

# Child protection and safeguarding policy

Living, loving and learning together in partnership following Jesus' example.

*'I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full'*  
*John 10:10*

Date of publication: September 2016

Review date: July 2017

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**Reviewed by:**

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Date: November 2016

Designated Safeguarding Lead 2 Liam Daniels  
Date: November 2016

Headteacher As above  
Date:

Nominated Governor Sara Kielty  
Date: November 2016

## **1. Policy statement and principles**

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. The school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements on the quality of leadership and

management and also the impact of leadership and management on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners.

This policy is available on the school website and all staff and volunteers are required to read it and confirm they have done so in writing before commencing work in school.

### **Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

### **Policy principles:**

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn.
- This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Representatives of the whole school community of pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and governors will therefore be involved in reviewing, shaping and developing the school's safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community or in school.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to Children's Social Care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

### **Policy aims:**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio.

### **Terminology**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the activity undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**DSL** refers to the designated safeguarding lead at the school

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

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

## **2. Safeguarding legislation and guidance**

**Academies, free schools, independent schools, alternative providers of education** - Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

The **Teachers' Standards 2012** state that teachers, including headteachers, must have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions; and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (DFE 2015)* covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in schools.

The statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE 2016)* is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff must read Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*. Staff can find a copy of keeping children safe on the school system and upon request to the Headteacher for a hard copy.

***What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 - Advice for practitioners*** is non statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. Staff can find a copy of this on the school system and upon request to the Headteacher for a hard copy.

In the UK, more than 50,000 children are annually subject to a child protection plan. Research suggests that one child a week dies from abuse, around 20 per cent of children will suffer some form of abuse, one child in six is exposed to violence in the home and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused and neglected. The prevalence of neglect continues to be a major concern and online abuse is increasing. The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem.

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, staffs in school are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all school staff is alert to the signs of abuse, are approachable and trusted by pupils/students, listen actively to children and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will act on identified concerns and provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### **Key personnel**

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is Frances Williamson**

Contact details: email: williamsonf.stelizabeths@schools.sefton.gov.uk tel: 0151 922 5752

**The deputy designated lead is Liam Daniels**

Contact details: email: head.stelizabeths@schools.sefton.gov.uk tel: 0151 922 5752

**The nominated child protection governor is Sara Kielty**

Contact details: email: sara\_caravan@yahoo.com tel: 0151 922 5752

**The nominated Early Help Lead Practitioner is Suzanne Elder**

Contact details: email: elders.stelizabeths@schools.sefton.gov.uk tel: 0151 922 5752

**The Headteacher is Liam Daniels**

Contact details: email: head.stelizabeths@schools.sefton.gov.uk tel: 0151 922 5752

The DSLs are members of the school's Senior Leadership Team.

#### 4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Is a senior member of staff from the school's leadership team and therefore has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff.
- Takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school, which will not be delegated although the activities of the DSL may be delegated to appropriately trained deputies.
- Is appropriately trained, receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals and regularly (at least annually) updates their knowledge and skills to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community.
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- Is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, looked after children and young carers.

- Has a working knowledge of Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures.
- Has an understanding of the Early Help process to ensure effective assessment and understanding of children's additional needs in order to inform appropriate provision of early help and intervention.
- Keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged but kept separate from the pupils general file
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to the MASH/ Children's Social Care or the Police as appropriate.
- Notifies Children's Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation.
- Ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, all child protection records are passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. If the child is the subject of an open case to Children's Social Care, the pupil's social worker is also informed.
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences, strategy meetings and multi-agency child sexual exploitation (MACSE) meetings.
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans as part of core groups, attending and actively participating in core group meetings.
- Facilitate access for children's social care from the host local authority and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the LSCB.
- Ensures that all staff sign, to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection and safeguarding policy and staff behaviour policy (Code of Conduct).
- Has a working knowledge of relevant national guidance in respect of all specific safeguarding issues highlighted in paragraph 43 (pages 12/13) and Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*, ensuring that all staff receive necessary training, information and guidance.
- Ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with the whole school community of pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and governors and/or proprietors regarding this.
- Liaises with the nominated governor and Headteacher (where the DSL role is not carried out by the Headteacher) as appropriate.
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training.
- Makes the child protection and safeguarding policy available publicly, i.e. on the school's website or by other means.
- Ensures that the Headteacher is aware of the responsibility, under *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*, to refer all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer (DO) in the Local Authority, within one working day prior to any internal investigation; and to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as appropriate.
- Ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility (please reference where this can be located ).
- Ensure that when a children looked after is identified and the school is in receipt of pupil premium plus additional funding, then the designated teacher should work with the virtual school head to discuss how that funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan.

