

# Oakdene Primary School



## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Policy Adapted by: M. Weston

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### 1. **Rationale and Purpose**

Oakdene Primary School recognises its obligation under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Children’s Act 1989 and 2004, to promote and safeguard the welfare of all its pupils and sees its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as fulfilling a key part of this duty.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is clear guidance and robust procedures around safeguarding and child protection, for all governors, staff (including volunteers), parents, carers, visitors and most importantly, for our pupils and their siblings and/or wider family. Oakdene Primary School believes that all children, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, culture, gender, family circumstances and ability, have the right to be protected from abuse. Oakdene Primary School also believes that all children also have the right to have a safe and nurturing childhood so they are placed in the best possible position to meet all of their health, social, emotional and educational outcomes.

This purpose and rational directly runs alongside our mission statement ‘Growing and Learning Together’.

Here at Oakdene Primary School, we believe that our core values of determination, honesty, respect, responsibility, pride and friendship are fundamental in regards to our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Here at Oakdene Primary School, we fundamentally believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy and safe. Therefore, we must ensure that our safeguarding practices are thoroughly effective and appropriately developed to meet the individual needs of our children.

### **Definition**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 “protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. **(p.6 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023)**.

## Introduction

Oakdene Primary School fully recognises the responsibility it has to effectively safeguard children. We believe that we have a significant contribution to make in ensuring all children are kept safe and achieve the outcomes they deserve.

There are three main elements to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:

- **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse and key named members of staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities. Due to our day to day contact with children, we strongly believe school staff are well placed to identify and act upon signs and indications of abuse.
- **Support** for pupils who may have been subject to abuse and working with families and additional agencies in order to address any safeguarding issues and achieve positive outcomes.
- **Prevention** through building the self-esteem and resilience of pupils and authentic and valued relationships with children and families.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in Oakdene Primary School, community education staff, temporary, part-time and supply staff and governors. All adults who come into school, for whatever reason, have a statutory duty to safeguard all of our children. Teaching assistants, mid-day assistants, office and cleaning staff as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child and therefore it is essential that all adults present in school are able to deal with child protection concerns quickly, confidently and effectively. Concerned parents, carers or members of the community may also contact the school if they are concerned about the welfare of a child of family.

This policy is written in line with **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002** and the **Children's Act 1989 and 2004**. The policy is also compliant with key statutory guidance including '**Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018)** and '**Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023)**. This policy also runs alongside the government guidance '**What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners' (2015)** and '**Statutory framework for the early years and foundation stage' (2023)**. Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy also reflects and is in line with the policies and practices of the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership and Pan-Merseyside Safeguarding Procedures.

All staff at Oakdene Primary School have a responsibility to read and adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy along with other relevant supporting documents. These include 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)' (full document for the DSL, Deputy DSL, Senior Leaders and Governors and Part 1 and Annex A for all other staff); 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018); 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners' (2015); and the staff code of conduct.

All staff and governors must sign to state that they have read and understood any guidance or legislation they are required to read.

Safeguarding is a **shared responsibility** and therefore all adults have a part to play in keeping our children and young people safe. This includes members of school staff working with families and additional external agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for our children. Oakdene Primary School recognises that collaborative working and sharing information is essential in order to effectively safeguard our children.

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**Please note that if you are ever concerned about the welfare of a child or family you must call The Contact Centre on 01744 676767 or, if it is after 5pm, The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0345 050 0148. Please contact the Police on 999 if you feel that a child or young person is in immediate danger.**

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## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Children's Act (2004) states that every organisation must have a "named person" for safeguarding. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), states that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be an 'appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college leadership team' (p.28). Here at Oakdene Primary School we have a named DSL and named Deputy DSLs. Both the DSL and the Deputy DSLs are members of the Senior Leadership Team and have a variety of roles and responsibilities related to safeguarding which are listed below.

#### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:**

Martin Weston – Deputy Headteacher

Telephone – 01744 678410

Email – [martin.weston@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:martin.weston@sthelens.org.uk)

#### **The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are:**

Lynsey Young – Headteacher

Telephone – 01744 678410

Email – [lynsey.young@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:lynsey.young@sthelens.org.uk)

Caroline Hughes – Assistant Headteacher

Telephone – 01744 678410

Email – [caroline.hughes@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:caroline.hughes@sthelens.org.uk)

Andrea Green – Pastoral Lead

Telephone – 01744 678410

Email – [andrea.green@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:andrea.green@sthelens.org.uk)

### **Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

- The DSL, who is a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, has lead responsibility for dealing with any safeguarding and child protection concerns in school. It is important that someone is available at all times to deal with any concerns or offer support or guidance to staff. This means that Oakdene Primary School has implemented safeguarding systems that are robust and allow an alternative appropriate member of staff (such as the Deputy DSLs ) to deal with a child protection concern quickly and effectively in the DSL's absence.
- It is always best practice to have the DSL or Deputy DSL on site. However, it may be unavoidable that the DSL will not be present in school due to their work pattern (such as attending training or meetings for example). In such circumstances, the DSL needs to be contactable at all times should a safeguarding issue arise. Should the DSL not be in school the Deputy DSL should be contacted in their absence. All staff will be notified if the DSL or Deputy DSL(s) are not on site.
- The DSL acts as a source of support, guidance and expertise when deciding how to deal with a child protection concern. This can include making a referral to an external agency, including Children's Social Care.
- The DSL receives dedicated Designated Safeguarding Lead training, which qualifies them to take on this role in school. This needs to be updated a minimum of every two years however Oakdene Primary School recognises and ensures that the DSL should receive regular updates, briefings and training on a wide array of safeguarding topics to ensure their knowledge is comprehensive and up to date. This broad range of training ensures that the DSL is confidently able to deal with a vast array of issues at a professional level.
- The DSL will provide statutory Safeguarding Training to all staff and long-term volunteers or students on an annual basis. For short term volunteers and members of staff, such as supply teachers, a Safeguarding Induction will be completed which will adequately equip them on how to effectively deal with safeguarding concerns in school.
- The DSL, along with all staff, will be able to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse. However, it will be the DSL's responsibility to make an appropriate judgement on what action to take. This will be based on the concern raised in accordance with the Local Authorities Descriptions of Need.

- The DSL will make the decision of when to offer families support and at what level. This includes any Early Help or intervention or referrals to external agencies such as Children’s Social Care. The DSL will ensure that they have met with the family and gained the relevant parental consent for any referrals or / and support offered.
- The DSL will attend regular training and network events and keep up to date with statutory guidance, changes in legislation and develop their knowledge around new and prevalent safeguarding topics.
- The DSL is responsible for writing and reviewing the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ensuring it contains relevant and up to date information. All staff and parents/carers of children who attend Oakdene Primary School have a responsibility to read and adhere to the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The DSL is responsible for creating and maintaining written or online records of child protection and safeguarding concerns. Some individual children will have an individual safeguarding file which provides a chronology for professionals. This includes, for example, any concerns that have been raised, meeting minutes or multi-agency referrals. Here at Oakdene Primary School, we use a secure web-based system called CPOMS to record any safeguarding or Child Protection issues. Oakdene Primary School adheres to GDPR data protection rules and regulations; this means that individual safeguarding files will be archived as part of the CPOMS system. **Please note, the school will share information with other professionals if this is deemed to be necessary and in the best interest of the child’s safety.** This includes requests for information from other services such as the police or Children’s Social Care. All individual safeguarding files should create an accurate and factual picture of a child and should be a proactive tool in preventing any safeguarding concerns from escalating.
- The DSL will either complete or contribute to the S175 Audit which is reviewed and quality assured by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. This is a self-assessment tool which is used to ensure that school’s safeguarding procedures are robust and effective.
- The DSL is aware of the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership (SHSCP) and how it operates. The DSL will also attend regular training provided by SHSCP.
- The DSL will attend multi-agency meetings and provide concise and accurate written reports stating and concerns or significant events, the strengths of the children and family and the school’s perspective and professional opinion on the situation. The DSL will work with class teachers and other relevant members of staff in order to comprise an accurate and factual report. The DSL will also obtain the wishes and feelings of the child or young person, so their views are incorporated and shape the report. The DSL will attend Child Protection Conferences and will be responsible for contributing to the decision as to whether a child should be subject to a child protection plan.

- The DSL will provide written reports and contributions to external agency assessments. This can include Child and Family Assessments (social care), CAMHS assessments and Family Action Meetings (this is not an exhaustive list). Again, if sharing information is deemed to be necessary in order to ensure the safety or protection of a child, then the DSL will provide a report to the relevant agency. Parents or carers consent will be sought in most cases however there may be occasions where this is not appropriate or may compromise the safety of the child. It is school's ethos, to work with our families openly and transparently. We recognise and strongly believe that this way of working strengthens relationships and improves outcomes for our children. We also strongly appreciate the vital role that parents, and carers have in the lives of their children and that this is fundamental to successful safeguarding practice.
- The DSL will create and maintain the school's Vulnerability Risk Register, kept in the school electronic Safeguarding folder. This is a fluid, working document which lists all the school's vulnerable children. This document allows the DSL and senior staff to be aware of and vigilant to individual vulnerabilities so that we can be proactive and offer families the best support possible at the earliest opportunity.
- The DSL monitors attendance and checks on the welfare of children who are not in school. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is directly linked to and supports the school's attendance policy.
- The DSL will work with the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and the Virtual School and Virtual Headteacher, to support the outcomes and achievements of Looked After pupils, as well as those who may have a social worker.
- The DSL will ensure that there is a well-managed filtering system in place at the school to ensure that there is a safe environment for pupils to learn, blocking harmful and inappropriate content but without over-blocking and negatively impacting on learning.
- The DSL will ensure that they are aware of and understand all filtering and monitoring systems and processes within the school and that they are implemented successfully, in liaison with the IT staff and technicians from St Helens LEA, using the Smoothwall system.
- The DSL will ensure that staff are trained in the expectations, roles and responsibilities linked to filtering and monitoring procedures in at least annual training updates for all staff.
- The DSL will ensure that staff are also trained to be aware of measures to take when children access any inappropriate content online and how to escalate concerns where they are identified.
- The DSL will ensure that they monitor use of devices and online activity. For monitoring to be effective it must pick up incidents urgently, usually through alerts sent via email or observations, allowing the DSL to take prompt action and record the outcome.
- The DSL and Headteacher will ensure that children are taught how to assess and manage risk themselves when accessing devices and online content.

- Any online incidents will be recorded using the e-Safety incident log (see E-Safety policy) and uploaded to CPOMs.

#### **Roles and responsibilities of the Deputy Safeguarding Lead:**

- The Deputy DSL is responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns in the absence of the DSL.
- The Deputy DSL is a strategic part in the development and implementation of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The Deputy DSL also receives additional training, including the Level 3 training which qualifies them as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

#### **Representation at meetings during school holidays**

Due to the term-time working pattern of school staff, and the statutory time scales for multi-agency meetings such as Child Protection Conferences, it can often be the case that schools may be unable to attend certain meetings during school holidays. However Oakdene Primary School recognises that continuity is vital and that school input into said meetings is essential. Therefore, if school are aware that they are unable to attend a meeting during the holidays, a referral will be completed to the Safeguarding Children in Education (SCIE) Coordinator, who is based within the Safeguarding Unit at the Local Authority. A report will still be completed and submitted by school and a handover meeting will be held between the SCIE Coordinator and the school representative prior to the meeting, to ensure all information is shared and communicated effectively. The SCIE Coordinator will then feedback any outcomes of the meeting back to school.

The DLS will in addition, inform relevant bodies from Social Care that they are unable to attend and contact the Local Authority Safeguarding Children in Education Officer. This is Donna Cullen. Donna will then be able act on behalf of the school. Donna will be able to then feedback to school the outcomes and actions of the meeting.

