details of the investigation and the outcome will be retained in the individual's personnel file in line with KCSIE and a copy provided to the individual.

In cases where allegations are proven to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious the LADO and case manager will consider whether the person who made the allegation is in need of help or may have

been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. A referral to children's social services may be deemed appropriate.

Allegations proven to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious will not be included in employer references.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the DSL will consider whether disciplinary action should be taken against a child, or whether the police should be asked to consider action against an adult.

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

On conclusion of a case in which the allegation is substantiated, the DSL and the LADO will review the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the police. Non recent allegations of abuse should be reported to the LADO who will liaise with other agencies. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Low Level Concerns

All concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) will be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the criteria indicated in the allegations section above.

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.

An adult working in or on behalf of BTC may have acted in a way that does not meet the expectation in the staff code of conduct, including conduct outside of BTC and does not meet the allegations criteria or is not considered serious enough to refer to the LADO.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum; examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone (which are not for social media, already been agreed with parents)
- Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported immediately to the DSL. If the concern is reported to the DSL, the headteacher should ultimately be informed and make any final decisions on how to respond. Where the concern is about the DSL it should be reported to the Advisory Board.

Low-level concerns about a guest teacher should be reported as above.

The DSL will notify the employer so that any patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

All low-level concerns will be recorded by the DSL and stored securely and confidentially.

These records will be reviewed so that any patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified and dealt with.

17. Providing a safe and supportive environment

Safer Recruitment and Selection

BTC pays full regard to current Department for Education (DfE) guidance, '**Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023**'. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including e.g. volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, experience, personality, and DBS.

Visitors

The school has clear protocols for guest teachers to ensure they are suitable and supervised as appropriate. All guests will be expected to confirm they have an appropriate DBS. BTC will keep a record of all guests. Guests will be expected to understand the ethos of the school which promotes equality and diversity and mutual respect in line with the Gospel values and that they will need to uphold these during their visit. During the visit, guests will be supervised by a member of school staff. Where the visitor will be working on a one-to-one basis with a child, specific safeguarding arrangements will be put in place.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board should ensure that BTC operates safe recruitment practices and procedures and that all appropriate checks are carried out on all employed staff.

The DSL is responsible for:

- ensuring that all new appointments to the schools workforce are DBS checked and are not barred from working with children;
- ensuring that identity checks are carried out on all appointments to the BTC workforce;
- ensuring BTC keeps a single central record detailing the range of checks carried out on their staff;
- ensuring that appointments recruited from overseas or those who have lived and worked outside the UK have a DBS disclosure and further checks as appropriate if the DBS disclosure is not sufficient for the purpose of assessing their suitability for the post;
- ensuring that employment history is fully explored, any gaps explained and at least 2 references taken up
- ensuring that all supply staff have undergone the necessary checks to assess their suitability for the post including seeking appropriate verification from any agency that the necessary checks have been undertaken;
- deciding whether a member of staff can start work pending receipt of a DBS disclosure by undertaking an appropriate assessment of the risk and putting additional safeguarding measures in place if necessary; and
- deciding whether the portability policy can apply regarding the DBS check;
- our BTC workforce who have lived outside the UK will be subject to additional checks as appropriate;
- BTC ensures that supply staff have undergone the necessary checks and will be made aware of this policy;
- identity checks must be carried out on all appointments to our school workforce before the appointment is made, in partnership with the LA.

The level of DBS check required, and whether a prohibition check is required, will depend on the role and duties of an applicant to work within BTC.

For most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be appropriate as the majority of staff will be engaging in regulated activity. A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if as a result of their work they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis, in any setting for the care or supervision of children; or
- will regularly work at BTC at times when children are on BTC premises (where the person's work requires interaction with children, whether or not the work is paid (unless they are a supervised volunteer), or whether the person is directly employed or employed by a contractor);

Safe Practice

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's Code of Conduct at induction which sets out the school's expectations of staff behaviour. We will review our Code of Conduct regularly and ask staff to ensure that they are familiar with the current version. Staff are expected to carry out their duties in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

There will be occasions when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. However, at all times the agreed policy for positive handling must be adhered to.

