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# Weston Secondary School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy 2024-25

<b>Prepared by</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)		
<b>Approved by</b>	D Butterworth	<b>Date</b>	September 2024
<b>Next review date</b>	September 2025		

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## Contents

Safeguarding Contact Details .....	2
Introduction .....	5
Policy Statement .....	5
Our Commitment to Safeguarding .....	6
Purpose.....	7
Definitions used within this Policy .....	8
Legal Context .....	9
Providing a Safe and Supportive Environment.....	9
Safer Recruitment .....	9
Roles and Responsibilities .....	11
Leadership and Management.....	11
Governance .....	11
Information Sharing .....	12
Confidentiality .....	12
Staff Code of Conduct .....	13
Health and Safety.....	13
Site Security .....	13
Safety in an Emergency Situation (planned drill or unforeseen occurrence) .....	13
First Aid .....	14
Storage and Uses of Medicine.....	14
Pupils with Medical Conditions (in school) .....	14
Pupils with Medical Conditions (out of school) .....	14
Taking and the Use and Storage of Images .....	15
Off-Site Visits .....	15
Use of Taxis .....	15
Staff/pupil relationships .....	16
Related School Policies .....	16
Safeguarding Information for Pupils.....	16
<b>Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning</b> .....	16
Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) .....	16
Intimate and Personal Care .....	17
Fabricated or Induced Illnesses .....	17

Children with Mental Health Needs .....	18
Children who need a Social Worker .....	18
Children Looked After (CLA).....	18
<b>Private Fostering Arrangements</b> .....	19
Multi-Agency Working .....	19
Safeguarding Issues and Procedures .....	20
Contextual Safeguarding.....	20
Radicalisation, Extremism and the Prevent Agenda .....	20
Exploitation .....	21
Trafficked Children and Modern Slavery .....	21
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) (including County Lines) .....	21
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).....	22
Teenage Relationship Abuse .....	23
Upskirting.....	23
Child Employment or Performance .....	23
<b>Serious Violence</b> .....	23
Gangs and Youth Violence .....	24
Children Missing from Education (CME).....	25
Removing a Pupil from Roll .....	25
Absence from School.....	26
E-Safety and Online Safety Risks .....	26
Remote Learning.....	27
Children Missing from Home or Care .....	27
Online Reputation .....	28
Cyberbullying.....	28
Sending Nudes / Semi-Nudes (formerly sexting) .....	28
Social Media .....	29
Filtering and Monitoring .....	29
Child-on-Child Abuse Policy including Sexual Violence and Harassment .....	29
Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment .....	30
Bullying .....	32
Harmful Sexual Behaviour.....	33
Prejudice-based Abuse/Hate Crime .....	33

Harmful Practices .....	33
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) .....	33
Breast Flattening.....	34
Forced Marriage .....	34
Possession or Witchcraft .....	34
The Trigger Trio .....	34
Domestic Abuse.....	35
Mental Health .....	36
Parental Substance/Alcohol Misuse .....	36
Parenting.....	37
Children & the Court System.....	37
Children with Family Members in Prison .....	38
<b>Homelessness</b> .....	38
Taking Action to Ensure that Children are Safe at School and at Home .....	38
The Curriculum .....	38
Physical Intervention (use of reasonable force) .....	39
Reporting and Recording Concerns about a Child or Young Person.....	39
Records.....	40
Dealing with Allegations against Staff and Volunteers .....	40
<b>Low-Level Concerns</b> .....	41
The Role of the LADO .....	42
Whistleblowing .....	43
Escalating Professional Disagreement .....	43
Appendix 1: Glossary of Types of Abuse.....	44

## Introduction

### Policy Statement

Weston Secondary School fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the school.

Everyone working in our school has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

We make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming environment underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, resilient, valued and respected and are encouraged to talk, believing they will be listened to. We will ensure children know there are adults at the school whom they can approach if they are worried.

### Our Commitment to Safeguarding

#### Environment:

- To provide a safe environment within which children can learn and flourish.
- To provide an environment in which all adults recognise that safeguarding and ensuring children and young people's welfare is everyone's responsibility.
- To ensure that all children and young people will feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to approach adults if they are in difficulties and that adults will, at all times, consider what is in the best interests of the child.
- To consider that children may not feel ready, or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they might not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- To recognise that children may feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers. None of this should stop staff from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- To raise the awareness of all leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers and visitors of the need to safeguard children within and outside of the home, including online.
- To raise awareness of leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

#### Safeguarding procedures:

- To ensure that all concerns, however small, are recorded to establish the wider picture for a child and ensure that sufficient oversight by the DSL enables a context to be known and therefore support the identification of for example, risks of exploitation.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure the school contributes to assessments of need and support plans for those children through timely Children and Families First referrals, contact and working with multi-agency partners and children's social care team and other safeguarding partners.
- To provide attendance by a nominated member of staff or a report with up-to-date information at multi-agency meetings for all children at their school, and for the DSL to liaise with any future school DSL with any information that is required to plan for an effective transition for the child/family.
- To work proactively together with partners such as other education settings where there are siblings, or GP surgeries to ensure that where there are concerns, they are shared and addressed swiftly, with a strong base of information ensuring that the best interests of a child/the children are placed at the centre of referrals.
- To refer to Children and Families First so that children, and their wider families can be supported by professionals, intervening as early as possible before referral to The Children's Resource Service (CRS) is required.
- Ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked and this is recorded.

External factors:

- Appropriate supervision is given to visitors and adults on-site. Key information or training for visiting staff and adults will be provided to those who may lead for example sports clubs/out of hours activities at or for the school.
- Have information available for all hirers to ensure the setting must not be used for the promotion of extremism or radicalisation, including the handing out of materials or speakers **and that these hirers comply with safeguarding requirements of the school.**
- Ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for children learning remotely, on work placements or alternative provision offsite, or in flexi-school arrangements.
- Transfer of child protection, welfare concerns and learning records that provide support for pupil development when pupils move on from their current setting will be carried out in accordance with local procedures.

Curriculum:

- To ensure that the school complies with the statutory guidance September 2020 for relationships, sexual relations, health and well-being.
- To provide an effective PSHE curriculum that encompasses age and developmentally appropriate content, enabling pupils to build skills and confidence to help them to manage the challenges of growing up in today's society, including knowing how to keep themselves safe and where to get help from if they, or others need it.

The protection of children is of the highest priority for our school. Children have the right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so. All children regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, religion, culture, language and beliefs have a right to be protected from harm.

All staff have a key role in prevention of harm and an equal **responsibility** to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm in accordance with the guidance. We acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies protects children and reduces risk and so we will proactively engage in partnership working throughout the child protection process to safeguard children.

Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, the school reserves the right to contact the Children's Resource Service (in line with current safeguarding procedures) without notifying parents if this is in the child's best interests. In all cases, consent must be sought unless it is not in the child's best interests to do so. These decisions will be clearly recorded with their reason and will be held with the child's record of concerns or child protection file with a level of protection determined by the DSL.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure in our school. The policy will inform parents and guardians how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.
- Protect children and young people who attend our school.

- Ensure consistent good practice across the school.
- Demonstrate our commitment to protecting children.

### Definitions used within this Policy

**Safeguarding**, as defined in KCSIE 2024, is 'providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online, preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes' (Part One paragraph 3).

**Child Protection** is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to children who have been significantly harmed or at risk of significant harm.

The term **staff** applies to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full-time or part-time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This also includes parents and governors.