#### **Supervision of Designated Safeguarding Leads and Frontline Staff**

Here at Oakdene, we recognise that dealing with safeguarding and child protection concerns can be emotionally distressing for the member of staff involved. We also recognise that working in isolation can be detrimental and presents a high risk when making decisions relating to child protection. Oakdene Primary School is currently in the process of developing its supervision structure for staff.



## **Role of the Governing Body and the Governor for Safeguarding**

The governing body are accountable for ensuring the safety of the school and its pupils. They work alongside all members of staff, including the DSL, to ensure that the best practice is being adhered to at all times. They also have a strategic responsibility to implement and drive effective safeguarding practice in school. Governors also have the following roles and responsibilities:

- To approve and help review all school policies including the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Governors also have a responsibility to check that all policies contain the correct information and are up to date.
- To ensure the school operates safer recruitment procedures including attending Safer Recruitment Training, references, DBS checks and quality assuring the Single Central Record (this is not an exhaustive list).
- To attend appropriate safeguarding training, This should be differentiated to accommodate their strategic role rather than operational responsibilities.
- To look at and review data and information relating to safeguarding and child protection and to challenge pre-existing systems in order to improve practice. **The governing body should immediately express concerns if it feels that the school is not fulfilling its duty to keep its pupils safe.**
- To support staff during difficult or serious incidents that may have occurred.
- To deal with allegations against members of staff where appropriate and to deal with any allegations made against the Headteacher. Please note any allegations or concerns regarding the Headteacher should be referred immediately, via the school office, to the Chair of Governors, Paul Forester.

The Governor responsible for Safeguarding works directly with the DSL and Deputy DSLs to ensure that children are continually protected by school. It is an opportunity for the named governor to challenge appropriately and improve practice but also as a means for the Safeguarding Team to report back on the positive work that they are doing. We believe that at Oakdene Primary School, this joint working makes our systems more robust and effective whilst placing clear levels of accountability on staff, volunteers and governors.

**The named Governor for Safeguarding is Clare Oldham.**

**If you wish to contact the named governor responsible for safeguarding, please email the school office ([oakdene@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:oakdene@sthelens.org.uk)) or telephone on 01744 678410 and staff will inform the governor of your message.**

### **3. Types and Definitions of Abuse**

Child abuse can take many different forms. Staff at Oakdene Primary School receive comprehensive statutory safeguarding training annually to understand the different forms of abuse and their signs and symptoms.

Definitions, examples and procedures for the different forms of abuse can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Oakdene Primary School also recognises additional specific safeguarding issues which may put a child's safety or wellbeing at risk, include those documented in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. These include:

- Breast Ironing
- Bullying, including cyber-bullying
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines
- Children Missing in Education
- Children missing from home or care
- Child-on-child abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Children with family members in prison
- Contextual Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse (including violence, controlling and coercive behaviour)
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- E-Safety
- Fabricated or induced illness
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based violence / violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Homelessness

- Mental health
- Modern slavery
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Sexting
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Trafficking
- Upskirting
- Young Carers

#### **4. Prevention and Early Help**

##### **Prevention**

Oakdene Primary School believes that a proactive and preventative approach to safeguarding is the most effective. We are committed to addressing any safeguarding or welfare issues as soon as possible in order to prevent child abuse and ensure children achieve their outcomes.

In order for Early Help to be successful, Oakdene Primary School recognises that good levels of self-esteem, supportive friends and positive relationships with trusted adults, support prevention and early intervention when it comes to safeguarding children. We also believe that we should take a child centred approach in everything we do, and that by listening to the voice of the child, we make decisions in the best interest.

The school will therefore:

- (a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, encouraged to talk and are listened to; we will provide opportunities for children to express their wishes and feelings regardless of age, circumstances or ability;
- (b) Ensure children know that there are adults in school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- (c) Embed skills throughout school that help children to keep themselves safe. This includes throughout the curriculum, whole school initiatives and bespoke interventions. This can also include external agencies that come into school and deliver lessons on specific issues.

Early Help can be offered either solely by the school or through an Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) which looks to identify strengths and areas of support and put in place a multi-agency plan. If you would like more information around Early Help, please speak to the interim Head of School.

Early Help at Oakdene is supported and underpinned by the St. Helens Descriptions of Need Document.

### **Safeguarding within the curriculum**

At Oakdene Primary School, safeguarding children is of paramount importance and incorporating this within the curriculum is essential. Therefore, we will teach children across all year groups about a variety of topics and issues relating to safety and wellbeing. Our safeguarding curriculum is currently in the process of being developed further.

We also utilise outside agencies coming into school to support our children with a wide range of issues. This may include, but is not exclusive to school health, the Police, NSPCC and ChildLine as well as more targeted services such as dedicated days focusing on fire safety or The Prevent Duty.

Any disclosures or safeguarding concerns raised during or outside a safeguarding focused lesson will be dealt with effectively and immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The policy is written alongside the new Government Guidance, **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education**.

If you have any questions or concerns around these discussion topics, please contact Mr Weston and we will be happy to answer any questions and offer any support required.

### **5. Child Protection Procedures**

Oakdene Primary School Child Protection Procedures coincide with the procedures set out by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership. These are available at [www.sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk) . Oakdene Primary School also has clear and exact internal procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues; these should be adopted and followed by all staff members, visitors and volunteers.

*“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests of the child**”.*

Should a member of the school community receive a disclosure or raise a concern about a pupil or their family, the following process **must** be adhered to:

1. Staff have a concern or receive a disclosure.
2. Staff to speak to DSL or Deputy DSL immediately.
3. Staff to record concern on a Yellow Sharing Concern form (see appendix) as soon as possible. In all circumstances, this should be done before the end of the school day. If there are any marks or injuries on a child, staff must record this in detail using the body map within the form.
4. The DSL or Deputy DSLs will use their knowledge and expertise to make a decision as to whether the situation can be addressed by school, or whether a referral to an external agency (such as Children's Social Care) is required.
5. Parents or carers will always be informed of any referral to an external agency, unless it is felt that this puts the child at greater risk.
6. Staff have the right to ask the DSL what actions have been taken following their concern. We understand that staff will naturally worry about the safety and welfare of our pupils. The concern form includes a section for feedback to staff.
7. The DSL or Safeguarding team will scan and upload the yellow Sharing Concern form to CPOMS.
8. If a member of school staff are unhappy with how something has been addressed by the DSL or Deputy DSLs, they should follow school's internal escalation procedures.
9. If the DSL, Deputy DSLs or any other member of staff is unhappy with the decision or actions of an external agency, they should follow the St Helens Multi-Agency Resolution Procedure.

Staff **do not** have to wait for the DSL to make the referral, and can refer to Children's Social Care themselves. We acknowledge that in most cases, the above process will be followed, however there may be exceptional times where staff need to refer to services directly. This may be essential to ensure a swift response to a particular concern.

**Written or online records provide a chronology and can help prevent further issues from escalating. In more serious circumstances, they may be used as evidence in legal or Child Protection cases.**

**If a case is referred in and school disagree with the outcome, or if school are unhappy with the conduct of a professional agency, then the St Helens Multi-Agency Resolution Policy will be followed. Oakdene Primary School recognises that they have a duty to challenge other professionals where they feel that a child's needs are not being met.**

## **Recognising Abuse**

All staff are given comprehensive safeguarding training annually; this covers in detail how to potentially recognise the different forms of abuse and neglect listed in Appendix 1. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Identifying significant changes in a child's behaviour
- Deterioration in a child's general wellbeing
- Unexplained bruising, marks or possible signs of neglect
- Children's comments which give cause for concern
- Any reason to suspect abuse or neglect or abuse outside the setting
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff

### **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023 p.22**

Oakdene Primary School will allow social workers and/or police officers who are completing S17 (Child in Need) or s47 (Child Protection) enquiries to see and have contact with the child and/or any siblings in school. However, the school recognises that this may be a frightening or upsetting situation for some children. Therefore, school staff will take the place of an 'appropriate adult'; that is to offer support to the child, provide comfort by being with a staff member they know well and have a relationship with and to ensure that any specific needs or issues are communicated to the relevant worker.

It may be that at times, school will need to refer to the police. This decision is always made with appropriate consideration; Oakdene Primary School never wants to unnecessarily criminalise children, and so the necessity to contact the police will always be considered carefully. This policy is written alongside the NPCC guidance, **When to Call the Police – Guidance for Schools & Colleges.**

## **Managing allegations against staff members**

Any allegation made against a staff member will always be taken seriously and dealt with immediately. At Oakdene Primary School it is important to ensure that any allegation is thoroughly investigated in order to effectively ensure the safety of the child but also the staff member involved.

If an allegation is made or a concern is raised regarding a member of staff, this must be reported immediately to the headteacher.

If an allegation or concern is raised regarding the Headteacher, Head of School or Executive Headteacher, this should be reported to the Chair of Governors, Paul Forester.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, staff should not solely wait for a disclosure when considering concerns against staff members. We know that children and young people may feel intimidated to disclose about people they consider to be in positions of power and authority. It is therefore imperative that staff are vigilant against patterns of behaviours, observations and other issues or concerns, so they can take proactive action.

This could include looking out for behaviour such as:

- Breaking small rules to see what response is carried out, or;
- Pushing boundaries to determine whether awareness is dropped or jaded.

It may be necessary to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice, either using a consultation form or via telephone. However, if it is evident that the allegation is true, or if we are advised by the LADO, then a LADO referral will be completed.

Email address: [sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk)

Telephone Number: 01744 671262

Police will always be present at LADO meetings to determine whether a crime has been committed.

If you're a professional with concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in our school or another organisation, you can talk to us anonymously to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:

**NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285**

The Whistleblowing Advice Line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, for any concerns or allegations against supply members of staff, the school will hold lead responsibility for managing this and not the supply agency.

False or malicious allegations will be taken extremely seriously and will not be tolerated under any circumstance. If the allegation turns out to be malicious, it will down to the Headteacher's as to whether a sanction should be issued. The LADO will also be contacted so the child's details can be recorded within the Local Authority in order to protect staff.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, it does not mean that the staff member will automatically be suspended. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors where appropriate, will make decisions based on individual cases in conjunction with the LADO and HR.

## **Abuse of Trust**

All staff at Oakdene Primary School are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of staff and a student under the age 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that student is over the age of consent.

## **Supporting the pupil at risk**

We recognise that children who are subject to abuse, in whatever form, may experience a significant effect on their physical and social and emotional wellbeing as well as their academic attainment. Oakdene Primary School recognises that school is a stable and secure environment in the lives of our pupils. Therefore, we strive to create a safe and consistent place where children feel secured and valued.

Between staff and the DSL, information about vulnerable children's academic progress and attainment must be known and all staff must have high aspirations for these children and the DSL must support staff to overcome challenges. This is especially important for children with social workers.

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018, Oakdene Primary School recognises that some children may be considered more vulnerable than others. These include:

- A child that has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND)\*
- A young carer
- A child who is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- A child who is in a family circumstance that is presenting challenges for them such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.