If staff, guests or volunteers are working with children alone they must ensure they are visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in BTC, who they are with and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

Further advice can be found in 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (2022). All staff, guests, and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

Safe working practice ensures that students are safe and that all staff:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- work in an open and transparent way;
- work with other colleagues where possible in situations open to question
- discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern;
- record any incidents or decisions made;
- apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- be aware of confidentiality policy
- are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

18. Safeguarding roles and responsibilities

The Advisory Board

The Advisory board have access to our safeguarding policy on line which will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in BTC are effective.

The Advisory Board will meet annually where they will be informed of all training that has taken place and how BTC meets its statutory requirements. The Board can visit BTC whenever and ask questions accordingly.

The Principals

The principals are responsible for:

- Identifying a senior member of staff from the leadership team to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Identifying members of staff to act as the DSL in his/her absence to ensure there is always cover for the role.
- Ensuring that all policies are followed by all staff.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff.

The Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSLs are senior members of staff, from the leadership team who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within BTC. The DSLs will carry out their role in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* DfE.

The DSLs will provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given to the DSL.

During term time the DSLs will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If in *exceptional* circumstances, a DSL is not available on the school site in person, we will ensure that they are available via telephone and any other relevant media.

The DSLs will maintain detailed, accurate written records and child protection files ensuring that they are kept confidential and stored securely. When children leave BTC, the DSLs will ensure child protection records are transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and a confirmation of receipt will be obtained. This should be as soon as possible and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days at the start of a new term to allow a school or colleague to have support in place for when a child / adult arrives.

The DSLs will help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about the issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and leadership staff.

Our Designated staff will ensure that:

- the policies and procedures are fully implemented, and followed by all staff; volunteers and guests.
- will liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*. This includes working with the Local Authority, Children's Services and Children's Social Care when children are missing from education and therefore posing a serious safeguarding risk.
- sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessments of children.
- all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding lead are:

Referrals

- Refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and:
- The LA designated officer (LADO) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member);

- Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child); and/or
- Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).
- Liaise with the principals to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies

Training

The designated safeguarding lead should receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order to:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands BTC's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, young carers and students with SEND.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff to protect them

Raising Awareness

- The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the policies are known and used appropriately:
- Ensure the school child protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of BTC in this
- Link with the local LSCB and Safeguarding services to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding
- Where children leave BTC ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file

19. Safeguarding Information for students

All students are aware of a number of staff who they can talk to. BTC is committed to ensuring that students are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All students know that we have a Designated Person with responsibility for child protection and know who this is. We inform students of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

We will raise pupil's awareness on how to keep themselves safe through Personal Development Programme. Topics covered in the Personal Development Programme curriculum include safety online and offline, health and wellbeing and relationships, sex and health education as per our RSE policy. We will also raise pupil's awareness through our acting classes.

We teach children how to keep themselves safe, including in relation to contextual factors.

Preventive education is most effective and prepares children for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our behaviour policy and pastoral system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE/RE delivered and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

20. Training and Staff Induction

The DSL and senior member(s) of staff with designated responsibility for child protection will undertake basic child protection training and training for Designated Staff which will be refreshed frequently. In addition to formal training, the DSLs will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

All other staff, including non-teaching staff, undertake appropriate induction training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively. Safeguarding training for new staff includes information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record concerns, online safety and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The training will also include information about whistle-blowing in respect of concerns about another adult's behaviour and suitability to work with children.

At the start of each year all staff are expected to read the following key documents and fully **understand** their responsibility to keep children safe. Staff sign within their contract to confirm that they have read and fully understood BTC's policy.

Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff

Staff will be supported by the senior leadership team.

21. Related Policy Statements

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, it also relates to other aspects of educational life.

Bullying

Bullying of any kind teacher to child or child to child will not be tolerated. Action will be taken by interviewing both parties separately and if needed together. There will be two impartial adults in attendance including the DSL. The Advisory Board will be informed if the decision for further action is not agreed by the two impartial adults. Parents will be then involved and should the problem continue then the source will be asked to leave BTC. All this process will be recorded in writing by the two adult witnesses and the Board can view this report at any time. Should the bullying be of a more serious nature then the social or police will be contacted for further guidance and ways forward. If the DSL is involved with this allegation then a member of the board will join the other impartial adult.