**Child** refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. On the whole, this will apply to pupils of our school; however, the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments.

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

**Victim** refers to the person who is adversely affected by a stressful or distressing situation or harmful or humiliating act.

It is important that we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way.

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

**DSL** refers to Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**DDSL** refers to Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Hamwic education Trust (HET) is the Multi-Academy Trust.

**School**, when we refer to school if the setting includes a nursery this is included in the definition.



## Legal Context

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education:

- Keeping children safe in education 2024 ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))
- Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for Practitioners (March 2015)

It is also based on the following child protection legislation:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 which states that teachers, education professionals, social workers, health professionals, police officers and members of the public have a statutory duty to report any concerns or suspicions that a child has been abused.
- Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002 which clearly states that the governing body of an academy shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Where national guidance changes within the approved policy year, or learning from practice reviews becomes available, addendum to policies and process may be made through the governing body.

## Providing a Safe and Supportive Environment

### Safer Recruitment

We create a culture of safer recruitment and, as part of that, adopt robust recruitment processes and volunteer checking processes that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. This enables the governing body and if applicable **HET** to act reasonably in making decisions about prospective employees and volunteers using evidence and checks carried out.

The governing body and our senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring we follow recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might harm children.

All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare guidance and their obligations to disclose to us relevant information that could lead to disqualification.

The school follows the safer recruitment process outlined in Part Three of KCSIE **2024**. On all recruitment panels there is at least one member who has undertaken safer recruitment training which is updated regularly. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history,

checking any gaps in employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job, alongside effective induction processes. It also includes undertaking interviews and, in all cases, instigating Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. As part of our due diligence, we will carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available online (as outlined in KCSIE 2024). We will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.

Curriculum Vitae will only be accepted alongside a full application form.

We ensure that our volunteers are appropriately checked and supervised when in school. We check the identify of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where required by Keeping Children safe in Education 2024. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

When using supply staff, we will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that staff they provide have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

The Single Central Record (SCR) includes a record of all checks undertaken, the date they were completed and who carried out the checks. It also includes the identification of the person's role to ensure regulated or unregulated activity is accurately recorded. Where an individual's details or role has changed the SCR will be updated and files supporting the SCR will include the updated information. For supply staff, information is received from the supply agency, downloaded, stored securely and checked prior to the individual starting regarding checks carried out for the role.

The SCR also holds information about school staff, HET staff, governors, volunteers, supply and contractors. Regular monitoring of the SCR is undertaken by senior leaders or governors and a record is made of this monitoring and any actions required.

### **Staff Training and Staff Induction**

All staff in our school should be aware of the signs of abuse and be able to respond appropriately. All staff will receive an induction programme which will include basic information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child and advice on safe working practice. All staff are expected to read at least Part One of KCSIE 2024. Only staff who do not regularly work with children can choose to read Annex A instead.

All Governors are expected to know and understand their safeguarding responsibilities as described in Part Two and Senior Leaders and the school safeguarding Governor should read the whole of KSCIE 2024. Our governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that there is an effective whole trust approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

In line with **KCSIE 2024** safeguarding training for staff is provided to the whole school every year with separate training to all new staff and volunteers as part of their induction (if this falls at a different point in the year). All staff are provided with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and are informed about safeguarding arrangements on induction to ensure they fully understand their role in identifying concerns and their responsibility to report concerns.

**New staff and volunteers receive a briefing during their induction which covers this Child protection and Safeguarding policy and our staff behaviour policy, how to report and record concerns and information about our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs.**

The DSL attends Level 3 Safeguarding training for their role and then refresh this specific training for DSLs every two years. It is the responsibility of the DSL to maintain an overview of new developments so, in addition to having an annual update, they will receive regular updates between training through Local Authority Network meetings, safeguarding updates from the **HET** and reading safeguarding related articles or research. Records of training and updates will be kept which identifies that staff have attended, read and understood the information shared. A full description of the DSL role can be found in Annex C of **KCSIE 2024**.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We recognise that all staff and Governors have a full and active part to play in ensuring there is a culture of safeguarding that is effective in protecting our pupils from harm. We recognise that staff anxiety around child protection can compromise good practice and so have established clear lines of accountability, training, advice to support the process and individual staff within that process. Staff understand that they all have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and provide help for children where necessary through referral to Children and Families First or The Children's Resource Service at the Local Authority.

### **Leadership and Management**

In this school any individual can contact the DSL if they have concerns about a pupil. The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The names and contact details are listed on page 2 of this policy. These safeguarding roles are explicit in assigned job descriptions. A full description of the DSL role can be found in Annex C of **KCSIE 2024**.

### **Governance**

There is a nominated Safeguarding Governor – Russell Slatford, who leads the monitoring of safeguarding and ensures the school meets its statutory duties effectively. The Safeguarding Governor meets with the DSL to check that procedures are being followed, that staff training is up to date and to keep abreast of the number of children who are open to social care. **Our safeguarding governor receives additional training to empower them to support and challenge the DSL and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding across the trust. When meeting the DSL, the safeguarding governor checks that procedures are being followed, that staff training is up to date and to keep abreast of the number of children who are open to social care.**

Governors will refer to the **HET** Safeguarding Review document as a template to support their own monitoring. The Chair of Governors receives reports of allegations against the Headteacher and act on the behalf of the Governing Body. Governors are aware of the duties set out in **KCSIE 2024** for governing body responsibilities for safeguarding. A record of all governors who have read and understood relevant sections of **KCSIE 2024** is held with governing body records. The Safeguarding Governor is required to read **KCSIE 2024** in full.

### Information Sharing

We are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

We ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. This includes:

- Being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as ‘special category personal data’.
- Understanding that ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. Sharing information is done when it is in the best interests of the child and consent is only obtained when it is not detrimental to the child to do so.
- Where the serious harm test under the legislation is met we will withhold providing the data in compliance with schools’ obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Where in doubt schools should seek independent legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Further details on information sharing can be found:

Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children, which includes a myth-busting guide to information sharing.

Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers.

### Confidentiality

Staff understand they can get advice from the DSL regarding concerns and confidentiality. We maintain that all matters relating to child protection are to be treated as confidential and only shared as per the GDPR guidance and DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance. There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection. Decisions to share/not share information will be recorded together with the reasons for this within a child protection

or welfare concern recorded. The best interests of the child will be placed at the heart of the decision making to share information, especially where contextual information is included. All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep a disclosure confidential. Disciplinary action/re-training will be considered for any breach of confidentiality.

**Staff should speak to their school Data Compliance Officer or HET Data Protection Officer if they need any advice around sharing safeguarding information; if in doubt, please seek advice before sharing.**

### **Staff Code of Conduct**

All staff (paid and voluntary) are expected to adhere to a code of conduct in respect of their contact with pupils and their families. This can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct Policy and forms part of the induction process for all staff, including expectations for volunteers.

### **Health and Safety**

The site, the equipment and the activities carried out as part of the curriculum are all required to comply with the Health and Safety at Work act 1974 and regulations made under the act.

All risks are required to be assessed and recorded plans of how to manage the risk are in place. The school has a Health and Safety Policy which details the actions that we take in more detail.

Some areas, such as Health and Safety, are a specialist area of safeguarding and a separate lead for this area is in place in the school.