\* Children with additional learning difficulties or disabilities can face additional barriers regarding recognition of abuse. These barriers can include:

Barrier	Resolution / Additional Support
<p><b>Communication Difficulties</b></p> <p>It can be significantly more challenging and unlikely for a child to disclose abuse if they have difficulties with communication.</p>	<p>Speech and language interventions</p> <p>Utilising key members of staff who have good understanding and relationships of that pupil</p> <p>Alternative communication means such as sign language, Makaton, PECs etc.</p>
<p><b>Behavioural Difficulties</b></p> <p>Screaming, shouting, emotional distress, marks being ignored, overlooked or failure to investigate if this is considered to be ‘regular behaviour for the child’.</p>	<p>Ensure that incidents are questioned and challenged.</p> <p>Understanding behaviours displayed such as triggers, relation to mood.</p> <p>Individual Behaviour Plans</p> <p>Gaining the views, wishes and feelings of the child.</p> <p>Always questioning any marks, bruises etc.</p>
<p><b>Physical Disabilities</b></p> <p>Physical disabilities can present a significant barrier for some children as it can limit their independence and personal ability to keep safe.</p>	<p>Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present.</p> <p>Using times such as during personal care to be vigilant against marks and bruises.</p> <p>Ensuring open dialogue and trusting relationships at all times.</p>
<p><b>Marks and Physical Injuries</b></p> <p>Assumptions that marks relate to the child’s physical disability or individual need without further exploration.</p>	<p>Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present.</p> <p>Seeking advice from external agencies including Children’s Social Care.</p>
<p><b>Bullying and prejudice behaviours</b></p> <p>Children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities may be more at risk of bullying and prejudice behaviour.</p> <p>Children with SEND may be more prone to peer group isolation.</p>	<p>Ensuring that equality, diversity and difference is taught to all children throughout school.</p> <p>Challenging and dealing with anti-bullying incidents immediately.</p> <p>Supporting children with forming healthy friendships with their peers.</p>

<p><b>Cognitive difficulties</b></p> <p>Some children may have difficulty understanding or recognising abuse.</p>	<p>Ensure PSHE and SMSC lessons are differentiated accordingly.</p> <p>Clear and direct conversations to be had regularly with those who are most vulnerable.</p>
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Protecting pupils with additional needs is underpinned by the school’s SEND policy.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- Our prevention procedures
- Regularly reviewing and updating the Vulnerability Risk Register
- The school’s behaviour policy is aimed at supporting all pupils in our school, especially those who are identified as being vulnerable. All staff will adopt a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour displayed by the child and not by condemning the child themselves, thus preventing damage of the children own sense of self-worth. Oakdene Primary School recognises that all behaviour is a form of communication and we aim to address through support for our pupils. **The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is linked to the Behaviour Policy.**
- Oakdene Primary School is committed to working with the appropriate agencies that best support our children and their families; we will complete any referrals deemed necessary that would provide a child with the right specialist support.
- Oakdene Primary School will exercise the Local Authority’s Multi-Agency Resolution Policy when deemed necessary.
- When any vulnerable pupil leaves our school, all information will be photocopied and transferred, or electronically transferred, to the new school within 5 school days (KCSIE 2023) and Social Care would be informed where necessary (such as if a child were to move to a different Local Authority). Oakdene Primary School adheres to the Local Authority STAR Protocol which is listed in Appendix ( P56 ).
- We will always listen to each and every one of our pupils and utilise our trusting and authentic relationships to ensure that a child’s voice is heard.

## 6. Further Safeguarding Arrangements

### **Voice of the Child**

Supporting our pupils in ensuring their voice is heard is a significant part of effective safeguarding procedures. We do this through collecting pupil voice through carefully planned and structured conversations.

It may also be appropriate for dedicated work to be completed with a child throughout a case or situation to ensure that their input is at the centre of that plan or intervention. Oakdene Primary School's approach to Child Protection and Safeguarding will always be child centred.

### **Safeguarding and Attendance**

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is directly linked to the school's Attendance Policy.

At Oakdene Primary School, we acknowledge that good attendance is essential not only for academic attainment, but also to ensure the safety of the child. As a result of this, we have set procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils through their attendance.

- If a vulnerable child is absent from school, or we are concerned about the welfare of a pupil who is not present, Oakdene Primary School will make contact with any relevant agencies, including the Education Welfare Service and Children's Social Care. This will be on the first day of absence.
- If we remain concerned a home visit may be completed by a member of staff or the Education Welfare Service.
- When a Child is Missing Education (CME), Oakdene Primary School will follow **Education Welfare's**

#### **Child Missing Education Policy and Procedures.**

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5861/st-helens-la-procedure-for-locating-missing-children-december-2016.pdf>

- There is a named CME Officers within the Education Welfare Service.
- There is also a dedicated CME email address for any enquiries relating to Children Missing Education. The email address is: [cme@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:cme@sthelens.gov.uk)
- If a child goes missing from the school site during the school day, parents and carers will be contacted immediately as will the Police. Staff will use their knowledge of the pupils and their own discretion as to whether it is appropriate to follow them off the school premises.

- Any adult with Parental Responsibility has the right to collect their child from school, unless there is a Contact, Residency or Child Arrangement Order in place, or if there are child protection concerns surrounding a parent or carer. For families with orders in place, we ask parents and carers to inform us of any such instance and provide paper evidence where necessary. **Please not we will not keep original copies of orders but may take photocopies which will be stored securely within the child’s individual safeguarding file.**

### **Monitoring and Filtering Systems**

Oakdene is responsible for ensuring that children are not subjected to inappropriate online content. Robust monitoring and filtering systems are put in place by the IT service provider from St Helens Local Authority, consistently applied across schools in the borough, using Smoothwall. This is reviewed centrally by St Helens IT, but is also monitored by the Safeguarding lead and Computing subject lead with the school IT technician. Further details can be found in sections 3 and 6 of the school E-Safety Policy.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras in Schools**

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is directly linked to the school’s mobile phone policy.

### **7. Links to other policies**

Oakdene Primary School’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy links to the following school, Local Authority and Pan-Merseyside policies and procedures:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- E-safety Policy (including Social Media Policy)
- Whistle Blowing Policy

## Appendix 1 – Categories and Definitions of Abuse

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child and causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Types of physical abuse include:

- Hitting with hands or objects
- Smacking
- Slapping or punching
- Kicking
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Poisoning
- Burning or scalding
- Biting and scratching
- Drowning
- Suffocating
- Fabricating or inducing symptoms\*
- Any other way of causing physical harm.

\*Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare yet serious form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. FII is also known as “Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy” (not to be confused with Munchausen’s syndrome, where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves).

It is important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person.

#### **Signs of physical abuse**

It is normal for children to get bumps and bruises through everyday activities such as playing. This does not mean that they are subject to physical abuse. However, if a child regularly has injuries, if there seems to be a pattern to the injuries, the child discloses abuse or the explanation doesn’t match the injuries, then this is a strong indication that abuse may have taken place.

Physical abuse symptoms include:

- Bruising
- Broken or fractured bones
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks
- Marks that look like a distinct object and/or shape

It can also include other injuries and health problems such as:

- Scarring
- The effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- Breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these. Visible signs include:

- Swelling
- Bruising
- Fractures
- Being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- Breathing problems
- Seizures
- Vomiting
- Unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It is sometimes referred to as psychological abuse. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

Types of emotional abuse include:

- Conveying that children are worthless, unloved, and inadequate or only valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person.
- Humiliation or constantly criticising a child

- Threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names
- Making the child subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- Not giving a child opportunity to express their views, 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- Not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives
- Blaming and scapegoating
- Inappropriate expectations for their age or development – including overprotection, pushing a child too far or not realising their limitations.
- Making a child perform degrading acts
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others such as domestic violence or abuse.
- Exposing a child to upsetting events such as drug taking
- Failing to promote a child's social development; not allowing them to have friends
- Persistently ignoring a child
- Never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on success
- Never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect
- Serious bullying and causing the child to feel frightened or in danger.
- Exploitation or corruption of children
- Manipulating a child

### **Signs of emotional abuse**

There might not be obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect and a child might not tell anyone what is happening until they have reached a 'crisis point'. Staff therefore need to be vigilant and know what signs and symptoms to look out for.

As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be challenging to tell if a child is being emotionally abused. Children who are being emotionally abused might:

- Seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
- Struggle to control their emotions
- Have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- Act in a way that is inappropriate for their age

The signs of emotional abuse can also present differently depending on the age and developmental stage of the child.

### **Babies and toddlers (pre-school age children)**

- Be overly affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well
- Seem unconfident wary or anxious
- Not have a close relationship or bond with their parent
- Be aggressive or cruel towards other children or animals

### **Signs in older children**

- Use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Struggle to control their emotions
- Have extreme outbursts
- Seem isolated from their parents
- Lack social skills
- Have few or no friends

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, developmental and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. This can also occur during pregnancy as a result of parental substance misuse. It is the most common form of child abuse.

There are 4 different types of neglect:

- **Physical neglect** – a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they are not properly supervised or kept safe.
- **Educational neglect** – a parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education
- **Emotional neglect** – a child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- **Medical neglect** – a child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

### **Signs of neglect**

#### **Poor appearance and hygiene**

- Being smelly or dirty
- Being hungry or not given money for food



- Having unwashed clothes
- Having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter
- Having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants

### **Health and development problems**

- Anemia
- Body issues such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- Medical or dental issues
- Missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- Not given the correct medicines
- Poor language or social skills
- Regular illness or infections
- Repeated accidental injuries, often caused by a lack of supervision
- Skin issues such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- Chronic head lice
- Thin or swollen tummy
- Tiredness
- Untreated injuries
- Weight or growth issues

### **Housing and family issues**

- Living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- Being left alone for a long time
- Taking on the role of a carer for other family members

### **Change in behaviour**

- Becoming clingy
- Becoming aggressive
- Being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- Changes in eating habits
- Displaying obsessive behaviour
- Finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities
- Missing school

- Showing signs of self-harm
- Using drugs or alcohol

**Neglect is a prominent contextual issue within St. Helens, and such it is a priority area for the Safeguarding Children Partnership. A neglect strategy has been launched and Oakdene Primary School is committed to work alongside families, the community and other agencies to address this issue.**

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. A child might not understand what is happening or know that it is wrong. They may be afraid to tell someone what is going on. Sexual abuse can occur anywhere, including in person and online

There are two types of sexual abuse; **contact** and **non-contact** abuse.

**Contact abuse** is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes:

- Sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they are clothes or not
- Using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
- Making a child undress or touch someone else
- Any physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, including touching, kissing and oral sex.

**Non- contact abuse** is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes:

- Exposing or flashing
- Involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images
- Exposing a child to sexual acts
- Making a child watch sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Making a child masturbate
- Forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
- Making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos

- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone
- Grooming a child in preparation from abuse

### **Signs of sexual abuse**

#### **Emotional signs**

- Avoid being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Self-harm
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem

#### **Physical signs**

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- pregnancy

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

Child Sexual Exploitation is sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18. It involves situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. CSE can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phone without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/ economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

#### **Warning signs and symptoms of Child Sexual Exploitation**

- Can be difficult to identify and can be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour

- Be involved in abusive relationships
- Hang out with groups of older people, anti-social groups or with other vulnerable peers
- Associates with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Gets involved in gangs, gang fights, gang memberships
- Have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Spends time at places of concern such as hotels or known brothels
- Not know where they are because they have been moved/trafficked around the country
- Go missing from home, care or education
- Have expensive items such as mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- Be very secretive about what they are doing online
- Have access to drugs and/or alcohol

How do we manage suspected cases of Child Sexual Exploitation, [The school] will follow **Pan-Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol** which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children partnerships' website:

[https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/assets/1/pan\\_merseyside\\_multi\\_agency\\_ce\\_protocol\\_march\\_2018.pdf](https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/assets/1/pan_merseyside_multi_agency_ce_protocol_march_2018.pdf)

If CSE is suspected, the practitioner should complete a Service Request Form (SRF) and send this through to St Helens MASH.

The SRF form will be screened at a multi-agency daily meeting, where partners from People's Services, Health, Social Care, Police and Catch 22 will assess each case.

Catch 22 are a dedicated service currently commissioned within St. Helens to support children and young people as well as professionals in all aspects centring on Child Sexual Exploitation. More information, advice and guidance can be found on their website:

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/st-helens-missing-child-sexual-exploitation-service/>

## **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of a person under the age of 18 and may coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under that age into activity

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

- c) Through violence or the threat of violence

The victim may be exploited even if the activity appears consensual (i.e. moving drugs, or the proceeds of drugs from one place to another).

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (**Home Office 2018**).

### **County Lines**

County Lines 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”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons (**Home Office 2018**).

County Lines is a form of Child Exploitation (CE). It is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery and missing persons. The response to tackle it involves the Police, the NCA (National Crime Agency) and a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing, and exploitation has a devastating impact on children, vulnerable adults and local communities.