In appropriate physical contact

Students and staff are informed in this and the boundaries here. The genres in which are taught at bTC will require physical contact, but this will be only of a Professional nature and an assisting tool. If in appropriate contact is witnessed or alleged then the same procedure as above will commence.

Attendance and Behaviour

The students at BTC will sign in and out of the venue every time they enter or exit. BTC will also use digital attendance files. Any student missing college will require a valid excuse in writing signed by the parent / guardian. The DSL will view this and should this be a continual issue then a investigation will commence with all suggested routes in accordance with BTC's safeguarding policy.

Mis behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated. Students will be informed throughout well being and acting classes of the boundaries and implications regarding behaviour. Should a students behaviour not improve then the parent / guardian will be informed and procedures to rectify this problem will commence. The main aim being to analyse the reasons and try to resolve the issues so that the student can continue their education and complete their course. Should the issues continue to be problematic then the procedures similar to the bullying procedures will be implemented by the DSL.

Well being Lessons and advice

Drugs and Alcohol are forbidden at BTC. All students will be taught the importance of Equality and Diversity, E-safety Policy, Self care and self harm consequences and Race Equality.

22. Confidentiality

BTC has regard to 'Information Sharing: Practitioner's guide' HM Government, 2006: www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/informationsharing.

"Where there is a concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration."

BTC should have a clear and explicit confidentiality.

23. Guidance and Advice documents

This policy has been informed by the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2023
- Education Act 2002 Section 175
- Newcastle LA procedures for dealing with allegations/complaints against staff
- Framework for Assessment of Children&Families
- Children Act 1989
- Working together to safeguard children DfE (2018) (Updated in 2022)
- Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board procedures
- Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE 2021)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE Sept 2020)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government July 2018)
- Circular 0027/04 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Inquiries (national/local) informing and improving practices
- United Nations Charter for the Child
- Data Protection Act
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Children Act 2000
- Freedom of Information Act
- Report of the Bichard Enquiry 2004
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM (HM Government July 2020)
- LA/Safeguarding Partnership advice and guidance.
- Children missing education (DfE Sept 2016)
- Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales (HM Government April 2021)
- Guidance (**non-statutory**) for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings. (Safer Recruitment Consortium February 2022)
- Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (non-statutory -applies from: September 2023)

The following is not BTC Specific but is copied from the

National Appendices of Specific Safeguarding Issues

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCSE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

We know that different forms of harm often overlap and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- Appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- Associate with other children involved in exploitation
- Suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Misuse drugs and alcohol
- Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing,

and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, can range from opportunist to complex organised abuse and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

It can involve force and/or enticement based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs include:

- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, e.g. 'swapping' sex
- Repeated sexually transmitted infections
- In girls, repeated pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- Having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile phone
- Having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile phone) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- Changes in the way they dress
- Going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- Seen at known places of concern
- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Contact with known perpetrators
- Involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Recruiting other young people into exploitative situations
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual, mood swings, volatile behaviour and / or emotional distress)
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- Getting involved in crime / police involvement, police records
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint and/or sexual assault

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need

to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children:

- Persistently going missing from home or school and subsequently found in areas away from their home
- In excessive receipt of calls and text messages
- In relationships with older, controlling individuals
- Associated with gangs
- Under suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries
- With parental concerns
- Showing a significant decline in school performance
- Demonstrating significant changes in emotional wellbeing
- Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- Are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- Are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- Owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- A 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 could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see Appendix C).