### **Site Security**

We aim to provide a secure site but recognise that the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all people on the site have to adhere to the rules which govern it. These are:

- all gates are locked except at the start and end of the school day;
- doors are kept closed to prevent intrusion;
- visitors and volunteers enter at the reception and must sign in;
- visitors and volunteers are identified by a visitor's lanyard;
- children are only allowed home during the school day with adults/carers with parental responsibility or permission being given;
- all children leaving or returning during the school day have to sign out and in using the electronic inventory system;
- emergency procedures are practiced and known by all staff, including those temporarily in positions of responsibility;
- staff know the expectations for challenging unrecognised adults or young people on site.

### **Safety in an Emergency Situation (planned drill or unforeseen occurrence)**

- We monitor visitors and volunteers; details can be found in our school visitor procedures/policy document.

- Fire drills/emergency procedures practices will be held regularly throughout the school year (termly as a minimum), at different times of the day, most of which will be unannounced so as to develop the effectiveness of the processes. These will be monitored by the governing body.

### **First Aid**

There is a separate First Aid policy, which can be found via the school offices. This is completed in line with other key policies and statutory guidance such as Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions 2014.

### **Storage and Uses of Medicine**

School will administer medicine to children during the school day only when it would be detrimental to their wellbeing not to. This includes medication for long term conditions and for shorter term conditions such as antibiotics for an infection. We will NOT administer any medication, prescribed or not prescribed without consent from a parent / carer. We will only accept medication that is in the full correct packaging (such as the box and the bottle / tablet sheet) and labelled accurately (with prescribed medicines).

Medicines will be stored securely, where possible in the school office / designated first aid area. Where the medication is a controlled medication (such as medication for ADHD) this will be secured with an additional lock and will require 2 adults present to administer. Where appropriate to need medicines can be secured in the classroom environment (such as an asthma inhaler).

This guidance is completed in consultation with Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions 2014.

### **Pupils with Medical Conditions (in school)**

There is a separate policy outlining the school's position on this, which is available from the school office.

As a school, we will make sure that sufficient staff are trained to support any pupil with a medical condition.

All relevant staff will be made aware of the condition to support the child and be aware of medical needs and risks to the child.

An individual healthcare plan may be put in place to support the child and their medical needs.

### **Pupils with Medical Conditions (out of school)**

There will be occasions when children are temporarily unable to attend our school on a full-time basis because of their medical needs. These children and young people are likely to be:

- children and young people suffering from long-term illnesses.
- children and young people with long-term postoperative or post-injury recovery periods
- children and young people with long-term mental health problems (emotionally vulnerable).

Where it is clear that an absence will be for more than 15 continuous school days the Education and Inclusion branch of The Children's Resource Service will be contacted to support the pupil's education. At this point a referral to Southampton Children's Hospital School might also be made.

## **Taking and the Use and Storage of Images**

As a school we will seek consent from the parent/carer of a pupil and from teachers and other adults before taking and publishing photographs or videos that contain images that are sufficiently detailed to identify the individual in school publications, printed media or on electronic publications.

We will not seek consent for photos where you would not be able to identify the individual. We will seek consent for the period the pupil remains registered with us and, unless we have specific written permission, we will remove photographs after a child (or teacher) appearing in them leaves the school or if consent is withdrawn. Photographs will only be taken on school owned equipment and stored on the school network. No images of pupils will be taken or stored on privately owned equipment by staff members.

Where remote learning is a feature the game guidance applies and uploaded material and communication with children can only be conducted on school devices – NEVER on a home device and screen shots should not be captured containing images of a child.

## **Off-Site Visits**

We will always consider and assess the risks when undertaking off site visits. Some activities, especially those happening away from the school and residential visits, can involve higher levels of risk. If these are annual or infrequent activities, a review of an existing assessment may be all that is needed. If it is a new activity, a visit involving adventure activities, residential, overseas or an 'Open Country' visit, a specific assessment of significant risks must be carried out. The school has an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who liaises with the Local Authority's outdoor education adviser and helps colleagues in School to manage risks and support with off site visits and provides training in the management of groups during off site visits, as well as First Aid in an outdoor context.

## **Use of Taxis**

As a school there are times, we may need to use taxis to support children and families, such as for the transportation of pupils to and from school, to support families accessing support such as health appointments.

In managing these arrangements, the school will put in place measures to help ensure the safety and welfare of young people carried in taxis. This includes the use of a recommended reputable firm with correct licences, insurance, and DBS checks. It is a non-negotiable expectation that photographic identification is shared by the driver upon arrival at school.

Where a child is transported to and from school in a taxi, staff will be available to support this.

Where a child is arriving at school by taxi, staff will be there to ensure the child safely exits the taxi and arrives in school safely. When a child is leaving school, taxi staff will ensure photographic identification is seen for the driver and the child is supported to get into the taxi safely, with seatbelt on ready to leave.



## Staff/pupil relationships

Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a pupil under the age of eighteen.

We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity, and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.

Our Staff Code of Conduct, within our Employee Handbook, sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

## Related School Policies

Safeguarding encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety, attendance, bullying and a range of other issues, for example, arrangements for meeting the medical needs of children, providing first aid, school security and positive behaviour. For this reason, other related policies within the school reflect our safeguarding procedures and ethos and are updated accordingly.

## Safeguarding Information for Pupils

We are committed to creating an ethos in school where children feel safe and are able to talk freely about their concerns, believing that they will be listened to and valued. All pupils in our school are aware of a number of staff they can talk to if they are worried about any problems. The school is committed to ensuring that pupils are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All pupils know that we have a senior member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding and know who this is. We inform pupils of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

## Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. When supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child).

## Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

School staff and Governors recognise that children with special educational needs or disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse and expect staff to take extra care to correctly interpret apparent signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other pupils. We are committed to providing a school environment in which pupils with SEND feel confident and able to discuss their concerns. Whenever possible, pupils will be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff



with appropriate communication skills. The DSL (or Deputy **DSL**) will work with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to identify pupils with particular communication needs.

Parents can seek information, advice and support from The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS).

### **Intimate and Personal Care**

'Intimate Care' can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, bodily products and personal hygiene, which demand direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, sexual parts of the body.

'Personal Care' involves touching another person, although the nature of this touching is more socially acceptable. These tasks do not invade conventional personal, private or social space to the same extent as Intimate Care.

Personal Care encompasses those areas of physical and medical care that most people carry out for themselves but which some are unable to do because of disability or medical need. Children and young people may require help with eating, drinking, washing, dressing and toileting.

Where Intimate Care is required we will follow the following principles:

- Risk assess the care needed.
- Involve the child in intimate care.
- Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.
- Be aware of your own limitations.
- Promote positive self-esteem and body image.
- If you have any concerns you must report them. If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, report it immediately to the DSL.
- Helping through communication.
- Support to achieve the highest level of autonomy.

As a basic principle children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, e.g. giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate/personal care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child. These plans include a full risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the child and the carer and health.

### **Fabricated or Induced Illnesses**

There are three main ways that a parent/carer could fabricate or induce an illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:

- Fabrication of signs and symptoms. This may include fabrication of past medical history;
- Fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts and records, and specimens of bodily fluids. This may also include falsification of letters and documents;
- Induction of illness by a variety of means.
- If we are concerned that a child may be suffering from a fabricated or induced illness we will inform The Children's Resource Services.

### Children with Mental Health Needs

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, **exploitation**, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Our staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and education.

School staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and SENCOs) will liaise with the DSL on matters of mental health when it involves safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) so children's needs are considered holistically. Our school may liaise with the mental health support team and CAMHS where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.

We understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.