### **Cuckooing**

Urban gangs establish a base in the market location, often by taking over homes of local vulnerable adults by force and/or coercion, in a practice referred to as ‘cuckooing’. Urban gangs then use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money.

### **Trafficking**

A person commits an offence if the person arranges or facilitated the travel of another person to exploit them. **It is irrelevant whether the exploited person, adult or child, consents to the travel.** A person may, in particular, arrange or facilitate another person’s travel by recruiting, transporting or transferring, harbouring or receiving them, or transferring or exchanging control over them. ‘Travel’ means arriving in, or entering, any country; departing from any country and travelling within any country.

The same Pan-Merseyside Procedure for Child Sexual Exploitation should be followed for suspected or confirmed cases of Child Criminal Exploitation.

## So-Called 'Honour-Based' Abuse

So-called Honour Based Violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. Although it is often perceived to be linked to religion, this is not a religious practice and is a form of child abuse when the victim is under the age of 18. However, any form of Honour Based Violence, despite the age of the victim, is illegal. Honour based violence can include, but is not exclusive to the following:

- Forced abortion and hymen repair
- Abduction and imprisonment
- Forced marriage
- 'Honour' suicide
- 'Honour' Violence

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (sometimes referred to female circumcision, cutting or sunna) refers to the procedure that intentionally alters or causes injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It occurs mainly in Africa and to a lesser extent, in the Middle East and Asia; however, children living in the United Kingdom are still at risk of this form of abuse. Although it is believed by many to be a religious issue, it is in fact a **cultural practice**. There are no health benefits to FGM. Communities particularly affected by FGM in the UK include girls from; Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Indonesia and Afghanistan. In the UK, FGM tends to occur in areas with larger populations of communities who practice FGM, such as first-generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Key points:**

- It is NOT a religious practice
- FGM occurs mostly to girls aged 5-8 years old; but up to around 15
- It has been a criminal offence in the United Kingdom since 1985.
- It has been an offence since 2003 to take girls abroad
- Criminal penalties include up to 14 years in prison

### **Reasons for this cultural practice include:**

- Cultural identity – an initiation into womanhood

- Gender identity – moving from a girl to a woman – enhancing femininity
- Sexual control – reduce the woman’s desire for sex
- Hygiene/cleanliness – un mutilated women are regarded as unclean

**Risk factors include:**

- Low level integration into UK society
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- A visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the family’s country of origin
- Talk about a ‘special’ event or procedure to ‘become a woman’

**High risk time**

This procedure often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period for FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Schools should be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a girl in a high-risk group is absent from school or where the family request a holiday or ‘authorised absence’ for just before or just after the summer school holidays.

Although it is difficult to identify girls before FGM takes place, where girls from these high-risk groups return from a long period of absence with symptoms of FGM, the police and social care must be informed immediately.

**Process to identify pupils at risk of FGM**

Oakdene Primary School looks to unify the cultural backgrounds of pupils, risk factors and possible symptoms to form a process to effectively identify pupils who may be at risk of FGM. Oakdene Primary School will always work with additional agencies such as the Police, Social Care and Children’s Services in order to prevent any harm from being caused to any pupil who may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation.

**Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL, or deputy DSL, with regards to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.**

**Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, “teacher” means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England.**

**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, p.14-15**

It is made clear to all teaching staff during their annual safeguarding training, as well as through policies and documentation, that they have the mandatory responsibility to report FGM directly to the Police.

**Post FGM symptoms include:**

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- Unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- Reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- Asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem, due to embarrassment or fear.

**Longer term problems include:**

- Difficulties urinating or incontinence
- Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- Menstrual problems
- Kidney damage and possible failure
- Cysts and abscesses
- Pain when having sex
- Infertility
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- Emotional and mental health problems

**It is mandatory for any cases for FGM to be reported directly to the Police. All staff, visitors and people who come into contact with children at Oakdene Primary School must adhere to this.**



## **Breast Ironing**

Breast ironing is the process whereby young pubescent girls 'breasts are ironed' massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects (for example hammers or stones) for non- medical reasons. The purpose of the procedure is to make the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely

### **Health consequences**

- Abscesses
- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever

Breast ironing is performed by mothers or female relatives. It is wrongly thought that breast ironing will protect the girl from rape, unwanted sexual advances, early sex and pregnancies. The practice is most likely to occur at the start of/during puberty

All staff need to be aware of breast ironing as part of our safeguarding duties

### **Risk factors and indicators**

The girl generally believes that the practice is being carried out for her own good and she will often remain silent. Girls between the ages of 9-15 years old are most at risk within practicing communities

Breast ironing is a well-kept secret between the young girl and her mother. Often the father remains completely unaware.

### **Signs to look out for**

- Unusual behaviour after an absence from school, including depression, anxiety, aggression, withdrawn etc
- Reluctance in undergoing normal examinations

- Some girls may ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- Fear of changing for physical activities due to scars showing or bandages being visible

### **What can we do?**

- We can raise awareness about breast ironing through sex and relationships education as part of our PHSE curriculum to help pupils keep themselves safe from harm and build their confidence to ask for help and learn that their body belongs to them.
- There is no specific law within the UK around breast ironing, however it is a form of physical abuse and if you believe a child may be at risk of or suffering significant harm.
- Report to your DSL
- Complete a Service Request Form (found in Safeguarding folder) and refer to social care

## **Forced Marriage**

There is a clear difference between ‘forced marriage’ and ‘arranged marriage’. Arranged marriages have worked well in society for many years. An arranged marriage is when families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

A forced marriage is when one or both parties do not consent to the marriage, and people are forced into marriage against their will. Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights. Both physical and emotional abuse may be used to coerce people into the marriage.

In law, both parties to a marriage must validly consent to the marriage, the minimum age a person is able to consent to a marriage is 18. A Forced Marriage Protection Order can be obtained from a Family Court in order to protect victim, both adults and children from a potential forced marriage or people who are already in a

[Legal age of marriage in England and Wales rises to 18 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### **Potential warning signs or indicators that a child is at risk of Forced Marriage:**

- Absence and persistent absence
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Fear about forthcoming holidays

- Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality
- Poor exam results
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility
- Removal from a day centre of a person with a physical or learning disability
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education

Oakdene Primary School acknowledges that persistent absence from school or requests for leave of absence can be an indicator of a potential safeguarding risk. The issues surrounding Forced Marriage link directly to the school Attendance Policy; any absences from school will be followed up in accordance with this policy. This is to ensure that we make every effort to know a child's whereabouts and make sure they are safe to the best of our ability.

#### **What to do if you have a concern regarding Forced Marriage?**

Forced Marriage is an offence and if this is happening to a child under the age of 18 it is considered to be child abuse. If you suspect that a child or young person is being forced to marry, then you must share your concerns with the Designated Senior Lead (DSL) who will make appropriate contact with Children's Social Care and/or the Police. The Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted for advice and help in making this referral, either by phone on **020 7008 0151** or by email on **fmu@fco.gov.uk**.

## **Radicalisation and Extremism**

Oakdene Primary School has a duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to prevent children and young people from being radicalised.

**Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

**Extremism** is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy (2010) as:

“Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas”.

**Extremism** is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- Encourage other serious criminal activity to seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK

**Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use of threat **must** be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public as is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause. (KCSIE 2023, p.149).

**Indicators of vulnerability include:**

- **Identity crisis** – the pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society
- **Personal crisis** – the pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have disassociated from their existing friendship groups and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- **Personal circumstances** – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting a pupil's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- **Unmet aspirations** – the pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.
- **Experiences of criminality** – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement/reintegration.
- **Special Educational Needs** – the pupil may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with other, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motives of others.

(This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purpose of violent extremism).

Oakdene Primary School's work reflects the Government's PREVENT strategy in their approach to radicalisation and extremism. Staff are required to read elements of the PREVENT strategy relating to school and education.

If a member of staff or the school community has a concern around radicalisation or extremism, they must report this immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSLs.

If a concern is raised about a child or young person being radicalised or being exposed to extremism, the DSL will complete a **Prevent Referral and Assessment Form** which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

- The named single point of contact for PREVENT in school is Mr Martin Weston.

Prevent Duty Guidance 2023: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

## **Missing Children and Young People**

Going missing is a dangerous activity and puts a child or young person at immediate risk. This section reflects the guidance set out in **St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership's Missing Children Procedure**, which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Partnership website.

This information is also in line with the Government guidance - **Children who run away or go missing from home or care (2014)**.

There is a national definition of what constitutes a missing person (including a child):

“Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another”.

In St Helens, anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities;
- Involvement in criminal activities including gang crime
- Victim of abuse
- Victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation or through gang activities
- Risk of trafficking
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Deterioration of physical and mental health
- Missing out of school and education

- Increased vulnerability.

Longer term risks include:

- Long term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- Crime
- Homelessness
- Disengagement from education
- Child sexual exploitation
- Poor physical and/or mental health.

**The police should always be notified immediately when a child or young person goes missing, regardless of what setting they go missing from.**

### **Preventing children and young people from going missing**

Any missing episode is potentially serious; one run away is one too many. Therefore, prevention work relating to children going missing is of paramount importance. The prevention of children and young people going missing required an integrated multi-agency approach to vulnerable children and young people. Prevention strategies need to include the prevention of children going missing from home and care and will include:

- Awareness and training for all professionals;
- Awareness and safety sessions for young people via curriculum opportunities;
- Multi-agency assessment procedures, including Early Help, should include the risk indicators for running away;
- Consistent implementation of this protocol across all agencies;
- Monitoring and reporting is missing from home, care and education incidents;
- Support to parents and carers;
- Every individual has a duty to inform the authorities if a child is missing.
- Effective interventions are best achieved by partnership working, information sharing, problem-solving and performance management.

## **Missing from care**

Looked after children can also be 'absent' in that they are away from their placement, their whereabouts are known, but they should not be there. If a child is categorised by Merseyside Police as 'absent', the person calling the police will be asked if there are safeguarding concerns or risks, to inform the Police response. Professional should contact the Police if there is a change of circumstances that would increase risk level or if the person returns.

Merseyside Police Missing Persons Policy states that **"All children aged 12 years and under will be categorised as 'missing' and not categorised as 'absent' under any circumstances"**.

If Merseyside Police have a CSE or CCE flag recorded on their systems or have any intelligence that a child is at risk of CSE or CCE, they must automatically be recorded as 'missing' and never 'absent'.

Regarding children who are Looked After by another Local Authority and placed within the Merseyside boundary, they remain the responsibility of the placing Local Authority.

Regardless of how long a child has been missing, upon their return an Independent Return Interview should be offered to all children and young people who have been missing from home

Further information regarding children and young people who go missing from home, or children and young people who go missing who are already open to children's social care, can be found in the **St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership's Missing Children Procedure**

## **Private Fostering**

Private Fostering is where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) goes to live with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. It is a private agreement between a parent and another adult.

A close relative is defined under The Children's Act 1989 and includes a parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether blood related or through marriage). A private foster carer may be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt, an unmarried partner of a parent, a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child's family.

Examples of private fostering could include:

- Children or young people who are sent to this country for education or health care by their parents from overseas.
- Teenagers living with a friend's family because they do not get on or relationships have broken down with their own family.

- Children living with a friend’s family because their parents study or work involves unsociable hours, which makes it difficult to use ordinary day care or after school care.
- Children staying with another family because there has been a bereavement, or their parents have divorced or separated.
- A child from overseas staying with a host family while attending school or overseas students at boarding school who do not stay with a host family during the holidays.

Education and other professionals have a mandatory duty to notify the Local Authority and Children’s Social Care when they believe there is a private fostering arrangement and they are not satisfied that the Local Authority has been or will be notified by the parent or carer. Private foster carers also have a responsibility to notify the Local Authority.

If a member of staff or any individual believes that a child is being privately fostered, they should contact Children’s Social Care or inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will make the referral to Children’s Social Care.