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as:

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

So-called 'honour' based abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including:

- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Breast Ironing

Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse

(regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that FGM:

- Brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Is part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds the family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries, including the UK.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something that somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinary tract infections
- Disclosure

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into the marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot

consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- Students may appear anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn with low self-esteem.
- They may have mental health disorders and display behaviours such as self-harming, self-cutting or anorexia.
- Sometimes they may come to the attention of the police having been discovered shoplifting or taking drugs or alcohol.
- Often students' symptoms can be exacerbated in the periods leading up to the holiday season.
- Students may present with a sudden decline in their performance, aspirations or motivation.
- They may be subject to excessive restrictions and control at home.
- Some students may not be allowed to attend any extra-curricular or after-school activities.
- Girls and young women may be accompanied to and from school/college, and even during lunch breaks.
- Some students may stop attending school or college.
- Their homework is incomplete or appears rushed. This may be the result of being actively discouraged from doing it by family members.
- Students may do their homework late at night, which frequently shows in school because they are lethargic, unable to concentrate and have a general appearance of tiredness.
- Professionals being told that the student is out of the country.
- There are occasions when older siblings (usually brothers) and cousins keep a close eye on girls to make sure that they do not meet anyone or talk to friends.
- Conflict between the student and their parents about whether the student will be allowed to continue their education.
- Family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early.

Preventing Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach. All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **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 **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.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

The DSL (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

School Leaders must:

- Familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales
- Take part in Prevent training and ensure staff have the relevant training
- Assess local risk of extremism
- Ensure there are robust IT protocols to filter out extremist materials
- Ensure buildings are not be used to give a platform to extremists
- Establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of extremism
- Ensure staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with it
- Communicate and promote the importance of the duty
- Ensure staff implement the duty effectively

Other duties on schools include:

- Effective partnership working with other local agencies, e.g. LSCB, police, health, etc.
- Information sharing
- Maintaining appropriate records
- Assessing local risk of extremism (including Far Right extremism)
- Demonstrating they are protecting children
- Developing clear protocols for visiting speakers
- Safeguarding policies that take account of LSCB policies and procedures
- Training staff to give them knowledge and confidence
- Ensuring there is robust ICT protocols that filter out extremist materials

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.

Channel

Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Section 36 of the CTSA 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must be chaired by the local authority and include the police for the relevant local authority area. Following a referral, the panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and, where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Section 38 of the CTSA 2015 requires partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in providing information about a referred individual. Schools and colleges which are required to have regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023' are listed in the CTSA as partners required to cooperate with local Channel panels.

Understanding and recognising risks and vulnerabilities of radicalisation

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These may include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

Possible indicators include:

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature
- Behavioural changes
- Advocating violent actions including:
 - Association with known extremists
 - Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

Prevent

From July 2015 specified authorities, including all schools as defined in the summary of this guidance, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“the CTSA 2015”), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies. Bodies to which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 (“the Prevent guidance”). Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent guidance are concerned specifically with schools (but also cover childcare). It is anticipated that the duty will come into force for sixth form colleges and FE colleges early in the autumn.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.

- Education establishments are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Schools and colleges should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures may be set out in existing safeguarding policies. It is not necessary for schools and colleges to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty.
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs).
- The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual establishments are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the establishment of being drawn into terrorism. As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Establishments must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet. Suitable filtering should be in place.

The Department for Education has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

Private Fostering

Many people find themselves looking after someone else's child without realising that they may be involved in private fostering. A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or immediate relative. If the arrangement is to last, or has lasted, for 28 days or more it is private fostering.

The Children Act 1989 defines a relative as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a step parent.

People become involved in private fostering for all kinds of reasons. Examples of private fostering include:

- Children who need alternative care because of parental illness
- Children whose parents cannot care for them because their work or study involves long or antisocial hours
- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children
- Teenagers who stay with friends (or other non-relatives) because they have fallen out with their parents
- Children staying with families while attending a school away from their home area

There is a mandatory duty on the school to inform children's social care of a Private Fostering Arrangement. Children's social care has a duty to check that the young person is being properly cared for and that the arrangement is satisfactory.

Children missing from education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Further information can be found in 'Children Missing Education' statutory guidance for local authorities – September 2016.

Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that all victims 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 sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk.

All staff have been made 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
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”
- 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

Sexualised behaviour

Green Behaviours...	Amber Behaviours...	Red Behaviours...
are part of safe and healthy sexual development which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability • reflect curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices • ‘normal’ but inappropriate within the school/classroom 	are potentially outside of safe and healthy development due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age or developmental differences • activity type, frequency, duration or context 	are clearly outside of safe and healthy development and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve much more coerciveness, secrecy, compulsiveness & threat • require action from school & other agencies

For further information of sexualised behaviour thresholds visit [Harmful sexual behaviour framework: an evidence-informed operational framework for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework/)

Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

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. (Schools should be aware that 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.)