### Children who need a Social Worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect **and/or exploitation** and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

### Children Looked After (CLA)

We value that every child who has been taken into care, even if they are now out of care and adopted remain vulnerable. They will have experienced levels of abuse, **neglect or exploitation** that were eventually deemed unacceptable in order for them to have been removed. These experiences are often likely to have a long-term impact on a child's relationships, emotional wellbeing and development. **We ensure that these children are closely monitored to minimise any gaps in attainment and that emotional development and wellbeing is supported.**

The Delegated Teacher for CLA will have all details of the child's social worker, the name of the LA Virtual School Headteacher. The Delegated Teacher in our school has received training to undertake their role with regards looked after and previously looked after children. The role is clearly set out in their job description and includes the need to promote the educational achievement of these children. The Delegated Teacher will:

- Ensure PEP meetings take place regularly and ePEPs are kept up to date;

- Ensure devolved funding is allocated to named children;
- Ensure they work effectively (or in partnership) with the Virtual School Headteacher.

Governors in our school ensure that the Delegated Teacher has the necessary training, skills and time to carry out this role on at least an annual basis. The Delegated Teacher will ensure that they liaise with the Virtual School and ensure that a personal education plan (PEP) is in place and regularly reviewed. Appropriate staff will have information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status and contact arrangements in place for the child.

**The Delegated Teacher for our school is:** Emma Church

**The name of the Virtual School Head Teacher is:** Maria Anderson

### Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative care for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the arrangement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of sixteen or aged under eighteen if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will tell the DSL and the school will notify the local authority of the circumstances.

### Multi-Agency Working

Schools do not operate in isolation but are part of a wider safeguarding system for children. **KCSIE 2024** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** sets out the pivotal role schools have in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The school aims to help protect the children in its care by working consistently and appropriately with a range of agencies.

Our school works as a named agency with the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Schools and colleges have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that the school or college contributes to multi-agency working in line with the statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

Our safeguarding children partnership has three safeguarding partners (the local authority, a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for an area within the local authority). The partners have a shared and equal duty to work together with appropriate relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children including identifying and responding to their needs. When named as a relevant agency, schools, in the same way as other relevant agencies, are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements. Our school will adhere to local published threshold guidance and procedures.

## Safeguarding Issues and Procedures

### Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is “an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, Children’s Social Care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extrafamilial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.”

We will consider the various factors that have an interplay with the life of any child about whom we have concerns within the school and the level of influence that these factors have on their ability to be protected and remain free from harm particularly when it comes to child exploitation or criminal activity.

We recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school environment and/or can occur between children outside of the school. This is contextual safeguarding.

### Radicalisation, Extremism and the Prevent Agenda

The school is aware of its statutory duty to prevent radicalisation and extremism under the Prevent Duty which became law in 2015. The Prevent Duty requires that all staff are aware of the signs that a child may be **susceptible** to radicalisation. The risks will need to be considered for any kinds of extremism. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British Values of liberty, mutual respect, tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, rule of law and democracy. **Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to: negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or undermine, overturn or replace the UK’s system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in the above.**

All staff **must undertake annual** Home Office Prevent awareness training or equivalent and will be alert to signs of radicalisation. The school will discuss any concerns with the family unless this is likely to put the child at risk.

As part of the preventative process, resilience to radicalisation will be built through the regular promotion of fundamental British values through the PSHE and wider curriculum available at our school.

Any child who is considered **susceptible** to radicalisation (and where there are evidence-based concerns which indicate they may be being groomed or radicalised), will be referred by the DSL, who will follow the agreed referral to The Children’s Resource Service, liaising and sharing information with the police and Channel, as required. If the police and colleagues consider the information to be indicating a level of risk, the Channel Panel will be convened, and the school will be invited to attend and support this process. **Consent will be sought.**

## Exploitation

Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive any child or young person under the age of 18. At our school we recognise that any child or young person is vulnerable to this activity and ensure through our annual safeguarding training for all staff that awareness of raising concerns is vital. This includes the use by staff of the Hampshire Constabulary Community Partnership Information (CPI) form for information that could be used to share relevant intelligence information with police that will assist in building a bigger picture of potential exploitation issues in the community. Once a CPI form is submitted it can be destroyed. Information may be relevant to record in a child's record of concern in school as per other concerns or additionally make a separate referral to The Children's Resource Service. Our curriculum includes how children can keep themselves safe and CSE at an age appropriate level through PSHE.

## Trafficked Children and Modern Slavery

Missing exploited or trafficked children are supported by the MET (Missing Exploited or Trafficked team).

- Within the local area, the acronym MET is used to identify all children who are missing; believed to be at risk of or being sexually or criminally exploited; or who are at risk of or are being trafficked. Given the close links between all of these issues, there has been a considered response to join all three issues so that cross over of risk is not missed.

Human trafficking is defined by the UNHCR in respect of children as a process that is a combination of:

- movement (including within the UK);
- control, through harm / threat of harm or fraud;
- for the purpose of exploitation.

Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim. There is significant evidence that children (both of UK and other citizenship) are being trafficked internally within the UK and this is regarded as a more common form of trafficking in the UK.

Young people being forced to work in restaurants, nail bars, car washes and harvesting fruit, vegetables or other foods have all been slaves 'hiding in plain sight' within the U.K and rescued from slavery. Other forms of slavery such as sex slaves or household slaves are more hidden but have also been rescued within the UK.

If staff have any concerns relating to this and a child in school, this will be reported to the DSL for referral to be considered to Children's Services. We will also liaise with and work with the MET.

## Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) (including County Lines)

CCE "is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or

(c) through violence or the threat of violence. (KCSIE 2024)

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**County Lines** is a form of CCE and is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line.” This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK – no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. (Home Office 2018). Children exploited through County Lines activity are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of school (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county line gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence or kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Children may miss education or appear to have more material belongings or confidence than previously. They may have keys to places that raise a concern, display increasing disruptive behaviour and come home with injuries or looking dishevelled.

Any person in our school who has concerns that a child is being criminally exploited should report their concern to the DSL without delay. The DSL will refer immediately to The Children’s Resource Service for advice / to make a referral. It may be that the DSL decides to refer to the police. The Local Authority Children’s Services and the police will consider if a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) needs completing alongside child protection procedures.

As a school we educate all staff in the signs and indicators of all forms of exploitation, including criminal exploitation.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. (KCSIE 2024 Part 1 para 38).

The school recognises that this may even appear to be consensual, but still constitutes abuse. Indicators a child may be at risk of CSE include:

- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school;

- Associating with other young people being sexually exploited;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc., without plausible explanation;
- Drug and/or alcohol use – may return home or present at school under influence;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Frequenting areas known for sexual exploitation or adult sex work.

As a school we educate all staff in the signs and indicators of sexual exploitation. Staff will also remain open to the fact that child sexual exploitation can occur without any of the above risk indicators being present. Our school will follow safeguarding procedures where there is a concern about a child being at risk of or experiencing CSE/CCE.

We will use the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF) available [here](#) and associated guidance to identify pupils who are at risk.

### Teenage Relationship Abuse

It is acknowledged that many young people / teenagers do not understand and ‘see’ abuse in young relationships. We are supporting this with a carefully planned curriculum.

### Upskirting

At Weston Secondary School we recognise that “Upskirting” is a criminal offence and any incidents will be recorded and reported to the DSL and the police, and may be also reported to children’s services.

It is recognised that incidents are likely to be upsetting and support and sensitivity are required when dealing with both victim and perpetrator. The DSL will determine how the school will approach any incident on a case by case basis ensuring a clear record is made by the person who it was first reported to.