## **Child-on-Child Abuse**

*“All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child)”* **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, p.15.**

Child on Child abuse features physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of a child/young person by their peers. Child on Child abuse is often located within the neighbourhoods, schools, peer groups and families associated with the young people who are affected.

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between children; these are described below and are followed by sections giving advice and support on action to be taken in relation to both the victim and the child displaying the harmful behaviour.

It should be noted that there can be considerable overlap between these different types of child on child abuse.

This section directly links to **Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.**

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may include biting, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be reasons why a child physically harms another, and it is



important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour (including whether it happened accidentally) before considering the action or sanction to be taken. Any physical incidents will be taken extremely seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with Oakdene Primary School's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy.

### **Prejudice Behaviour**

The term 'prejudice related bullying' refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, (physical, emotional or both) which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society. In particular, prejudices are to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, gender identity and sexual identity. Any form of prejudice behaviour will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy.

### **Harmful sexualised behaviour**

Harmful Sexual Behaviours are behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or abusive towards another child, young person or adult.

Harmful sexualised behaviour (HSB) from children or young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. HSB may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse including rape.

Although all children and young people have the potential to be at risk of any form of sexual harassment or assault, we recognise that some groups may be more at risk than others. For example, girls are often more at risk of being sexually harassed than boys.

Not all sexual behaviour displayed by children or young people is harmful. Showing some sexualised behaviours can be healthy and a normal part of child and adolescent development. We refer to the NSPCC guidance on healthy and harmful sexual behaviour.

Decisions on whether sexualised behaviour is potentially harmful should be made with reference to the NSPCC framework, knowledge and understanding from specialist training and advice from the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership, including the use of the ERASE protocol which advises practitioners on how to identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviour. (ERASE should only be used once a member of staff has received the appropriate and relevant training)

Due to the concerning and sensitive nature around suspected Harmful Sexual Behaviour from a child or young person, as well as the need to keep the victim safe, advice will be sought from external agencies including Children's Social Care. School will also work with families where appropriate, and directly with both the child displaying the harmful behaviour and the victim (separately) to ensure that all children are kept safe and the harmful behaviour ceases. If the harmful behaviour continues, it may be necessary to take further action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim. This is in line with Oakdene Primary School's Behaviour Policy.

### **Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

#### **Sexual Harassment:**

- Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which can occur on or offline
- Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment
- Sexual harassment can normalise inappropriate behaviours and create an environment which may lead to sexual violence

#### **Sexual Violence:**

- Rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault

Here at Oakdene Primary School, we understand that any incidents of sexual assault, harassment or rape may be hard for a child or young person to disclose to an adult. There are many barriers that may stop a child or young person from wanting to share what has happened to them. Therefore, even though there may be no specific reports of child-on-child abuse, Oakdene Primary School will always adopt an 'it could happen here' attitude. We also understand that some disclosures we receive may be relating to historic incidents.

Regardless of when or where the incident took place, we will ensure that:

- We take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- We recognise, acknowledge and understand the scale of harassment and abuse that can take place;
- We challenge physical behaviour, including that which may be criminal in nature;
- All disclosures or concerns are taken seriously, and that all victims will be assured of this;
- All incidents are thoroughly investigated;
- We listen to the voice of the child or young person and let that inform and shape how we support them;
- We understand that some children may not be ready or able to tell us what has happened to them, and it is our job to understand behaviour and other forms of communication or indicators;

- We teach about healthy relationships, rights and abuse within our safeguarding curriculum to help protect and empower pupils
- We challenge inappropriate language, gender stereotypes or attitudes.

Incidents will be dealt with in line with the Local Authority's ERASE Protocol. Here at Oakdene Primary School we acknowledge that both the victim and the child displaying the Harmful Sexual Behaviour may require a safeguarding response.

### **NSPCC Helpline**

The NSPCC have launched a dedicated helpline which provides appropriate support and advice to victims of abuse and harassment, and concerned adults, which also includes any appropriate onward action.

This dedicated helpline will offer support to:

- all children and young people making current and non-recent disclosures of sexual harassment or abuse on school grounds within school time, and incidents linked to school in any capacity
- any children or young people who want to talk about being involved or witnessing any incidents
- any adults who have experienced non-recent abuse
- parents and carers who have any concerns about their own or other children
- professionals who work in schools and need support in this or related issues.

Young people and adults can contact the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education on **0800 136 663** or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Cyber bullying**

Cyberbullying includes the use of phones and computers/electronic devices to harass, threaten or intimidate someone and it can include; instant messaging; email; chat rooms; voice notes or social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. It may constitute a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Outside of the immediate support children or young people may require in these instances, they school may have no choice but to involve the police to investigate certain situations. Many incidents may occur outside of school hours, however we understand that any situations around cyber-bullying will have an impact on the child's wellbeing at school, especially if the child who has displayed the harmful behaviour also attends.

Oakdene Primary School works hard to provide a PSHE, SMSC and safeguarding curriculum that encompasses online safety and helps our pupils deal with any concerns they may have.

In cases of sexting, government guidelines will be consulted and implemented. The website is as follows:

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident \(overview\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-how-to-respond-to-an-incident-overview)

## Initiation / Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony that is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation because they all experienced it as a part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment. Although it is not subjective to males, it should be noted that boys may be more at risk of such forms of abuse.

## Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and must include:

- **Imbalance of power** – young people who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity, to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition** – bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

## Responses

All disclosures, claims or allegations of child-on-child abuse will be investigated immediately and as thoroughly as possible. It will be important to gain accounts from all those involved, including the victim, the child displaying the behaviour and any witnesses. Previous records of incidents will be looked at to determine whether there are any patterns of behaviour and the persistency of the issue. Once the evidence has been collated, a judgement and outcome will be decided based on the information and evidence gathered. The response will be dependent upon the nature and severity of the incident. However, Oakdene Primary School

has set responses to manage and support both the victim and the child who has displayed the harmful behaviour.

**For the young person who has been harmed:**

The appropriate support required depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one-to-one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends, in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PSHE that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently, subsequently developing children's understanding of these topics.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst they are in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

**For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour:**

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in a harmful manner. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Support from identified services may be necessary through Early Help and the young person may require additional support from family members. Dependent upon the outcome of the investigation, a decision will be made as to whether the child requires therapeutic support, a behaviour sanction, or a combination of both.

If there is any form of ongoing criminal investigation it may be that the young person cannot be educated onsite until the investigation has concluded. In such circumstances, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site. Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured proportionately by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents/carers. This may mean additional supervision

of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

### **After care:**

It is important that following the incident, the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). Regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

### **Minimising the risk**

As with all forms of abuse, preventative measure should be taken to avoid any child on child abuse occurring. This includes the following:

- Ensuring that safeguarding is taught as part of the curriculum across all key stages and year groups
- That any lower level incidents of bullying etc. are dealt with immediately and effectively in order to ensure they do not escalate
- That children who have vulnerability indicators of either being a victim or someone who may display harmful behaviour, are identified early and subsequently supported.
- That vulnerability indicators are clearly identified and recognised, such as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, learning difficulties and disabilities, and previous abuse suffered.
- That all staff have relevant up to date training on child on child abuse a part of their annual safeguarding training.
- That school is a safe and caring environment where children and young people feel confident to express their concerns at the earliest stages.

### **Record keeping**

It is important that school staff keep accurate and comprehensive records of any bullying or child on child abuse incidents that take place. This is important for the following reasons:

- To hold evidence of incidents so their frequency, nature and severity can be assessed to determine the appropriate action
- To spot trends and to see whether there are particular issues that seem to be more prevalent within the school and therefore need specific intervention
- To providing supporting documentation for any investigation including criminal investigations

- To ensure compliance with child protection procedures
- To provide evidence of outcome of any incidents to ensure they have been dealt with effectively
- To ensure effective monitoring procedures.
- Figures around incidents of Child on Child abuse will be reported to the governing body.

**Child on Child abuse can be and is as damaging as any form of abuse. All incidents will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with in the same approach as other allegations of abuse. Child on Child abuse should never be tolerated under any circumstance and should not be passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’, ‘boys being boys’ or ‘part of growing up’. All children have the right to feel safe with their peers and should be protected accordingly. Any incidents of bullying will be dealt with in line with the school’s Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.**

## **Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. For many young people, their relationships extend beyond their family such as within their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online. These relationships can unfortunately sometimes feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts and therefore can have little impact on a young person’s experiences of extra-familial abuse. This abuse subsequently undermines the parent-child relationship, which is in itself, a protective factor for most children and young people.

It is therefore important that practitioners, including school staff, engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial (outside the family) contexts, and recognise that assessing and intervening with these areas are a crucial part of safeguarding practices and responsibilities. Contextual safeguarding is therefore a continuation and expansion of child protection systems by recognising that children and young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

## **Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)**

This section is linked to Government Guidance ‘**Sexting in Schools and Colleges**’.

### **Definition:**

*“Whilst professionals refer to the issues as ‘sexting’ there is no clear definition of ‘sexting’. Many professionals consider sexting to be ‘sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the internet”.* **(Sexting in schools and colleges p.5).**

Many children have access to technology and devices such as tablets and mobile phones. It is our responsibility as parents, carers and educators to ensure that children are kept safe online and that they are aware of risks.

*“Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is ‘indecent’ is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18” (p.7).*

It will never be our intention to criminalise children and young people, but rather to protect them and prevent any harm coming to them. Any incident involving youth produced sexual imagery will be responded to in accordance with **‘Sexting in schools and colleges’** guidance. Any incidents of sexting will be judged on a case by case basis; that is that advice will be sought from Children’s Social Care, the child’s history and vulnerability indicators will be factored in, as well as the nature of the incident. Response and intervention could range from school-based intervention work or other early help initiatives to a completion of a referral to Children’s Social Care.

*“Children under 13 are given extra protection from sexual abuse under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This law makes it clear that sexual activity with a child under 13 is never acceptable, and that children of this age can never legally give consent to engage in sexual activity” (p.29).*

*“Any situation involving children under 13 and youth produced sexual imagery must be taken seriously as potentially being indicative of a wider safeguarding or child protection concern or as being problematic sexual behaviour” (p.29).*

No adult in school will view any indecent images or material. Any evidence of sexting or disclosures will be immediately referred to the Police and/or Children’s Social Care. It is not up to school to investigate this further and any investigations will be conducted accordingly by the Police and Children’s Social Care.

## **Upskirting**

Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks in order to obtain sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence and anyone, of any gender, can be a victim.

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019.



## **Children With Family Members in Prison**

Around approximately 200,00 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. Having a parent in prison can increase the likelihood of a child experiences poor outcomes, including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

It is therefore essential that school provides support to the child or young person and helps them to achieve and reach their potential. Resources and support can be found on The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO):

<https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/category/children#results>

## **Homelessness**

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

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

KCSIE 2023 p.147

## **Domestic Abuse**

The term domestic abuse (or domestic violence as it is sometimes referred to) is used to describe anything from emotional abuse, financial abuse to physical assault, sexual abuse, intimidation, isolation, threats or coercive and controlling behaviour.

The Government define domestic abuse as:

*“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or*

*sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional”.*

This also includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called ‘honor killings.

There are different types of domestic abuse. They are:

- **Emotional abuse** – constant criticism, insults, undermining capabilities
- **Physical abuse** – hitting, punching, burning, strangling, punching, slapping, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair out, pushing, shoving
- **Sexual abuse** – forcing unwanted sexual acts, having sex with you when you don’t want to have sex, any degrading treatment based on your sexual orientation
- **Isolation** – preventing someone from having or developing family, social or professional relationships, preventing from working, monitoring or blocking your telephone calls.
- **Financial abuse** – withholding money, making a person account for every penny they spend, taking your money without asking.
- **Threats** – making angry gestures, using physical size to intimidate, shouting someone down, destroying someone’s possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a weapon, threatening to kill or harm someone around children.
- **Coercive control** – an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

Domestic abuse is often a combination of several, if not all of the above.