What is consent? Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Further information about consent can be found here: Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- The age of consent is 16
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos.
 - sharing of unwanted explicit content
 - upskirting (is a criminal offence)
 - sexualised online bullying
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

Modern slavery, trafficking and child abduction/community safety incidents

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is ‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs’.

Child trafficking

“Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age. Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim, whether or not they have been forced or deceived. This is partly because it is **not considered possible for children to give informed consent**. Even when a child understands what has happened, they may still appear to submit willingly to what they believe to be the will of their parents or accompanying adults. It is important that these children are protected too.

Children are trafficked for many reasons, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud and involvement in criminal activity such as pick-pocketing, theft and working in cannabis farms. There are a number of cases of minors being exploited in the sex industry. Although there is no evidence of other forms of exploitation such as ‘organ donation or ‘harvesting’, all agencies should remain vigilant.

Children may be trafficked from other countries for a variety of reasons. There are a number of factors in the country of origin which might make children vulnerable to being trafficked.

The factors listed below are by no means a comprehensive list:

- Poverty
- Lack of education
- Discrimination
- Cultural attitudes
- Grooming
- Dysfunctional families
- Political conflict and economic transition and
- Inadequate local laws and regulations

Potential indicators that a child may have been trafficked

Once in the UK the child:

- Receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls whilst in placement/temporary accommodation
- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy
- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- Has gone missing from Local Authority care
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- Works in various locations
- Has limited freedom of movement
- Appears to be missing for periods
- Is known to beg for money
- Performs excessive housework chores and rarely leaves the residence
- Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good; is one among a number of unrelated children found at one address
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- Has not been enrolled in school

- Has to pay off an exorbitant debt, e.g. for travel costs, before having control over own earnings, is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings by another person is excessively afraid of being deported

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby, unknown adults engaging children in conversation, rumours about undesirable residents or adults in vehicles approaching children. As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. This is taught as part of our Personal Development Curriculum. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members or an institutional and community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. (KCSIE)

The cross-government definition of domestic abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members.

Domestic Abuse can impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Children can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child on child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures will be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators will be offered support.

Signs, indicators and effects

It is often difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening because it takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around. Children who witness domestic abuse may show signs of:

- Aggression and bullying
- Anti-social behaviour
- Depression, anxiety or have suicidal thoughts
- Attention seeking
- Bed wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Constant or regular sickness, such as colds and headaches
- Eating disorders
- Not doing as well in school – due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to, as well as from, refuges
- Withdrawal

Other signs and symptoms may include:

- Sudden change of behaviour
- Clingy
- Soiling clothes
- Risk taking behaviours
- Missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Obsessive behaviour
- Self-harm

Some children may not display any symptoms / behaviours that may be a cause for concern. ‘What is life like at home?’ – is a good question to use regularly with all children.

We are an ‘Operation Encompass’

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police should inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child’s circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child’s needs.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. (KCSIE)

Types of homelessness could include:

- Living in temporary or emergency accommodation (such as B&Bs and hostels)
- Hidden homelessness (staying with friends or family on a temporary basis or living in overcrowded conditions)
- Couch / sofa surfing, moving from one place to another

Impact of homelessness:

- Practical issues include loss of possessions required for school e.g. books, uniform etc
- May be unkempt due to lack of laundry services
- Physically exhausted due to sleeping arrangements

- Emotionally exhausted due to increased stress
- Signs of severe emotional trauma leading to emotional stress, anxiety
- Changes in behaviour and/or problematic behaviour
- Child may become withdrawn or aggressive
- If placed out of area they may arrive late or miss school due to transport / financial difficulties
- The child's ability to maintain relationships may be affected
- May 'stand out' more to peers, leading to feelings of alienation and self-consciousness
- Impact on attainment levels and ability to learn

In most cases staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. (KCSIE)