### Child Employment or Performance

The Local Authority will be alerted to any child who is known to be working in paid or unpaid employment. Any queries around child employment should be directed to the Child Employment/Performance ([child.employment@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:child.employment@southampton.gov.uk)) to ensure the correct performance licensing is in place for children who perform, act, model or take part in paid sporting activities.

### Serious Violence

All staff are made aware of indicators that children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These include increased absence, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals



or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of mental health difficulties, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts could also indicate that children have been approached by or are involved with individuals associated with criminal gangs.

All staff are made aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

## Gangs and Youth Violence

The vast majority of young people will not be affected by serious violence or gangs. However, where these problems do occur, even at low levels there will almost certainly be a significant impact.

As a school we have a duty and a responsibility to protect our pupils. It is also well established that success in learning is one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime. Dealing with violence also helps attainment. While pupils generally see educational establishments as safe places, even low levels of youth violence can have a disproportionate impact on any education.

Secondary schools are recognised as places where early warning signs that children may be at risk of getting involved in gangs can be spotted. Crucial preventive work can be done within school to prevent negative behaviour from escalating and becoming entrenched.

Factors that may indicate a young person is at risk from or involved in serious violence include:

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

Factors that may indicate a young person is a risk or involved in serious violent crime include:

- increased absence from school,
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- a significant decline in performance,
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing,
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- unexplained gifts or new possessions

As a school we will:

- develop skills and knowledge to resolve conflict as part of the curriculum;
- challenge aggressive behaviour in ways that prevent the recurrence of such behaviour;



- understand risks for specific groups, including those that are gender-based, and target interventions;
- safeguard, and specifically organise child protection, when needed;
- make referrals to appropriate external agencies;
- carefully manage individual transitions between educational establishments, especially into pupil referral units or alternative provision;
- work with local partners to prevent anti-social behaviour or crime.

### **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

At Weston Secondary School our policy is informed by the Southampton City Council Policy for CME (August 2020). Attendance is a safeguarding issue. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation, FGM, child exploitation, child criminal exploitation or risk of radicalisation. We recognise our statutory duty to follow the guidance relating to any child we are aware of who for example does not begin school as expected or moves with no forwarding school known. There are various reasons a child may be deemed as CME which include, but are not limited to:

- Child not starting school when they reach compulsory school age and therefore never entering the system;
- Failing to transition between schools, at phase transfer or if a family moves from one LA to another;
- A delay in applying for a new school place;
- Refusing an alternative offer of a school place, when the preferred school is full;
- Leaving school, with no forwarding education provision or destination.

We recognise that it is important that agencies work cooperatively, and information is shared in a timely manner. If anyone at our school becomes aware of a child missing education, a referral is made to the LA CME Officer as soon as possible.

If we are aware of a child who is moving and parents/carers have not provided any forwarding address or school, we will contact the CME Officer for advice at the earliest opportunity having attempted to find out the information.

**The LA CME Officer for our school is:** Eliza Theobald-Morgan

### **Removing a Pupil from Roll**

Decisions about when to remove a child from roll is always made in accordance with Southampton City Council's CME Policy (August 2020) and all steps in the operational guidance for CME have been followed, as appropriate.

Where a pupil has been 'located' because steps in the operational CME guidance document were followed.

- The child has been confirmed as having moved overseas.
- The new school has confirmed enrolment.

- The new LA has confirmed their awareness of the child.
- School has received a parental deregistration letter for Elective Home Education (EHE).
- Conditions listed in the removal from roll checklist (contained in the CME Guidance for Schools) have been met.

In this instance the pupil may be removed from roll and forwarding details recorded on the school information management system.

Where a pupil cannot be 'located' (pupil is still on roll) - as long as a home visit has been carried out and our CME Guidance for Schools followed, then school will consult with the CME Officer who will follow the appropriate actions and at this point the CME officer can agree to remove from roll and take on management of the case. If removal from roll is not agreed, then the pupil must remain on roll.

### Absence from School

In addition to statutory CME duties, absence from school at any point may be considered, in individual contexts, as both a potential safeguarding issue as well as an educational outcomes issue. We recognise that educational neglect is a factor that adversely affects a child into adulthood. The school has clear procedures to monitor, support and challenge attendance of all pupils. Staff are aware of these procedures and that attendance is an aspect of safeguarding. All absence or non-attendance will be considered in context with other known factors or concerns and relevant partners or agencies contacted as per safeguarding duties. Staff in our school will aim to work with parents/carers to establish regular attendance for all children and young people through an approach including support and guidance, external agency support, including health colleagues where required. Where these are refused or are not effective given time, we will review each on a case-by-case basis, to consider any additional actions. We may also take steps that could result in legal action for attendance, or a referral to children's social care, or both but will do so on a case-by-case basis.

The school will inform the LA if a parent/carer has notified the school in writing of their decision to electively home educate their child and will coordinate a meeting with the parent/carers where possible; if the child is unfit to attend on health grounds; is in custody for four months and when a child is issued a suspension or permanent exclusion. Required LA documentation will be completed and submitted to the relevant LA colleague/team.

### E-Safety and Online Safety Risks

Children may expose themselves to danger, whether knowingly or unknowingly, when using the internet and other technologies. Additionally, some children and young people may find themselves involved in activities which are inappropriate, or possibly illegal, through social networking sites etc., including cyber-bullying. Some of the risks presented with online activity include:

- Unwanted contact;
- Grooming;
- Online bullying;
- Sharing of nudes;

- Leaving digital footprint;
- Accessing inappropriate material deliberately or by accident;
- Accessing inappropriate material beyond a child's capacity to comprehend.

In order to safeguard all our children, the school will, therefore, seek to provide information and awareness to both pupils and parents through:

- Acceptable use agreements for children, parents/carers and governors.
- Curriculum activities involving raising awareness around online dangers and strategies to keeping themselves safe online. Children are taught, across the curriculum, that if they do something wrong, it is better to tell someone before it gets any worse.
- Parents evenings / sessions – parents are included as much as possible as children often have access to a wide range of technologies at home.
- High profile events / campaigns e.g., Safer Internet Day.
- Building awareness around information that is held on relevant websites, apps or publications.
- Ensuring the safeguards in place for the school electronic systems are effective and monitored for any threats to safety. The school has appropriate virus software and filters on all computers.
- Careful management and handling of reports that include an online element. Including being aware of searching screening and confiscation advice (for schools) and UKCIS sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people. The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

### Remote Learning

School will be in regular contact with parents and carers during any periods of remote learning. The school will inform parents and carers of their filtering and monitoring systems and why these are in place. Parents and carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Governors and **HET** will refer to additional guidance for keeping children safe online, including when they are online at home. The school will follow the most up to date DfE guidance regarding remote learning as signposted in **KCSIE 2024**.

### Children Missing from Home or Care

If a child is missing or absent from where they are expected to be without reasonable explanation, we would consider this a potential safeguarding risk and would follow our school procedures and wider policies to try to locate them – we will work with wider agencies such as the police and social care as appropriate to ensure the safety of the child.

“Missing person” is: ‘anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.’

An absent person is: ‘A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.’

All cases classified as ‘missing’ by the police will receive an active police response – such as deployment of police officers to locate a child. Cases where the child was classified as ‘absent’ will be recorded by the police and risk assessed regularly but no active response will be deployed. The absent case will be resolved when a young person returns, or new information comes to light suggesting that he/she is at risk. In the latter instance, the case is upgraded to ‘missing’.