### **Operation Encompass**

Our school is part of Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales.

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

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school about **all** police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day.

Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputies (DDSLs) have attended either an Operation Encompass briefing or completed the online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation

Encompass to all other school staff and Governors. All schools staff and Governors can undertake the online training.

Our DSL, Mr Martin Weston, undertook training in September 2023.

Our DDSLs undertook training in September 2023 or were already trained.

Our Safeguarding Governor undertook training in September 2023.

Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school, as shown on the school website Safeguarding page, and we ensure that when a new child joins our school the parents/carers are informed about Operation Encompass.

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

As a staff we have discussed how we can support our children who are experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse on a day-to-day basis and particularly following the Operation Encompass notification. We have used the Operation Encompass Handbooks to inform our thinking.

We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.

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

We have used the Operation Encompass Key Adult Responsibilities checklist to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

When Head Teacher, DSL or DDSLs leave the school and other staff are appointed, they will ensure that all Operation Encompass log in details are shared with the new Head Teacher /Key Adults and that the new member of staff will undertake the Operation Encompass online training.

**Domestic Abuse is a prevalent issue amongst our community in St Helens. Therefore, we are fully committed to support our children and families, whilst working with other agencies, to address this issue.**

**Oakdene's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy directly links to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

## Appendix – NSPCC Healthy and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

### The stages of normal sexual behavior

There are 4 phases of childhood sexual development. Just like every other part of growing up, some children mature sooner or later than others. Children with developmental delays may not stick to these age guides. If a parent or carer is worried about anything they can speak to a health professional about it.

Below are some examples of **healthy and age appropriate** sexual behaviour.

#### **Infancy from 0 to 4 years**

Even at this stage, sexual behaviour is beginning to emerge through actions like:

- Kissing and hugging
- Showing curiosity about private parts
- Talking about private body parts and using words like poo, willy and bum
- Playing “house” or “doctors and nurses” type games with other children
- Touching, rubbing or showing off their genitals or masturbating as a comforting habit

#### **Young children from 5 to 9 years**

As children get a little older they become more aware of the need for privacy while also

- Kissing and hugging
- Showing curiosity about private parts but respecting privacy
- Talking about body parts and sometimes showing them off
- Trying to shock by using words like poo, willy and bum
- Using swear and sex words they have heard other people say
- Playing “house” or “doctors and nurses” type games with other children
- Touching, rubbing or showing others their private parts

#### **Pre-adolescents from 10 to 12 years**

Children are getting more curious about sex and sexual behaviour through:

- Kissing, hugging and ‘dating’ other children
- Being interested in other people’s body parts, relationships and sexuality
- Using sexual language and talking about sex with friends
- Looking for sexual pictures or online porn
- Masturbating in private and experimenting sexually with the same age group

#### **Adolescents from 13 to 16 years**

As puberty kicks in, sexual behaviour becomes more private with;

- Kissing, hugging, dating and forming longer-lasting relationships
- Being interested in and asking questions about body parts, relationships and sexuality
- Using sexual language and talking about sex with friends
- Looking for sexual pictures and online porn
- Masturbating in private and experimenting sexually with the same age group

### **How to respond to sexualized behaviour**

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up and as they start to make decisions about relationships. By knowing what is 'normal' at each particular stage you can be ready for what to expect, even though it might seem a little uncomfortable at times.

The way you respond is important.

If you are too disapproving or imply that sex shouldn't be spoken about then your child may be less likely to come to you with any questions or worries they may have.

Of course, this won't be easy for everyone, especially if your child's behaviour seems shocking or morally wrong to you. Try to keep calm. Your body language and tone can make a difference. The way you react can affect how comfortable your child will feel about talking to you about these things in the future.

## Appendix – Sexual Behaviours Across a Continuum

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
- Developmentally expected	- Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	- Problematic and concerning behaviour	- Victimising intent or outcome	- Physically violent sexual abuse
- Socially acceptable	- Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	- Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	- Includes misuse of power	- Highly intrusive
- Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	- Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	- No overt elements of victimisation	- Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance	- Instrumental violence that is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
- Shared decision-making	- Generally consensual and reciprocal	- Consent issues may be unclear	- Intrusive	- Sadism
		- May lack reciprocity or equal power	- Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given by victim	
		- May include levels of compulsivity	- May include elements of expressive violence	

# **WORKING TO STOP DOMESTIC ABUSE SCHOOL CHARTER**

**AS A SCHOOL WE RECOGNISE THAT  
DOMESTIC ABUSE CAN HAVE A  
SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON OUR  
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY  
We therefore pledge to:**

- 1. Support any child who is experiencing domestic abuse at home, including gaining their wishes and feelings and acting in their best interest**
- 2. To act on any Operation Encompass notifications immediately**
- 3. To ensure that healthy relationships are taught as part of our curriculum, so children are able to recognise abuse**
- 4. To provide a safe environment where children and families feel confident to disclose abuse, knowing we will take action to support them**
- 5. Commit to working/participating with other organisations to facilitate the best support for those who experience domestic abuse**

## **SIGNATURES**

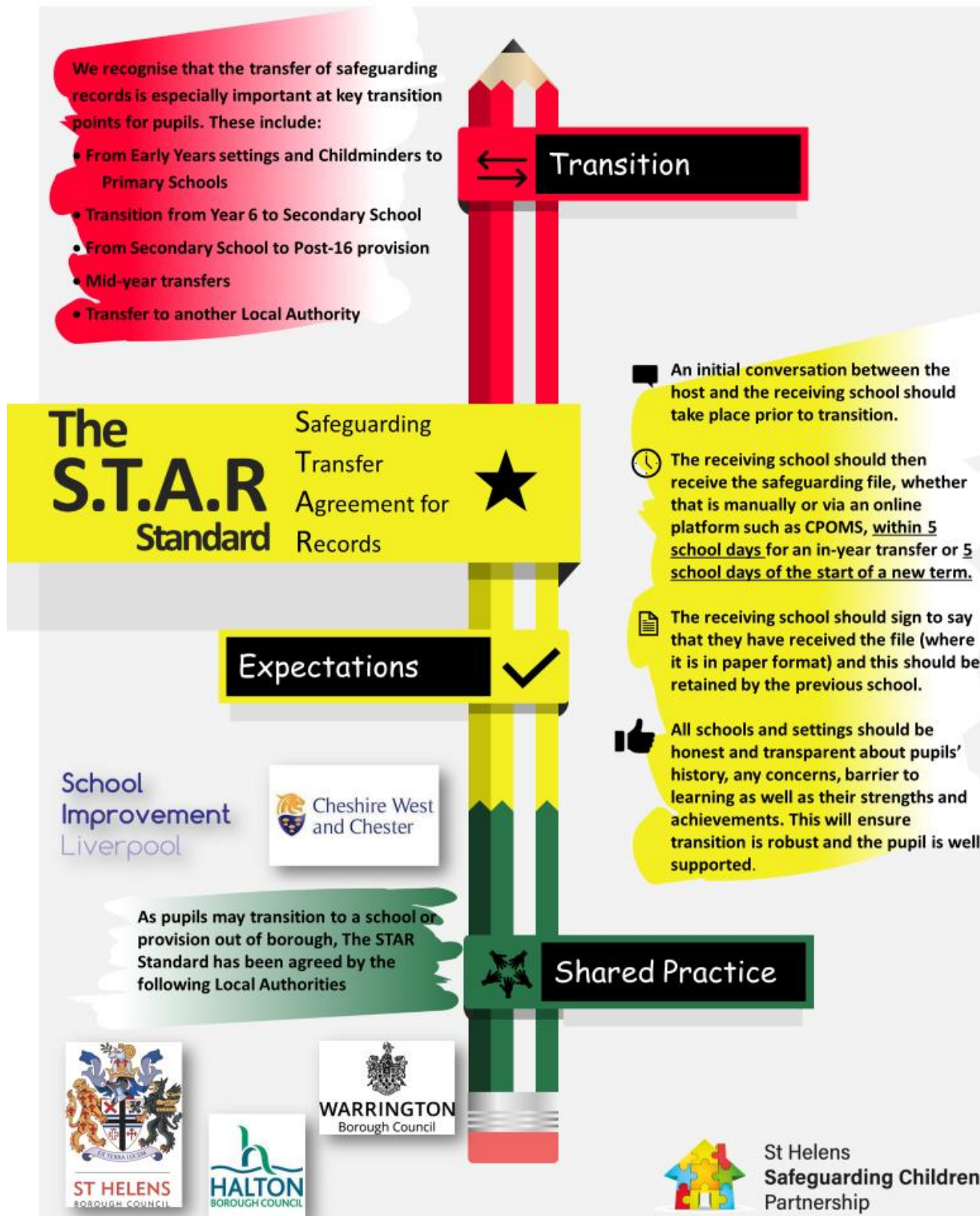
**HEADTEACHER /  
PRINCIPLE**

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**CHAIR OF  
GOVERNORS**

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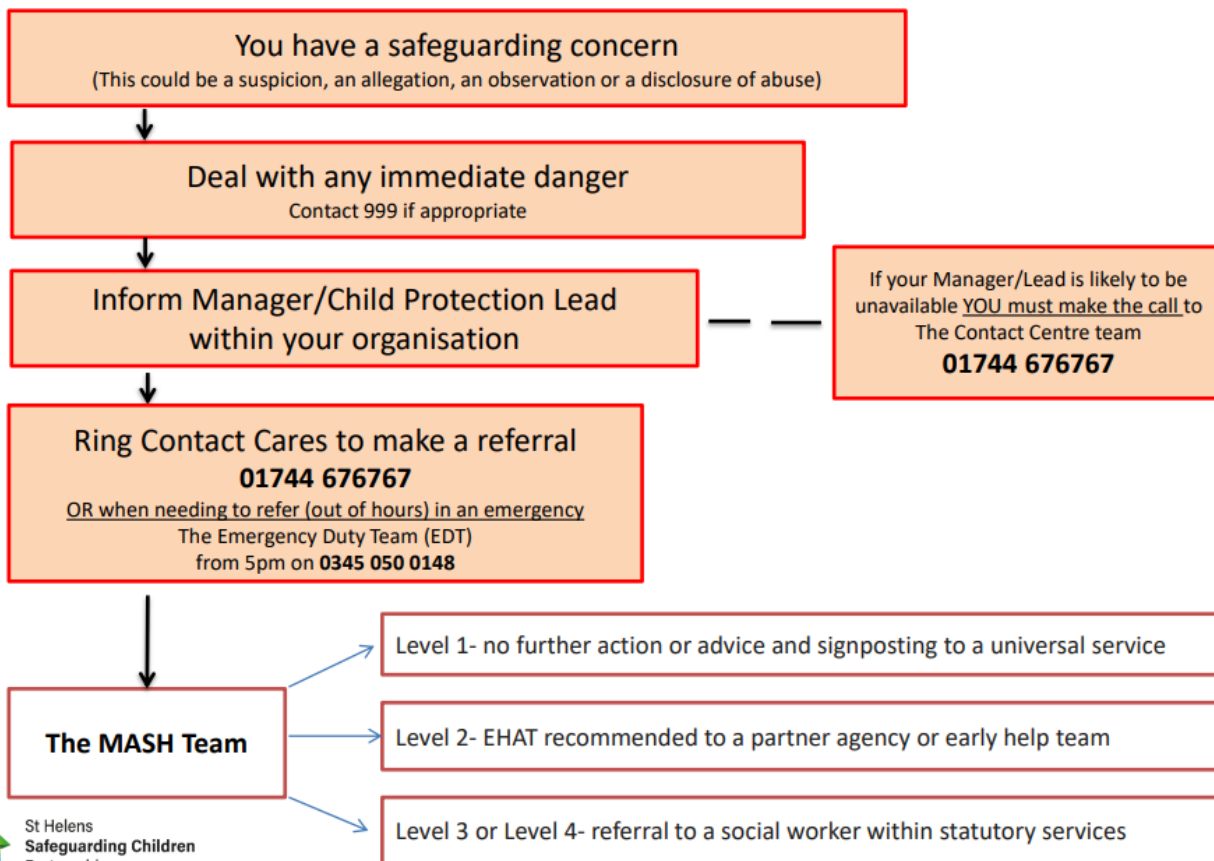