#### **The Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s)**

Are appropriately trained to the same level and, in the absence of the DSL 1, DSL 2 and DSL 3 carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of DSL 1, DSL 2 and DSL 3, they will assume all of the functions above.

**The governing body** ensures that the school:

- Appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training.
- Ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job/role descriptions of every member of staff and volunteer.
- Has a child protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, that are consistent with Sefton LSCB and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means.
- Has a procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the Headteacher and allegations against other children.
- Follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and disqualification by association regulations.
- Develops an induction strategy that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, and volunteers receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code Of Conduct) and the role of the DSL on induction.
- Develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, and volunteers receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training and updates as required (at least annually), to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with any requirements of Sefton (LSCB). The training strategy will also ensure that the DSL receives refresher training and regular updates as defined under the DSL's duties above.
- Appoints a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after by the Local Authority and ensures that the designated teacher has appropriate training.
- Ensures that the school contributes to inter agency working and plans and that ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the LSCB. This should include understanding and reflecting local protocols for assessment and the LSCB's threshold document along with supplying information as requested by the LSCB.
- Participates in the Early Help process and offers to initiate Early Help assessments for pupils/students with additional needs in order to provide a co-ordinated offer of early help.
- Teaches pupils about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure that the school follows guidance from the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre (CEOP) in relation to cyber bullying and sexting.

The governing body nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority, LSCB and national guidance.

#### **The Headteacher:**

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff.
- Allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy/s to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings.
- Supports the designated teacher for looked after children to promote the educational achievement of any pupils who are looked after by the Local Authority and to ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keeping looked after children safe.
- Ensures that all staff feels able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures.

- Ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Refers all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer (DO) in the Local Authority within one working day prior to any internal investigation.
- Ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk of harm to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as advised by the Designated Officer.
- Appoints a case officer who will be a member of the senior leadership team to investigate allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers and/or act as a point of contact for the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

## **5. Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them.
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils.
- Being a good listener.
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation.
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (Code of Conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing.
- Asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with school procedures.
- Referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children's Social Care.
- Following the school's rules with regard to communication and relationships with pupils and use of social media and online networking.
- Following the school's rules with regard to communication and relationships with pupils, including via social media

**Please also refer to the school's Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers.**

## **6. Abuse of trust**

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual.

This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

**The school's Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.**

## **7. Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability such as societal attitudes and assumptions including prejudice and discrimination; child protection procedures that are inadequately responsive to children's diverse circumstances; isolation; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Young carers
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyles
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- At risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- At risk of forced marriage
- At risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

## **8. Early Help process**

The school recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. All school staff is trained to notice any concerns about children which may help to identify that they would benefit from early help.

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, Police), the school will use the Early Help Process to complete an early help assessment and identify what help the child and family require to prevent their needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

The school is committed to working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies to:

- identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from early help;
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help, using the early help assessment and
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing a plan that will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.

The school will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- is in a family whose circumstances present challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental ill health, domestic abuse;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; and/or
- Is particularly vulnerable in any of the ways identified in paragraph 6 above.

The Early Help process can only be effective if it is undertaken with the agreement of the child's parents/carers. The Early Help offer should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them. Staff trained that can undertake an Early Help assessment include Suzanne Elder under the instruction of the DSL.

The school will keep the needs and circumstances of children receiving early help under constant review. If the child's situation does not improve and/or the child's parents and/or the child do not consent to early help or the Early Help assessment being initiated, the school will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral to Children's Social Care may be necessary

## **9. Attendance**

We recognise that full attendance at school is important to the well-being of all our pupils and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely. Our attendance policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the governing body.