### Online Reputation

Online reputation is the opinion others get of a person when they encounter them online. It is formed by posts, photos that have been uploaded, it includes posts, photos and comments made by others on people’s profiles. It is important that children and staff are aware that anything that is posted could influence their current or future professional reputation. The majority of organisations and work establishments now check digital footprint before considering applications for positions or places on courses. For an employee it can bring disciplinary action and staff are encouraged to follow any code of conduct their employer or professional body provides regarding the professional reputation of the individual or their organisation or profession).

We will aim to educate our pupils through our career’s education provision as well as our PSHE curriculum.

### Cyberbullying

Cyber-bullying is defined as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.”

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones.
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation.
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites.
- Using e-mail to message others.
- Hijacking/cloning email accounts.
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in on-line forums.

### Sending Nudes / Semi-Nudes (formerly sexting)

The sharing of naked or ‘nude/semi-nude’ pictures or video through mobile phones and the internet was previously referred to as Sexting. It also includes underwear shots, sexual poses and explicit text messaging. The terminology is more recognised by young people as “Sending nudes” as well as other slang terms.

While this often takes place in a consensual relationship between two young people, the use of images in revenge following a relationship breakdown is becoming more commonplace. It can also be used as a

form of sexual exploitation and take place between strangers. In our school we will treat any incidents sensitively and may inform parents if it will not raise risks for either child, children's services or the police.

### Social Media

In addition to the above online safety guidance, we recognise there are some specific risks with the use of social media platforms increasingly by younger children. Pupils of a young age are now aware of a wide range of social media platforms. They may access them via friends or family member's phones. Many have an age restriction, mainly due to how the platform can be used. Trends may be seen with platforms, especially those aimed at young people where they think their message or photo disappears once read, or children don't understand privacy settings. Whilst they can seem harmless, we will ensure that our educational provision sets out the responsibilities and legalities of usage as well as the dangers and risks that usage can bring.

### Filtering and Monitoring

The school has robust filtering and monitoring systems allowing excellent filtering capabilities. Appropriate staff keep abreast of any issues worldwide and update school systems regularly, and as necessary.

It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor online safety. The designated safeguarding lead will take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. The filtering and monitoring in this school is smoothwall and is in place to prevent against unwanted contact, grooming, online bullying, sexting, leaving a digital footprint, accessing inappropriate material deliberately or by accident, accessing inappropriate material beyond a child's capacity to comprehend.

### Child-on-Child Abuse Policy including Sexual Violence and Harassment

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and it can take various forms. – we robustly hold the view that it could happen here. Children can be victims, and perpetrators, in their own relationships. This will be dealt with in line with the statutory guidance set out in **KCSIE 2024** and as outlined in the guidance Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. In **KCSIE 2024**, the definition of child-on-child abuse includes:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Sexting
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Upskirting
- Abuse within intimate partner relationships

All of these behaviours are not acceptable, and it will be taken seriously. There is a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse.

We uphold the importance of making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, or “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys” or “girls being girls”. Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, and unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We recognise, acknowledge, and understand the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

We challenge physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection;
- Providing training to staff;
- Making staff aware that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, including direct disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment, they must not take the view it is not happening. All staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’;
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school’s behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence based content delivered through the curriculum;
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

All persons who need to report any unwanted, inappropriate, or hurtful behaviours whether they be on-line, in text type communications, on social media or in person to any member of our staff can be reassured that they will be taken seriously and supported to take any appropriate actions which may be in school or with external agencies as needed.

### **Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

All staff in our school are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. The school recognises that more vulnerable groups are girls, SEND and CLA. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional wellbeing. It is important that all victims are reassured they are taken seriously, that they should not feel ashamed and offered appropriate support. The child’s wishes and feelings will be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

Staff recognise that allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment are likely to be complex and will require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure (KCSIE 2023). The DSL must be notified without delay and decisions made on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking a

leading role using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies. As with other disclosures the person disclosing must be able to disclose the information in a supportive environment with a clear record of factual information made as soon after the disclosure as possible.

The DSL will refer to the Brook's Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Toolkit for guidance.

The DSL will follow Part 5 of **KCSIE 2024** on how to record and respond to a report and complete an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis. The risk assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support;
- Whether there may have been other victims;
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action; The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any sanctions;
- All other children at the school;
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

The DSL will consider:

- The wishes of the victim;
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused;
- Ages of the children involved;
- Developmental stages of the children;
- Any power imbalance between the children;
- Any previous incidents;
- Ongoing risks;
- Other related issues or wider context.

The DSL will manage the report with the following options:

- Manage internally
- Refer to Children and Families First
- Refer to the Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to **the Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub**)

If the alleged abuse involves an online element staff including the DSL will be mindful of the Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools DfE guidance (2018) and the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) guidance (**2022**) Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people. If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, the DSL will report to children's social care through contact with The Children's Resource Service, and



this will be in conjunction with having contacted the police first (irrespective of the child's age). Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to, such as immediate safety or risk to the child be they the victim or alleged perpetrator. The police will advise what information can or should be shared.

Ongoing response:

- The DSL will manage each report on a case-by-case basis, consider the proportionality of the response, and will keep the risk assessment under review.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils).
- The school will enforce sanctions against the alleged perpetrator in line with the school behaviour policy. Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in the light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of a permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.
- The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.
- The victim, alleged perpetrator and other witnesses (pupils and adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, the school will ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult to talk about their needs. The choice of any such adult will be the victims and the school will respect and support this choice.

## Bullying

All incidents of bullying (including those involving physical abuse), including cyber-bullying, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying, will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Bullying policy. This is linked with our Behaviour Policy and our PSHE **curriculum** which includes the statutory Relationships, Sex and Relationships and Health Education. Weston Secondary School is committed to treating all bullying seriously. Racial and homophobic incidents are recorded separately to general behavioural issues and appropriate consequences, re-education and support is put in place.



## Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)". The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously. When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. Confidential specialist support and advice on HSB is available from the specialist sexual violence sector and are listed in Annex B of the **KCSIE 2024**.

## Prejudice-based Abuse/Hate Crime

This is a criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's real or perceived disability; race; religion; gender identity; sexual orientation; and/or age. Although this sort of crime is collectively known as 'hate crime' the offender doesn't have to go as far as being motivated by 'hate', they only have to exhibit 'hostility'.

As a school we will train staff to ensure staff recognise what constitutes hate crime, or early indicative behaviour and take action to challenge it effectively. We will support victims of prejudice-based incidents and hate crimes. We recognise that anyone can be a perpetrator, and this can take place within groups who have a protected characteristic as well as those who do not.

Our school will use the Pan-Hampshire Prejudicial Language and Behaviour Toolkit (documents available from here).

## Harmful Practices

Harmful Practice encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community or an individual, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, abuse linked to faith or cultural practices such as breast flattening (sometimes referred to as breast ironing). It often can include a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

Any concerns held must be reported to the DSL without delay. The DSL will contact **social care** for advice and follow up with a written referral and may contact the police. If it is clear that a crime has been committed or the pupil is at immediate risk the police will be contacted in the first place, followed by **local safeguarding practices**.

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in England and Wales and it is mandatory for teachers and other regulated professionals to report known or disclosed cases of FGM directly to the police. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police

where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out. In these situations, the DSL and/or School Leader must be informed that the member of teaching staff has called the police to report information that they believe indicates that FGM has happened. Advice can be sought from the DSL if required. If the information is gained by a non-regulated professional, they must report to the DSL without delay for advice on actions.

At no time will school staff examine pupils to confirm FGM concerns. For cases where it is believed that a girl (under 18) may be vulnerable to FGM or there is a concern that she may be about to be affected by this issue the staff will inform the DSL who will report it in line with other child protection concern.

Through the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum, pupils will be made aware of the rights they have with regard to their body.

### **Breast Flattening**

Reports of concerns should be made through the usual process in school and the DSL will determine how and when to report to The Children's Resource Service, depending on circumstance and consider contextual factors such as a female relative staying or arriving, possibly from extended family, another area of the UK, or from overseas.

As a school we will raise any concerns where we think this action may be taking place.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a child to enter into a marriage without their full and free consent or where it is seen that they cannot consent, is a crime in England and Wales and is a form of abuse. Forced marriage is one in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are physically, psychologically, socially or emotionally coerced into entering into it. Where evidence is found of forced marriage or forced marriage is suspected, the school will inform and work with the relevant agencies to support the victim.

### **Possession or Witchcraft**

Sometimes faith/belief issues are believed to be linked to accusations of "possession" or "witchcraft". Whilst this is not common, children involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, their capacity to learn, their ability to form relationships and to their self-esteem. Such abuse generally occurs when an adult/ carer views a child as being "different" for any reason, and this is the reason for bad things happening to them/family or community. The adult attributes this difference to the child being "possessed" by a spirit or involved in "witchcraft" and attempts to exorcise him or her. This is sometimes attributed to faith/belief, or other protected characteristics.

### **The Trigger Trio**

The term 'Trigger Trio' has replaced the previous phrase 'Toxic Trio' which was used to describe the issues of domestic violence, mental ill-health and substance misuse which have been identified as common features of families where harm to women and children has occurred.

The above are viewed as indicators of increased risk of harm to children and young people. In an analysis of Serious Cases Reviews undertaken by Ofsted in 2011, they found that in nearly 75% of these cases two or more of the issues were present.

These factors will have a contextual impact on the safeguarding of children and young people.

## Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or pattern of incidents. The abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

We acknowledge that all **children who see, hear or experience its effects can** be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. We know that experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. We are aware, in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

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

We will ensure that our PSHE curriculum has planned learning for pupils to enable them to recognise and build healthy relationships and understand where they can get help from if they, or someone they know needs help or advice. This will be in line with the statutory guidance for the RSHE curriculum.

School staff are aware, as referenced in KCSIE, that advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available from:

- NSPCC
- Refuge (offers a 24-hour national domestic abuse helpline)
- Safe Lives (provide a toolkit for professionals to support an assessment)
- Operation Encompass

## Mental Health

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

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

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

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The department has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf), and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotionalhealth-and-wellbeing> Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol.

If staff become aware of any of the above indicators, or others that suggest a child is suffering due to parental mental health, the information will be shared with the DSL to consider a referral to The Children's Resource Service.

## Parental Substance/Alcohol Misuse

Substance misuse applies to the misuse of alcohol as well as 'problem drug use', defined by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs as drug use which has: 'serious negative consequences of a physical, psychological, social and interpersonal, financial or legal nature for users and those around them.

Parental substance misuse of drugs or alcohol becomes relevant to child protection when substance misuse and personal circumstances indicate that their parenting capacity is likely to be seriously impaired or that undue caring responsibilities are likely to be falling on a child in the family.

Children living in a home environment and exposed to this are at risk of harm, including neglect and if staff believe that a child is living with parental substance misuse, this will be reported to the DSL for referral to be considered for The Children's Resource Service.

## Parenting

All parents will struggle with the behaviour of their child(ren) at some point. This does not make them poor parents or generate safeguarding concerns. Rather it makes them human and provides them with opportunities to learn and develop new skills and approaches to deal with their child(ren).

Some children have medical conditions and/or needs e.g. Tourette's, some autistic linked conditions, ADHD; that have a direct impact on behaviour and can cause challenges for parents in dealing with behaviours. This does not highlight poor parenting either.

Parenting becomes a safeguarding concern when the repeated lack of supervision, boundaries, basic care or medical treatment places the child(ren) in situations of risk or harm.

In situations where parents struggle with tasks such as setting boundaries and providing appropriate supervision, timely interventions can make drastic changes to the wellbeing and life experiences of the child(ren) without the requirement for a social work assessment or plan being in place.

As a school we will support parents in understanding the parenting role and provide them with strategies to make a difference by:

- Providing details of community based parenting courses;
- Linking to web based parenting resources (for example <http://www.familylives.org.uk/>);
- Discussing the issue with the parent and supporting them in making their own plans of how to respond differently (using evidence based parenting programmes);
- Considering appropriate early help services.

## Children & the Court System

As a school we recognise that children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. They may also be involved in family law cases, such as when parents are separate and contact needs to be supported. We know that this can be a stressful experience and therefore the school will aim to support children through this process as appropriate.

Along with pastoral support, the school will use age-appropriate materials published by HM Courts and Tribunals Services (2017) that explain to children what it means to be a witness, how to give evidence and the help they can access and will use online materials published by The Ministry of Justice (2018) which offers children information & advice on the dispute resolution service.

These materials will also be offered to parents and carers if appropriate.

### **Children with Family Members in Prison**

Children who have a family member in prison are at greater risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, and poor mental health.

The school aims to:

- Understand and respect the child's wishes;
- Keep as much contact as possible with the parent and caregiver as appropriate;
- Be sensitive in lessons;
- Provide extra support.

Alongside pastoral care the school will use the resources provided by the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders in order to support and mentor children in these circumstances. School will use age-appropriate materials published by HM Courts and Tribunals Services (2017).

These materials will also be offered to parents and carers if appropriate.

### **Homelessness**

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

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

### **Taking Action to Ensure that Children are Safe at School and at Home**

#### **The Curriculum**

Throughout the whole school, staff raise pupil's awareness of safety knowledge. The aim is to raise awareness, confidence and resilience in all our pupils, enabling them to use strategies and a range of contacts that ensure their protection and that of others. In this way the school seeks to give pupils opportunities to develop the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.

Pupils will be taught that they have a right to be safe and they will be taught how to be safe in a range of situations and how to avoid harming themselves. This includes topics covering relationships, health, and wellbeing, and living in the wider world.

### Physical Intervention (use of reasonable force)

During rare occasions where a child is causing harm to themselves or others, staff are expected to safely intervene. The school follows the DfE guidance on Use of Reasonable Force (2013). Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use 'reasonable force' to prevent a pupil from:

- a) Committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- b) Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
- c) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.

School staff may also be empowered to carry out physical searches for weapons, illegal drugs, pornography etc. Actions by school staff must at all times be in accordance with guidance and procedures. In the event of searches or physical restraint being needed, parents will be informed the same day.

Any child who has more complex behavioural and emotional needs will have an Individual Behaviour Plan and a Risk Assessment which will be co-created by nominated school staff and shared and signed by parents/carers. These documents will be shared with other staff and reviewed on a regular basis.

Any restraint incident will be recorded using the **HET Incident Reporting System**. Parents/carers are always informed of any restraint used immediately.

### Reporting and Recording Concerns about a Child or Young Person

In our school any individual can contact the DSL or a Deputy DSL if they have concerns about a pupil. Staff understand through training that they must report without delay disclosures or information identifying harm to the DSL using the school's process. Staff will make a brief, accurate and verbatim record of the concerns including the child's own words (if a disclosure/allegation) or the evidence that has led to the concerns. This report is given to the DSL who will analyse risk and refer onwards as necessary and appropriate.