Appendix – St Helens Flowchart

**St. Helens process for reporting concerns about children (Under 18)**



## Appendix – Sharing Concern Form (Yellow)

<b>Name of Child / young person:</b>		<b>Date of birth and age:</b>	
<b>Male/female:</b>	<b>Ethnic Origin:</b>	<b>Disability Y/N:</b>	<b>Religion:</b>
<b>Day &amp; date of concern</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Time recorded / reported</b>
<b>Siblings' names and DOB:</b>			
<p><b>Initial report of the concern / s:</b> <i>In factual terms; what did the child say? How are they feeling? How is their behaviour? Are there any signs of injuries or pain? (If so, illustrate on body map) Are any other children or adults involved? If additional space is needed to record information, please see final page of this form.</i></p>			<p><b>Examples of what you might say:</b></p> <p><i>“You have done the right thing by telling me...”</i></p> <p><i>“This is important. I need to speak to Mr Weston about it.”</i></p> <p><i>“I will do my best to help you.”</i></p> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <p><i>Observe &amp; listen – don’t ask leading questions</i></p> <p><i>Give the child time and space to answer your questions</i></p> <p><i>Do not over-talk or interrupt</i></p> <p><i>Use short, open-ended questions</i></p> <p><b>Productive Questions</b></p> <p><i>Where    Tell me    In detail</i></p> <p><i>When     Explain    Exactly</i></p> <p><i>Who       Describe</i></p> <p><i>What     Show me</i></p> <p><i>How</i></p>
<p><b>Additional information:</b> <i>Your views on what you know about the child e.g. Any previous concerns? How are they doing in school? Any comments on their presentation, their personal circumstances (such as health, development and whether they have any additional needs), their identity, race, religion and/or if known, their social relationships with their family, friends and wider networks?</i></p>			
<p><b>Your response and actions to the concern:</b> <i>What you have done / said to the child or agreed to do?</i></p>			
<p><b>Your name:</b></p> <p><b>Your role or position:</b></p> <p><b>Your signature:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If not an employee of the school, please ensure you provide your contact details, should the DSL need to contact you regarding your concern.</i></p>			

**Headteacher/ DSL's immediate response and actions taken:** *Include sharing and gathering information, speaking to child, parents or carers and gauging their response. This may also include undertaking a professional consultation. Has any immediate risk assessment been carried out if so, what?*

**Information shared with Parents / carers?** *Are they aware of school's concerns / actions carried out to support / safeguard CYP? Do you have consent for this? If not rationale for not sharing information?*

**Information shared with other staff/ agencies?** *Who, what, how and your rationale for this?*

**Outcome for the Child:** *What level of intervention is required to safeguard and promote the CYP welfare? i.e. where does this level of need sit on the **Continuum of Need document***  
[www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child\\_protection/referral/index.shtml#need](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/referral/index.shtml#need)  
*- Universal, Targeted, Intensive Support or Specialist/Safeguarding?*

**Feedback given to member of staff reporting concern:** *This is to be an overview omitting any confidential information, consider 'need to know'*

**Your name:**

**Your role or position:**

**Date, day and time of this recording:**

**Your signature:**

**Checklist for DSP (to be printed on back of record of concern form)**

- ✓ Child clearly identified.
- ✓ Name, designation and signature of the person completing the record populated?
- ✓ Date, day and time of any incidents or when a concern was observed?
- ✓ Date, day and time of written record?
- ✓ If a third party has raised concerns, are details of this person included (name, relationship to the child and their contact details if relevant)?
- ✓ Distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay
- ✓ Concern described in sufficient detail, i.e., no further clarification necessary.
- ✓ Child’s own words used. (Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim)
- ✓ Are the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event included? Is it clear what their relationship is to the child?
- ✓ Record free of jargon?
- ✓ Written in a professional manner without stereotyping or discrimination?
- ✓ What did the member of staff say or do in response to the concern?
- ✓ Record of concern completed in a timely manner.
- ✓ Record of concern passed to DSP in a timely manner.
- ✓ The record includes an attached completed body map (if relevant) to show any visible injuries – see attached.
- ✓ Is any additional paperwork, e.g., handwritten notes of conversation with parents attached securely to this record?
- ✓ Has DSP completed their sections in full- including action taken and outcome, feedback to staff and information sharing?
- ✓ If the concerns have not been referred to Children’s Services/Police, are the reasons clearly recorded by the DSP?
- ✓ Has this form been added to chronology in CPOMs?

<b>Audit date:</b>	<b>Audited completed by:</b>		
<b>Overall RAG rating (see key below)</b>			
<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Name and position of person responsible</b>	<b>Date action completed</b>

<b>RED</b>	<b>Indicates that information from the checklist is lacking and deficiencies need to be addressed as a matter of urgency</b>
<b>AMBER</b>	<b>Indicates that key information is included but recording could be further improved</b>
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>Indicates that the recording meets the above required standards</b>

*If you intend to give a copy of the above action plan to the member of staff, please ensure they are not given page 1, i.e., the actual record of concern form which contains confidential details.*

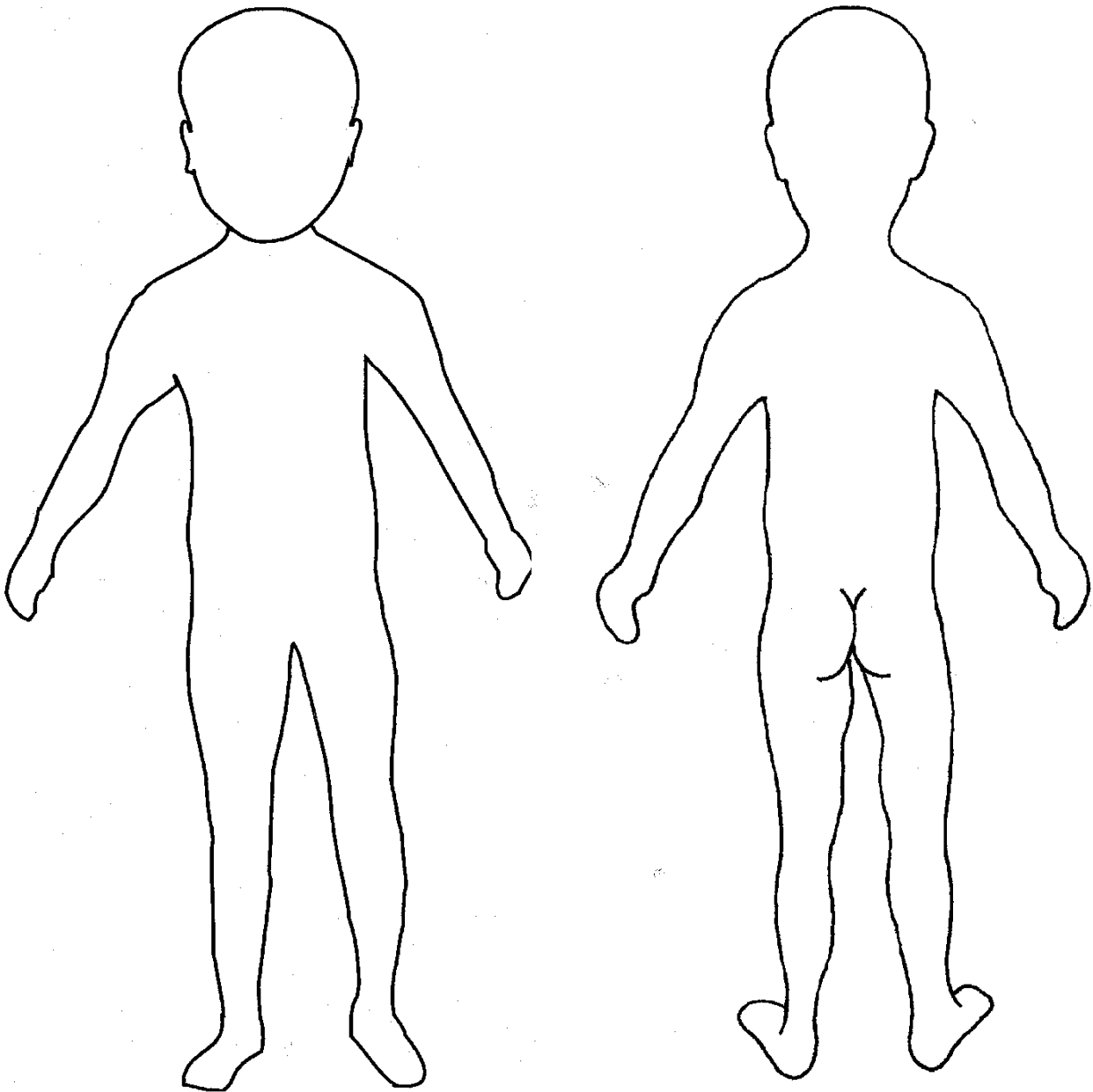
**Oakdene Primary School  
BODYMAP**

**(This must be completed at time of observation)**

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

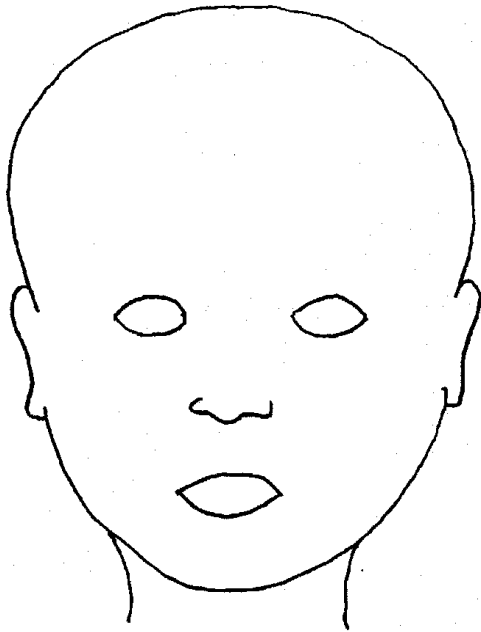
Name of Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

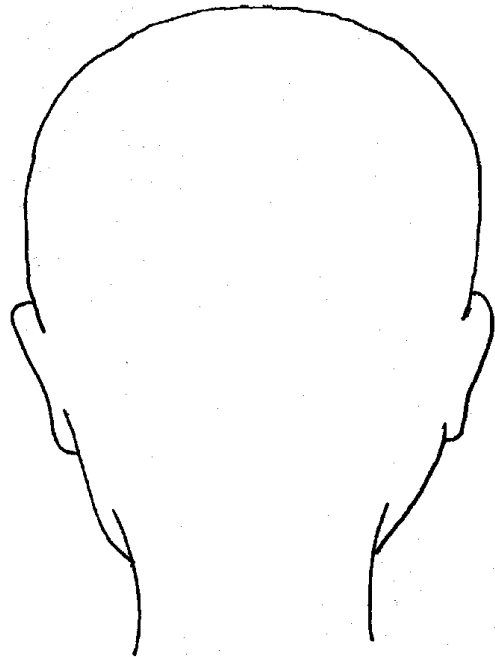


Name of pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

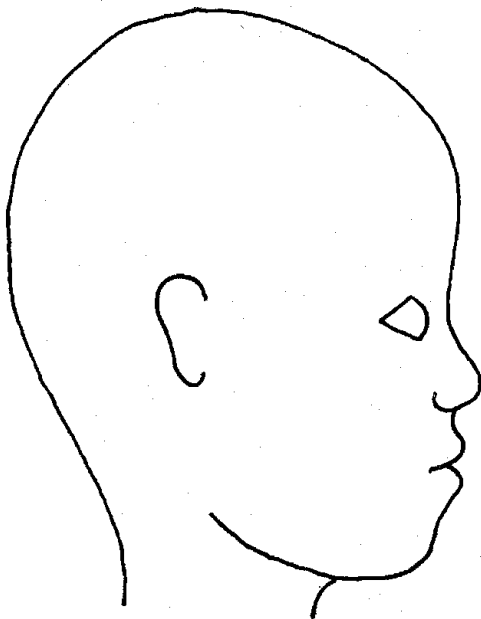
Date and time of observation: \_\_\_\_\_