## **10. Children Missing from Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. The local authority procedures for children missing from education are followed.

If a pupil is withdrawn from the school having not reached the normal date for transfer, due to a family move or any other reason, all efforts will be made to identify any new address and the school to which they are being admitted and to ensure that their education records are sent without delay to the child's new school. If the parent/carer fails to provide this information, an urgent referral will be made to the Children Missing Education Coordinator in order that they make further enquiries. If the school receives education records concerning a child who is not registered with us, the records will be returned promptly to the sending school with a note, advising them to refer to their LA's Children's Services Department.

A child's name will only be removed from the schools' admission register in accordance with the Pupil Registration regulations or with the authorisation of the Local Authority CME Coordinator Carole Blundell, who can be contacted on 0151 934 3181 or alternatively [carole.blundell@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:carole.blundell@sefton.gov.uk)

All additions to or deletions from the school roll will trigger the completion of the Common Transfer File (CTF) which will be downloaded to the appropriate database via the S2S system with particular regard to pupils leaving the school but the destination is not known. In this case the CME coordinator must be contacted and the CME procedures instigated.

## **11. Children who run away or go missing from home or care**

The school/college recognises that children who run away or go missing - and are thus absent from their normal residence - are potentially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, offending and placing themselves in situations where they may suffer physical harm.

*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 highlights that 'Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care' (DfE 2014) requires that every child or young person who runs away or goes missing must be offered a Return Home Interview (RHI) within a period of 72 hours of their return.*

RHI's are intended to ascertain the factors that triggered the young person's absence. Those factors may include difficulties at home, in school and in the community. The short timescale of 72 hours is imposed in order to ensure that the RHI remains relevant to the young person and enables any required action to be initiated at the earliest opportunity. RHI's are undertaken by professionals who are independent in order to facilitate a discussion with the young person that is as open as possible.

As soon as the Local Authority receives notification that a young person has gone missing from home or care, contact will be made to parents/carers seeking their consent to a RHI with their son/daughter. Direct contact will then be made with parents/carers and the young person to make arrangements for the interview.

In order to fulfil the timescale of within 72 hours, it is essential that all opportunities to interview young people including times during the school/college day are utilised. When necessary and in conjunction with the Local Authority, the school/college will facilitate RHIs, both in terms of releasing the young person from their normal timetable to participate in an interview and in providing an appropriate and safe space on the school/college site for the interview to take place.

The school/college will check with the Local Authority whether or not parents/carers have given their consent to the interview. However, young people aged 16 and 17 years old are generally considered to be able to consent and withhold consent to their own information being shared and therefore to participate in a RHI or not.

With reference to the Fraser Guidelines, younger children may also be deemed able to consent. If the Local Authority has not received consent from parents/carers and the young person is not assessed as being capable of giving or withholding informed consent, the school/college will contact the parent/carer and seek to secure their consent. Parents/carers may also choose to accompany their son/daughter in interviews and the school/college will facilitate that as appropriate.

## **12. Helping children to keep themselves safe**

*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016* requires governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.

**(This section needs to reflect what you do in your school)** Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and sex and relationships lessons, Citizenship and through all aspects of school life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about e-safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and pupils who are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have. They are taught to recognise risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly through the Prevent Programme. ‘Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people’. That work will include discussions with children about the risks and issues associated with young people sending, receiving and/or disseminating indecent images of themselves and other young people, which are widely referred to as ‘sexting’.

Staffs are trained to be vigilant and to notice and record any concerns about young people sending and receiving indecent images, which includes listening to what young people say to each other and to staff, as they do with any other safeguarding concern. When concerns are identified, staff will always speak to children and will inform parents about their concerns unless there is good reason to believe that doing so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm. The DSL will also need to consider the Fraser guidelines in making a judgement about whether or not to respect a young person's request not to inform his/her parents/carers.

### **13. Support for pupils, families and staff involved in a child protection issues**

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously.
- Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest.
- Responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety.
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies.
- Storing records securely.
- Offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support.
- Following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures.
- Co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

### **14. Complaints procedure**

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action.

Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a pupil or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is on the website for parents and pupils to access.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the school's child protection procedure

#### **15. If staff have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague, including visiting professionals and volunteers, towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood a situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The school's **whistleblowing** policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues - including what may seem minor contraventions of the school's Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) - to the Headteacher; to facilitate proactive and early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture that protect children and reduce the risk of serious abuse in school.

As a first step, staff should normally raise concerns with their immediate manager or the Headteacher if staff feel uncomfortable in discussing the issue with someone working in close proximity to them. Staff may choose to raise the concern in writing, but it is helpful to all concerned if an initial and informal discussion can take place in the first instance. This depends, however on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice. Concerns or complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors - the procedure for doing this is as follows:-

For example, if staffs believe that senior management is involved, they should put the information in an envelope marked 'Strictly Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only - For the attention of Chair of Governors' and ask for it to be given to the Clerk to the Governors. The Clerk to the Governors will immediately notify the Chair of Governors of the receipt of an envelope marked 'Strictly Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only - For the attention of Chair of Governors' so that they can receive it. Only the Chair of Governors will be made aware of the envelope.

Information about how to contact the Chair of Governors is also displayed in the staff room.

Staff may also report concerns about suspected abuse or neglect directly to Children's Social Care or the Police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action. Contact numbers for both services are displayed in the staff room.

Staff can also contact the Designated Officer in the Local Authority, who is responsible for the coordination of responses to allegations against people who work with children, by submitting a '**Sefton MASH**' form or via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 0345 140 0845. If you would like to have a consultation with the Designated officer (Allegations) prior to making a referral through to Children's Social Care call the Designated Officer on 0151 934 3783 or the MASH Team on 0151 934 4388.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staffs who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 between 8.00 a.m. and 8.00p.m. Monday to Friday or email 'help@nspcc.org.uk'. Contact numbers for Children's Social Care, the Police and the DO for the Local authority and the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline are all displayed in the staff room.

#### **16. Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. However, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that allegations are investigated fairly, quickly and consistently and that all parties are protected. In the event of suspension the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

**As stated above, all allegations against staff should be reported to the Headteacher. Allegations against the Headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors.**

**Staff may also report their concerns directly to the Police or Children's Social Care via the MASH if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.**

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016* and Sefton LSCB's inter-agency safeguarding procedures, section 15 - *Managing Allegations Against People Who Work With Children*.

Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

Allegations concerning staffs who no longer work at the school or historical allegations will be reported to the Police.

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

## **17. Staff training**

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff, governors who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- the school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- reporting and recording arrangements
- the staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)
- details of the DSL.

**NB:** all of the above will be explained **before** a new member of staff, governor or volunteer has direct contact with children in school. The school's child protection policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) will be sent with the letter confirming an appointment, with a written requirement that the individual read the two policies in advance of starting work at the school. The individual will be given an opportunity to clarify any issues on their first day at work and then asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood both policies and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, including the Headteacher (unless the Headteacher is the DSL), volunteers and governors will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training and thematic updates as required (at least annually) during inset days and regular discussions at staff meetings, to

provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with statutory guidance and any requirements of Sefton LSCB.

The DSL will attend training for newly appointed DSLs and refresher training every two years delivered by the safeguarding Lead for Schools. That training will include up to date information about Sefton LSCB inter-agency procedures. In addition, the DSL will update their knowledge and skills at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and will be supported to access Sefton LSCB inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children, young carers and risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

In addition, the Headteacher and at least one governor will attend safer recruitment training, and the school will ensure that there are at least two school leaders and/or governors that have attended safer recruitment training within the past three years.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's **Visiting Staff Leaflet** when they sign in at the school's main reception.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including disabled and SEN children, looked after children, young carers and risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. This child protection policy aims to reflect the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration; children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

## **18. Safer recruitment**

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff and allow 'safe' volunteers to work with children by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016* together with Sefton LSCB and the school's *Safer Recruitment* policies.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed by a panel of at least two school leaders/governors, if shortlisted.

The school will also

- ensure that every job description and person specification for roles in school includes a description of the role holder's responsibility for safeguarding

- ask at least one question at interview for every role in school about the candidate's attitude to safeguarding and motivation for working with children
- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- *academies, independent schools and free schools* - check that an applicant for a management position is not the subject of a section 128 direction made by the secretary of state prohibiting or restricting her/him from taking part in the management of an independent school, academy or free school.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff and volunteers will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), other issues as in section 16 of this policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff are required to sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection and safeguarding policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct).

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies and third party organisations that they have satisfactorily undertaken all appropriate checks in respect of individuals they provide to work in the school that the school would have undertaken if they were employing the individual.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken and ensures that the record is maintained in accordance with section 3 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

## **19. Regulated Activity**

Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (May 2016) part three.

## **20. Governors**

All governors will be the subject of Enhanced DBS checks as defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*.

## **21. Volunteers**

Volunteers including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

## **22. Supervised volunteers**

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

## **23. Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where appropriate

## 24. Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given an identity badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## 25. Behaviour Management

Our behaviour policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the governing body. This policy is transparent to staff, parents and pupils

## 26. Record Keeping

The school will maintain safeguarding (including early help) and child protection records in accordance with the guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*.

In accordance with that guidance, the school will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children's Social Care immediately;
- keep records in a folder in a meticulous chronological order;
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school, college or other education establishment when a pupil moves.

Safeguarding and child protection records will be maintained independently from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Such records will only be accessible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and school leaders who need to be aware.

The recommended format for all staff in schools to record any safeguarding or child protection observations or concerns about a child is the school concerns sheet which is available to all staff.

Such records will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations describing the child's behaviour, appearance, statements/remarks made to staff or other children and observations of interactions between the child, other children, members of staff and/or parents/carers that give rise to concern. Where possible and without interpretation, the exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer will be recorded. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record.

Records of safeguarding/child protection observations or concerns can be completed *on the school concern sheet*, but it is most important that **all staff use one consistent system for the recording of concerns and that all records are passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**, who should complete the form to confirm what action, has been taken.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headteacher or DSL, who will advise them to submit a Freedom of Information request for consideration.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## 27. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil, family and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from the DSL, another SLT member or outside agency as required (e.g. Education Safeguarding Manager).

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about pupils with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met in school. However, staff should only refer child protection concerns to the DSL or Headteacher or, in the case of concerns about the Headteacher, to the chair of governors. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

**However, following a number of cases (serious case reviews), where senior leaders in schools failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (May 2016) emphasises that any member of staff can contact and/ or make a referral to Children's Social Care if they are concerned about a child.**

Sefton LSCB's guidance 'Information Sharing in Child Protection' is section 13 of the LSCB's inter-agency child protection procedures and can be accessed at <http://www.seftonlscb.co.uk/professionals/multi-agency-safeguarding-procedures/>

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets. Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Information is:

- processed for limited purposes;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate;
- kept no longer than necessary ;
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights and
- secure.

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals on a need to know basis.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a CD or flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage.

The school's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and pupils on request and is also included in the Staff Handbook.

## 28. Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, the school's child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on the school site, the school will check that those organisations have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When school pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, the school will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## 29. Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- seek their consent on enrolment for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications);
- seek parental consent;
- use only the pupil's first name with an image;
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed; and
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

## 30. Online Safety

Children and young people commonly use electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children. That harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites in school. Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites in school. Many pupils own or have access to hand held devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community. (E-safety policy can be found on the school's website). No access is given within school to inappropriate sites – either on our network or through own devices (as they are not permitted to be used on site and cannot access our internet). Appropriate filters and monitoring systems that are not too restrictive as to restrict a child's education; are in place as referred in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Annex C). The school's **online safety policy** can be accessed from the school office and school website and explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our sexual exploitation policy or child protection procedures (see 'Sexting' below). All staff receive online safety training and the school's e-safety coordinator is Frances Williamson. Staff also receive advice regarding the use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils

## 31. Staff/pupil relationships

Staff also receive advice regarding personal online activity, use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils, about which there are strict rules highlighted in the Code of Conduct. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be the subject of a referral to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority and may be subject to disciplinary action

### **32. Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing early help) or child protection procedures.

Please also refer to issues in relation to children who are sexually harmful or abusive towards other children below.

### **33. Children with sexually harmful or inappropriate behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **anti-bullying procedures** as above where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18. Information can be found on the Sefton LSCB website in section 20 of the Multi agency safeguarding procedures.

Abusive behaviour by one child towards another will not be tolerated, minimised or dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Staff will be mindful of the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse although it is recognised that boys as well as girls can be abused by members of the opposite as well as the same gender group.

Members of staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexualised behaviour, including any known online sexualised behaviour, should record their concerns and report them to the DSL as soon as possible, as with any other safeguarding concern.

Any instances of sexual harm caused by one pupil to another and any situation where there are concerns about power imbalance, coercion or force will be discussed with Children's Social Care. The school will also be informed by the Police or Children's Social Care about referrals made directly to those agencies from other sources (e.g. family members, family friends, parents of other children) in relation to alleged sexualised inappropriate or sexually abusive behaviour displayed by pupils inside and/or outside school.

In all such circumstances, the school may be required to attend a strategy meeting under Sefton LSCB inter agency child protection procedures in order to facilitate risk management and planning with other agencies.

In responding to cases involving children or young people who have committed sexually abusive behaviours, Children's Social Care will consult with appropriate agencies for advice, consultation or provision of a direct service. A wide range of practice guidance, knowledge and therapeutic materials

has been developed to inform the interventions relating to children and young people with sexual behaviour difficulties.

In circumstances where a child displays sexualised inappropriate behaviour but evidence of sexual harm towards other children is not clear-cut, the school may seek consultation and advice from children's social care and/or the Education Safeguarding Manager.

In deciding the most appropriate response, relevant considerations will include:

- the nature and extent of the inappropriate/abusive behaviours. In respect of sexual abuse, it is necessary to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation; and sexually inappropriate or aggressive behaviour;
- the context of the abusive behaviours;
- the child/young person's development, family and social circumstances;
- the need for services, specifically focusing on the child/young person's harmful behaviour as well as other significant needs; and/or
- the risks to self and others, including other children in the school, household, extended family, peer group and wider social network.

The school is committed to participating in plans both to provide pupils who are at risk from other children and those pupils who may present a risk to other children with appropriate services to address any concerns and, wherever possible, to facilitating ongoing access to education in school for all children concerned, subject to appropriate risk assessments and risk management plans.

#### **34. Sexting**

As with all other actual or possible safeguarding issues and concerns, staff should not make their own judgements about whether a 'sexting' issue is more or less serious enough to warrant a report to the DSL. What may seem like less serious concerns to individual members of staff may be more significant when considered in the light of other information known to the DSL, which the member of staff may not be aware of.

If staff become concerned about a 'sexting' issue in relation to a device in the possession of a student (e.g. mobile phone, tablet, digital camera), the member of staff should secure the device (i.e. it should be confiscated). This is consistent with DfE advice **Searching, Screening and Confiscation - Advice for Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies (DfE February 2014)**, page 11 'After the search'.

The confiscated device will be passed immediately to the DSL. Staff will not look at or print any indecent images.

The DSL will make a judgement about whether the reported 'sexting' incident is experimental as in section 12 above or aggravated.

Aggravated incidents involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of sexual images created by young people. These include possible adult involvement or criminal or abusive behaviour by young people such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts, or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a young person who is pictured.

Aggravated incidents of sexting will usually be referred to Sefton's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice about whether or not a response by the Police and/or Children's Social Care is required. This will facilitate consideration of whether:

- there are any offences that warrant a Police investigation;
- child protection procedures need to be invoked;
- parents/carers require support in order to safeguard their children ;
- a multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meeting is required;
- any of the perpetrators and/or victims require additional support. This may require the initiation of a CAF and the offer of early help services.

Examples of aggravated incidents include:

- any evidence of pressurising, intimidating, bullying, extortion and/or threatening of students by one or more other students to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- pressure applied to a number of students (e.g. all female students in a class or year group) to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- pressurising a younger student or students to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- pressurising a student with additional vulnerability to create and share indecent images of themselves;
- dissemination of indecent images of young people to a significant number of others (either as an act of so-called 'revenge porn' or exploitation);
- any evidence of adult involvement in acquiring, creating or disseminating indecent images of young people (possibly by an adult pretending to be a young person known to the victim).

The DSL will make a judgement about whether or not a situation in which indecent images have been shared with a small number of others in a known friendship group with no previous concerns constitutes an aggravated incident; or whether the school is able to contain the situation in partnership with all parents of the students involved, arrange for the parents to ensure that all indecent images are deleted and that the young people involved learn from the incident in order to keep themselves safe in future.

In the latter instance, the DSL will usually consult with the Police and/or Children's Social Care through the MASH to check that no other relevant information is held by those agencies and to ensure an agreed response is documented before proceeding.

### **35. Child protection procedures**

#### **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

**There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.**

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also

be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child 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 children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### **Sexual abuse**

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

### **Neglect**

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2015)*.

## **36. Indicators of abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised.

The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are

also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- change their eating habits;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- frequently miss school or arrive late;
- show signs of not wanting to go home;
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn; • challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their school work;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol; and/or
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development;
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends' or adults recently acquainted with the child's family.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.**

### 37. Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation, should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

### 38. Taking action

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "It could happen here".

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999;

- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly not left until the end of the day as the risk to the child may be from home;
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family;
- complete a record of concern, using school recording sheets; and
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

If a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the same record of concern form to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help/CAF process as in section 7 of this policy.

### 39. If a pupil discloses to a member of staff or volunteer

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual. Their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell. They may have lost all trust in adults. Or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets/confidentiality. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, but if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with pupils staff will:

- allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me';
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil;
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil's mother think about all this; (**however**, it is reasonable to ask questions to clarify understanding and to support a meaningful referral if that is required, e.g. when did this happen, where did this happen?)
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on;

- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the pupil what will happen next;
- let them know that someone (either you or another named person, e.g. the DSL) will come to see them before the end of the day;
- report verbally to the DSL;
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern form and hand it to the DSL; and
- seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief.

#### **40. Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will be sought first from Children's Social Care.

#### **41. Making a referral to Children's Social Care**

The DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm (see Section 47 'Submitting child protection referrals').

**However, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (May 2016)* emphasises that any member of staff may make a direct referral to Children's Social Care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.**

The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child or create undue delay.

#### **42. Sexual exploitation of children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people. Victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to the trafficking of children.

The school teaches children about consent and the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see her/himself as a victim. The child may initially resent what she/he perceives as interference by staff but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation of children and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to Children's Social Care via the MASH (see section 33 below) as with any other child protection concern and with particular reference to Sefton LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation procedures. Parents will be consulted and notified as above.

Following a referral to Children's Social Care, a Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meeting may be convened under Sefton LSCB inter-agency safeguarding procedures. The school will attend and share information at MASE meetings as required. Parents and young people will be invited to attend MASE meetings by Children's Social Care as appropriate.

#### **43. So-called 'honour based' violence**

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. Such crimes include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered HBV.

All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and staff will record and report any concerns about a child who might be at risk of HBV to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to the Police and/or Children's Social Care as with any other child protection concern.

#### **44. Female Genital Mutilation**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both. (See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines> for further information).

If staff has a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Teachers are subject to a statutory duty defined by Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) to report to the Police personally where they discover (e.g. by means of a disclosure) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18. This is known as mandatory reporting.

Teachers in that situation will record their concerns and inform the DSL, who will support the teacher in making a direct report to the Police.

#### **45. Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age and well below the age of consent in England. School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. (See <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage> for further information)

#### **46. Private fostering arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that schools are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible. When the school becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement for a pupil that has not been notified to Children's Social Care, the school will encourage parents and private foster carers to notify Children's Social Care and will share information with Children's Social Care as appropriate.

#### **47. Submitting child protection referrals**

All child protection referrals should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by completing an online Multi-Agency Referral and submitting it to the MASH. All urgent child protection referrals, i.e. where there is an immediate concern about a child's safety, should be made in the first instance by telephoning the MASH on 0345 140 0845. This should be followed by submission of a form as above. Consultation with the MASH team prior to a referral being made can be made via 0151 934 4388.

Outside of office hours, immediate concerns about a child should be referred to the Emergency Duty Team on telephone number 0151 920 8234.

If staff are ever concerned that a child is in immediate danger, they will contact the Police by dialling 999.

#### **48. Staff reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, as emphasised in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSLs, the Headteacher and/or the chair of governors are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety; or
- for any other reason they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

In any of those circumstances, staff may make direct child protection referrals and share information without being subject of censure or disciplinary action. However, staff should inform the DSL and/or

Headteacher at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

If in any doubt, members of staff may consult the MASH (details below) or seek support from the Education Safeguarding Manager via 0151 934 3359.

#### **Related safeguarding policies.**

#### **49. Radicalisation and Extremism**

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values.

Even very young children have been exposed, in rare circumstances, to extremism at home and elsewhere including online.

As children get older, they look for adventure and excitement and they may start to ask questions about their identity and belonging. During that stage of their development they are vulnerable to extremist groups that may claim to offer answers, identity and a social network apparently providing a sense of belonging. Many of those extremist groups make sophisticated use of the internet and social media to target young people and spread their ideology, making young people more vulnerable to being influenced by extremist ideas.

The school has defined responsibilities to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school.

During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. The school is committed to preventing pupils from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The school promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing pupils with opportunities through the curriculum to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and learn how to discuss and debate points of view; and by ensuring that all pupils are valued and listened to within school.

School staff receives training that provides them with both the information they need to understand the risks affecting children and young people in this area; and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and how to support them. Staff are trained to report all concerns about possible radicalisation and extremism to the DSL immediately as they would any other safeguarding concern.

The school recognises the importance of providing a safe space for children to discuss controversial issues; and building their resilience and the critical thinking skills they need in order to challenge extremist perspectives. However, the school will make appropriate referrals to the Police PREVENT team and Channel programme in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

The school will discuss any concerns about possible radicalisation identified in school with a child's parents/carers as with any other safeguarding or child protection issue unless there is reason to believe that doing so would place the child at risk; and will also support parents/carers who raise concerns about their children being vulnerable to radicalisation.

The school expects all staff, volunteers, governors, visiting professionals, contractors and individuals or agencies that hire school premises to behave in accordance with the school's Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct), will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on school premises or at school events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

Parents and staff may find the website [www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com) informative and useful. The website is designed to equip school and college leaders, teachers and parents with the information, tools and resources they need to recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people and how best to support them. The website provides information on training resources for teachers, staff and school and college leaders

## **50. Related safeguarding policies**

- Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct.)
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force.
- Behaviour.
- Complaints procedure.
- Bullying.
- Whistleblowing.
- SEN.
- Safer recruitment.
- Staff Grievance.
- Disciplinary and managing allegations

## **51. Special Circumstances**

### **Children who are looked after**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe and ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL hold details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for children who are looked after.

### **Work Experience**

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervising pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*.

### **Children staying with host families**

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (May 2016), Annex E to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the Local Authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

## **Boarding Schools and Children's Homes**

Research has shown that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings. All boarding schools and residential special schools comply with the National Minimum Standards for their particular setting and are appropriately inspected.

### **Contact numbers:**

- General Enquiries: 0345 140 0845
- MASH: 0151 934 4388
- (Consultation)
- MASH contact officers: 0151 934 3801/2533/4200/3596
- Early Help Gateway 0151 934 3506 [EIP.Gateway@Sefton.gov.uk](mailto:EIP.Gateway@Sefton.gov.uk)
- Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team: 0151 920 8234
- Tel: Designated Officer Local Authority (DO) for Allegations: Pauline Trubshaw: Tel: 0151 934 3783
- Forced Marriage Unit. 020 7008 0151/020 7008 1500
- Police. Tel: 999/101
- Bully Busters Tel: 0800 169 6928
- Childline. Tel: 0800 1111

### **Legislation:**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016

What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015

Information Sharing – Advice for Practitioners 2015

Threshold for Intervention Handbook – Sefton LSCB