Referrals where urgent action is required should never be delayed in order for a full record to be written.

Staff should not delay reporting if the DSL is unavailable. If a DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable or there are immediate concerns, the staff member will refer directly to The Children's Resource Service and the police if appropriate.

The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for the **member of staff** to report directly to the police. The DSL should also be made aware.

Generally, the DSL will inform the parents prior to making a referral. However, where this may not be possible or appropriate, particularly when informing parents/carers may place the child at further risk.



Staff will notify the DSL (and attendance officer if nominated) of any child on a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan where there is an unexplained absence, who in turn will inform the allocated Social Worker or Child Protection Chair.

Staff will report to the DSL any additional concerns, disclosures or observations after the initial referral, not assuming that a referral in itself will protect children.

Staff will record any concern using the school system as it is acknowledged that it is the combination of information that often brings the best oversight of the whole child or family. Child protection records will be stored securely and away from main pupil records. Oversight of records of concerns made by staff will be maintained by Emma Church and Lisa Griffiths on a daily basis through the c4c system. Staff will be held to account for the record, timelines, and appropriateness of actions.

### Records

We will ensure all records pertaining to safeguarding and child protection (adult and children) will be kept in strict accordance with wider policy and practice and will do the same in respect of the handling and transfer of records.

- Keep records of child protection concerns securely and separately from the main pupil file and use these records to assess the likelihood of risk.
- Ensure that safeguarding records are transferred accordingly (separate from pupil files) and in a timely fashion when a child transfers school.
- Ensure that when a pupil transfers school and is on a child protection plan or is a child looked after, their information is passed to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed. Consideration is given to a transition meeting prior to moving if the case is complex or ongoing.

### Dealing with Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

Our school has clear procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. If a concern is raised about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff this information should be reported straight away and passed to the Headteacher, **David Butterworth**.

In the absence of the Headteacher or if the allegation is against the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Chair of Governors directly. In the absence of a Chair of Governors, **the HET Deputy CEO should be contacted.**

An allegation, in the context of the statutory obligations or organisations relates to any individual who works or volunteers in any capacity with children or any individual or organisation using the school premises for running an activity for children and where there is a concern that this person has or may have:

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



In all cases where the concern about an individual falls into one of the categories above, which does meet the harm threshold, this will be considered to be an allegation. In all such cases the allegation must be reported to the LADO as soon as possible, but must be within 24 hours.

### Low-Level Concerns

The school will also respond to low-level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold.

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

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

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language;
- Humiliating pupils.

The school will promote a culture in which safeguarding pupils is the uppermost priority beyond any perceived professional loyalties to colleagues, ensuring that staff are actively encouraged to report concerns, regardless of their relationship with the staff member.

From September 2024, any low-level concerns must be reported through the Hamwic Incident System (via the Hamwic Intranet). This allows staff to report a concern about another member of staff or the Headteacher. The online reporting form ensures details of the concern are captured for the Headteacher to review and investigate. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, unless they wish to remain anonymous.

Our low-level concerns reporting mechanism is in place to:

- Give everyone a way to raise their concerns discreetly and in the right way.
- Help create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school values and expected behaviour set out in the staff code of conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff.
- Address unprofessional behaviour, which may lead to a colleague receiving help, support and guidance at an early stage.

- Help identify a colleague who may be finding things difficult but does not feel able to come forward to say they are struggling, which may lead to targeted support.
- Help identify any weaknesses in the safeguarding systems of the school, which will lead to change.

We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

Low-level concerns will be managed in the following way:

- Concerns about members of staff will be read, reviewed and managed by the Headteacher. In some cases, the Headteacher may ask for advice from HR.
- Concerns about the Headteacher will be managed by the HET Deputy CEO.
- All concerns will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.
- If concerns are unsubstantiated or do not meet the low-level concerns threshold they will not be recorded.
- In most cases, a Headteacher will arrange a conversation with the member of staff. If the Headteacher is satisfied it is a valid concern, the conversation may lead to a follow-up in writing, either an email or letter of professional advice.
- The member of staff will be advised if the concern is being noted – the school MIS (BromCom) is used to do this.

Staff records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where this is identified, the school will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where it moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it will be referred to the LADO. Any organisations or individuals using school premises will be subject to the same procedure.

### The Role of the LADO

The LADO is responsible for:

- Providing advice, information, and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations around allegations and concerns regarding paid and unpaid workers;
- Managing and overseeing individual cases from all partner agencies;
- Ensuring the child's voice is heard and that they are safeguarded;
- Ensuring there is a consistent, fair and thorough process for all adults working with children and young people against whom an allegation is made;
- Monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible;
- Recommending a referral and chairing the strategy meeting in cases where the allegation requires investigation by police and social care.

### LADO Contact Details:

## Southampton

Jemma Swann (Jo Williams on Fridays)

023 8091 5353/07500 952037

[LADO@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@southampton.gov.uk)

## Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues using the school's Whistleblowing Policy. If the concern is in relation to a member of staff, the matter must be brought to the attention of the Headteacher immediately who will act in accordance with procedures in Part 4 of **KCSIE 2024**. Whistleblowing concerns about the Headteacher should be raised with the Chair of the Governing Body, in accordance with the **HET's Whistleblowing Policy**. **In the absence of a Chair of Governors, the HET Deputy CEO should be contacted.**

Any concerns which staff feel unable to raise internally or feel they have not been addressed correctly can be taken via the NSPCC helpline via [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## Escalating Professional Disagreement

At no time will professional dissent detract from ensuring that any child is safeguarded. If professionals are unable to resolve differences, this will then be addressed by the line manager in conjunction with the DSL in the first instance, and an email record/notes retained by both parties.

If any professional in our school remains dissatisfied with another professional/agency's response to the raising of a concern then the relevant manager should be contacted and the SSCP/HIPS procedures for escalation should be followed. Advice may be sought from SCC officers.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Types of Abuse

**Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger, and have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. Neglect can include physical neglect (not meeting a child's basic physical needs); educational neglect (a child does not receive an education); emotional neglect (a child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need); and medical neglect (a child isn't given proper health care).

**Physical Abuse** is when someone intentionally hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. Physical abuse symptoms include: bruises; broken or fractured bones; burns or scalds; bite marks; injuries and health problems. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell. If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

**Sexual Abuse** is when a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. There are two types of sexual abuse; contact abuse (which can include touching, kissing and oral sex) and non-contact abuse. Sexual abuse can happen in person or online.

**Emotional Abuse** (sometimes called psychological abuse) is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

**Online Abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the internet and can happen anywhere online. Children and young people might experience different types of online abuse, such as cyberbullying, emotional abuse, grooming, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

**Domestic Abuse** is defined as the behaviour of a person towards another person if they are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; psychological, emotional or other abuse. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a type of sexual abuse and is when a child or young person is given things like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship.

**Grooming** is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. It can happen in person or online, or both and by a stranger or someone they know. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.

**Child Trafficking** is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

**Honour Based Abuse** is an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual or family. This type of abuse can include female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing and forced marriage.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting' but has many other names.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** is where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

**County Lines** is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into suburban areas and market and coastal towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'.

**Child-on-Child Abuse** is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. It can take various forms. Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse with a digital element.

**Bullying** is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online.

**Cyberbullying** is bullying that takes place online and can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phones.