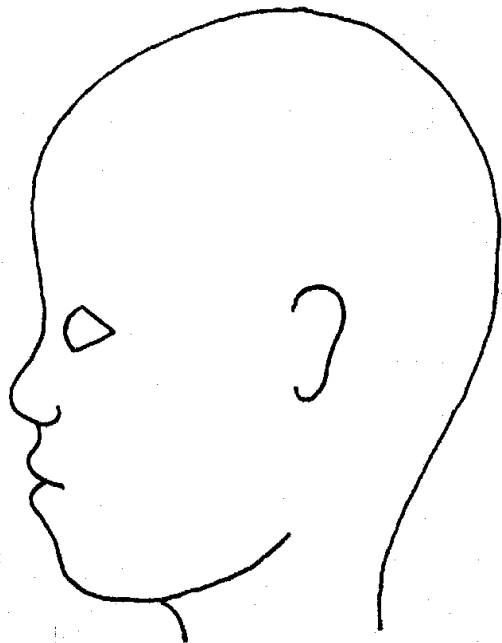
**FRONT**



**BACK**



**RIGHT**

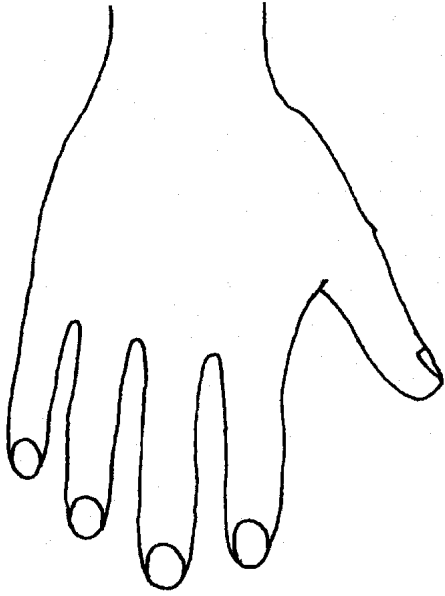


**LEFT**

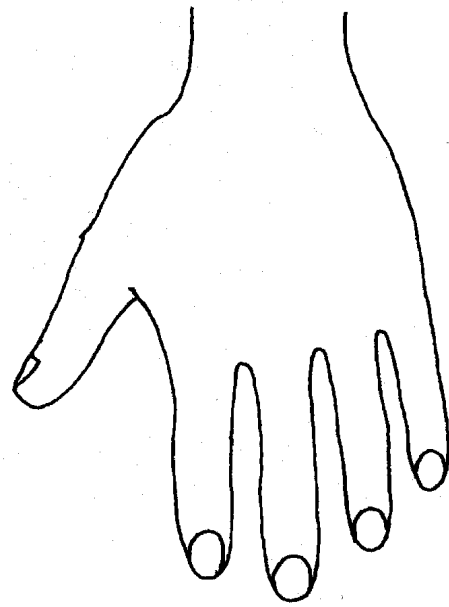
Name of pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of  
observation:

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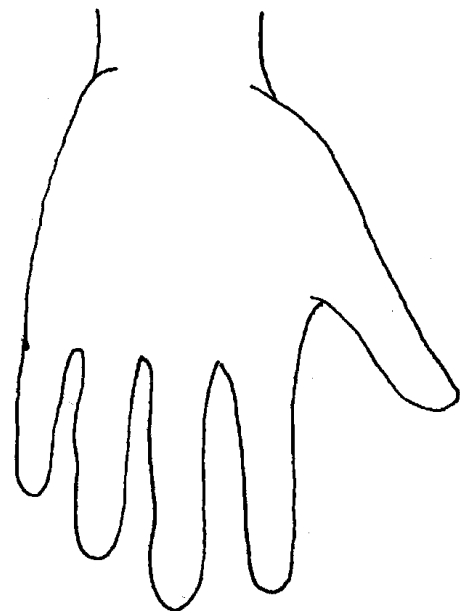


R



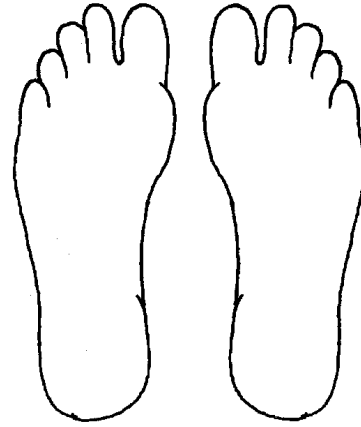
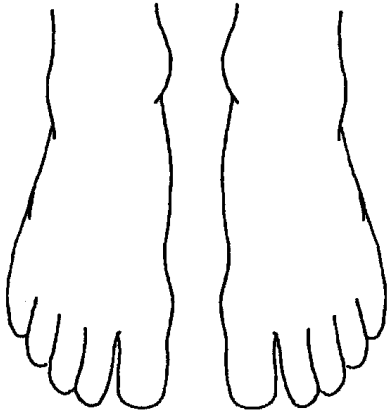
L

**BACK**



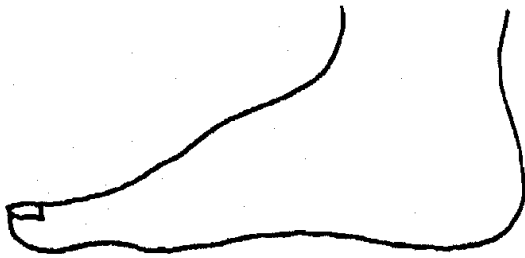
Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of observation: \_\_\_\_\_



R TOP L

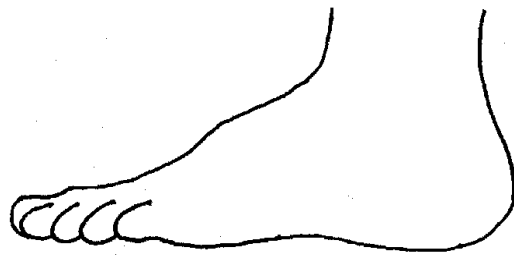
R BOTTOM L



R

L

INNER



R

L

OUTER

Printed Name,  
Signature and Job  
title of staff:

\_\_\_\_\_



*Additional notes made:*

# KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

## AT OAKDENE IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY!

**Mr Martin Weston**  
Deputy Headteacher  
Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Ms Lynsey Young**  
Headteacher  
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

**Mrs Caroline Hughes**  
Assistant Headteacher  
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

**Miss Andrea Green**  
Pastoral Leader  
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

### OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM ARE ALWAYS HERE TO HELP!

Clare Oldham is the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection and Children Looked After.

## SAFETY IS IMPORTANT TO US

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or family, call The Contact Centre on 01744 676 767.  
Contact the police on 999 if you feel a child or young person is in immediate danger

**Appendix – Staff Policy Signing Sheet**

Oakdene Primary                      2023 - 2024

Please sign and return to Martin Weston (DSL) by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023

I, \_\_\_\_\_ **(name)** have read and am familiar with the contents of the following documents and understand my role and responsibilities as set out in these document(s).:

- (1) Oakdene’s Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- (2) **Part One OR Annex A and Annex B** of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE Guidance, 2023
- (3) Oakdene’s Staff Handbook
- (4) Oakdene’s Code of Conduct
- (5) Oakdene’s E-Safety Policy including Social Media Policy
- (6) Oakdene’s First Aid Policy
- (7) Oakdene’s Medical Conditions Policy
- (8) Oakdene’s Behaviour Policy
- (9) Oakdene’s Anti-Bullying Policy
- (10) Oakdene’s Attendance Policy
- (11) Oakdene’s Whistleblowing Policy
- (12) Oakdene’s Sharing Concern Form

I am aware that the DSLs/DDSLs are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

and I am able to discuss any concerns that I may have with them.

I know that further guidance, together with copies of the policies mentioned above, are available in the PPA room, on the school website and accessible through the school office.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix - Safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures**

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### **Advertising**

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

- Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with the children.
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013, and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account.

### **Our application forms will:**

- Include a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
- Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on employment of ex-offenders.

### **Shortlisting**

Our shortlisting process will involve at least two people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them.
- Explore all potential concerns.

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:

- o If they have a criminal history.

- o Whether they are included on the barred list.
- o Whether they are prohibited from teaching.
- o Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales.
- o Any relevant overseas information.
- o Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true.

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online.

### **Seeking references and checking employment history**

We obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references, we will:

- Not accept open references.
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees.
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher as an accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations.
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate.
- Resolve any issues before the appointment is confirmed.

## **Interview and selection**

### **When interviewing candidates, we will:**

- Prove any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently and ask candidates to explain this.
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made.

### **Pre-appointment vetting checks**

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

### **New staff**

The offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment check. The Local Authority Human Resource department is responsible for carrying out the following checks.

- Verifying identity.
- Obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed, we may still keep a record of the fact that a vetting check took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision made.
- Obtaining a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.
- Verifying their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.

- Verifying their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards.

- Verifying their professional qualifications, as appropriate.

- Ensuring they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher.

- Carrying out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. Where available, these will include:

- o For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records check for overseas applicants 29

- o For teaching positions: obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

**Regulated activity means a person who will be:**

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or

- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or

- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not.

## **Existing staff**

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual move from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

## **Agency and third-party staff**

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors. We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.



Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances. We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school. For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

### **Trainee/student teachers**

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

### **Volunteers**

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity.
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment.
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual fall outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

## **Staff working in alternative provision settings**

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

## **Governors**

The School Business Manager (Mandy Pierce) will carry out enhanced DBS checks for all governors, without barred list information. They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity. All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

### **All governors and members will also have the following checks:**

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- Identity.
- Right to work in the UK.
- Other checks deem necessary if they have lived or worked outside of the UK.

## **Appendix: allegations of abuse made against staff**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations**

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

### **Procedure for dealing with allegations**

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the headteacher (or chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation) – the 'case manager' – will take the following steps:

- Immediately make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the referrer is to complete the LADO referral form and email securely to [sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk) and then follow up with a telephone call to the Safeguarding Children Unit on **01744 671262** within 1 day of the allegation. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
  - Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
  - Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
  - **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
  - **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
  - **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate e.g. advice and support from a trade union, work colleague, counselling or medical advice.

- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children’s social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

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

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency. Where the police are involved, wherever possible the governing body will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school’s disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point

#### **Additional considerations for supply staff**

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

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

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

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

### **Timescales**

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

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

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

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

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. If they think that the individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if they think the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, they must make a referral to the DBS. If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

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

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this. The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation if they are still attending the school.

### **Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the headteacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

### **Confidentiality**

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

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

### **Record-keeping**

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

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation.
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved.
- Notes of any action taken, and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual.



Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

### **References**

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

### **Learning lessons**

After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff.
- The duration of the suspension.
- Whether or not the suspension was justified.
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

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

### **Non-recent allegations**

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

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

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

## **Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold**

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

### **Definition of low-level concerns**

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – 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 designated officer of the local authority (LADO)

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

- Being overly friendly to children.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phones.
- 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.

### **Sharing low level concerns**

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately

We create a culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.
- Empowering staff to self-refer.
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage.
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system.

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern unless it has been raised anonymously.
- To the individual involved and any witnesses.

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff behaviour policy.

### **Record Keeping**

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any actions taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority.

- Retained at least until the individual leaves' employment at the school.

- Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

## **References**

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance.