



# SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis unless circumstances require policy update in the interim.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

It is due for review September 2022 - Reviewed March 22 and reapproved.

Signature ..... Date .....

Head Teacher

Signature ..... Date .....

<p><b>PART ONE - OUR SCHOOL</b></p> <p>This section outlines the understanding of the community that we serve, and our presenting needs for children, young people and their families.</p> <p>It defines how the safeguarding and child protection policy aligns to other policy and procedures within our school, and introduces key government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.</p> <p>This section provides details of all key safeguarding staff and an overview of some of the roles and responsibilities of those staff.</p> <p>It provides an overview of how our curriculum ensures that the children and young people in our school are taught about safeguarding and how we promote an open culture and ethos where children and staff can share concerns safely and their voices are heard.</p> <p>All parts of this policy are underpinned by local and national guidance, law and procedure and this is defined within part one.</p>	4-12
<p><b>PART TWO - TAKING ACTION</b></p> <p>This part explores what safeguarding is; and everyone's responsibility for safeguarding.</p> <p>It explains the expectations for all staff if they have a concern about a child or young person. Concerns regarding colleague's behaviour is covered in part five of the policy.</p> <p>Professional curiosity is a key factor in this part and provides an emphasis on communicating with both the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Childrens Services, plus an overview of sharing information to safeguard children and young people.</p> <p>This part explains the requirements for recording safeguarding concerns in school, and an overview of Walsall Right Help, Right Time continuum of need.</p> <p>The 6 "R"s are at the end of this part of the policy.</p>	13-21
<p><b>PART THREE - DEFINING ABUSE</b></p> <p>This part explains what constitutes abuse/harm under the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.</p> <p>Additionally it defines further specific risks and should be read alongside part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.</p> <p>Part four of the policy makes more specific reference to preventing and responding to incidents of peer on peer abuse.</p>	22-42

<p><b>PART FOUR - SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN</b></p> <p>This part explains our commitment from prevention to responses and procedures for managing peer on peer sexual abuse.</p> <p>The roles of police and Childrens Services is explained, and how we will support both victims and alleged/convicted perpetrators of abuse.</p> <p>A Harmful Sexual Behaviour toolkit is included to ensure the Right Support is offered at the Right Time.</p>	43-51
<p><b>PART FIVE - SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF</b></p> <p>This part explains our safer recruitment procedures to support our safer culture in school.</p> <p>It provides examples of how our school deters and prevents people unsuitable to work with children from being recruited to work in our school.</p> <p>Allegations about concerns regarding members of staff including supply staff, volunteers and contractors are explained; also what our school will do in response to whether the harm threshold is met; or not.</p> <p>Whistleblowing is explained alongside links to the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline.</p>	52-66
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## PART ONE – OUR SCHOOL

Our school is aware of and assesses the risks/issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of our pupils.

Our school follows the child protection procedures as defined by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/>) and the multi-agency threshold guidance, Walsall Right Help, Right Time - A Continuum of Need. We work with partners to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors to our school as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our belief is that "it could happen here" and "we have the interest of the children" as our priority.

We facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding meaning that we ensure safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We know that ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Our belief that "it could happen here" for all aspects of safeguarding and bullying supports us to address any underlying bias in order to achieve equality for all children and adults within our school.

We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in our school and where political issues are brought to the attention of the pupils; reasonably practicable steps are taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

It is vital that we ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We strive for a culture where children can confidently report abuse, know their concerns will be treated seriously, and know they can safely express their views and give feedback

We know that some children who have not been 'at risk' previously become more at risk in COVID-19 context. Children potentially will have suffered increased risk of

domestic violence, neglect, abuse, child criminal exploitation or child sexual exploitation therefore we are committed that everyone in our school is observant and listening to the voice of the child during any contact.

Negative experiences and distressing life events associated to Covid 19 can still affect the mental health of pupils and their parents, we are well prepared to offer the right help at the right time.

This policy is shared with parents and carers via Class Dojo and is available on our schools website at <https://www.elmoregreenprimary.co.uk/>

Our children understand our responsibility to keep them safe. We share a child version of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

All staff and volunteers are aware of the safeguarding procedures in our school and these are explained to as part of staff induction and ongoing training.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 is statutory guidance and is understood and followed by:

- ✓ Our governing body
- ✓ Our senior leadership team
- ✓ All staff and volunteers

In our school staff, volunteers and visitors will:-

- be familiar with and understand our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
- be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc (see part 5)
- be involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, child in need plans, child protection plans and early help assessments where necessary (see part 2)
- be alert to signs and indicators of abuse (see part 2)

This policy will be read and referenced alongside other school safeguarding policy and guidance:-

- Recruitment and vetting policy
- Online safety policy
- Anti bullying policy
- Attendance policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Intimate care policy
- Physical Restraint and Use of Reasonable Force policy and guidance

- Behaviour and Discipline policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- SEND policy
- Equality policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Penny Jones-McDonald
Head teacher	Penny Jones-McDonald
Chair of Governors	Susan Lemm
Safeguarding Governor	Wayne McDonald
Deputy DSL	Rebecca Flood (DHT) Mark Jones (AHT) Josie Lloyd (PSA)
Special Educational Needs Coordinator	Mark Jones
Single Point of Contact (SPOC)	Penny Jones-McDonald
Looked After Children Designated Teacher	Mark Jones
Designated Lead for online Safety	Mark Alders
Senior Lead for Mental Health	Mark Jones

### ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

The governing body have appointed Mrs Jones-McDonald, Headteacher as the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead as they are the appropriate **senior member** of staff with the authority to perform the role and form part of the schools leadership team. The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. You should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local Childrens Services. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Mrs Jones-McDonald has responsibilities as follows:-

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Childrens Services as required
- support staff who make referrals to local authority Childrens Services
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;

- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required;
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required
- liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians SENCO and Mental Health Lead) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- be aware of pupils who have a social worker
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school and college leadership staff (delete as applicable)

**If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available you must refer your concerns to someone else who is named as a deputy for this role.**

**All staff are aware of the process for making referrals to Childrens Services and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral. Further information is outlined within part two.**

### **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERING BODY**

Our governing body are the accountable body for ensuring the safety of the school.

The governing body will ensure:

- that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- we have in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future;
- that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Our school will work with Children's Services, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs

- of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans;
- that our safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority. This includes the requirement under Section 175/Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 which placed a duty on the governing bodies of schools to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in place and the Local Authority to monitor compliance of maintained schools;
  - that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, peer on peer sexual abuse (sexual violence and sexual harassment) as appropriate, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum;
  - that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against teachers, headteachers, principals, volunteers and other staff;
  - that all staff members complete safeguarding, child protection and online training at induction. This training will be regularly updated and the will be in line with advice from Walsall Safeguarding Partnership. Our Governing body will ensure that, as part of the requirement for staff to undergo regular updated safeguarding training, that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school or college safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

Our governing body recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and all staff have the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

The school's policies and procedures are reviewed annually. If there is a need to update safeguarding policies so that they are kept up-to-date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and/or to include lessons learnt locally or nationally, then the school's leaders and the governing body may update safeguarding policies more regularly.

The Nominated Governor for safeguarding in school is Mr Wayne McDonald. He is responsible for liaising with the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads in regards to safeguarding issues. The role is strategic rather than operational - they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils/students.

The chair of governors, Mrs S Lemm, is responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher.

## THE ROLE OF DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Our Governing body will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after children safe. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all our staff will have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

The designated safeguarding lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

Our governing body has appointed a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after or previously looked after and ensure that this person has appropriate training. On commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers will also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

[Guidance for Designated Teachers](#).

## CURRICULUM

Our governing body considers how children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through Personal, Health and Safety Education (our Rainbow curriculum), Relationships education, Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education (SMSC), British Values, e-safety, assemblies, approved visitors etc.

We are familiar with the following resources to help us plan and teach about safeguarding:

- [Teaching Online Safety in Schools](#)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance [Education for a Connected World](#)
- UKCIS guidance [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- The UKCIS [external visitors guidance](#) ;
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme [ThinkuKnow](#)

Using the resources above, our children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

We will provide opportunities for our children to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being. Relevant issues will be addressed through the curriculum, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, exploitation, sex and relationships education, consent, e-safety, British values, bullying and sexting. These issues may also be addressed through other areas of the curriculum.

Our policies address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, physical handling, positive behaviour, online safety, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and are linked to ensure a whole school approach. Our safeguarding policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which will ensure that pupils are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.

## **TRAINING**

All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding Children and Young People training. This training is delivered by the school's safeguarding team

All staff and volunteers will receive induction training - this is mandatory and will include:

- This policy (Safeguarding and Child Protection)
- Explanation of the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).
- Behaviour policy for pupils
- Staff code of conduct
- Online Safety policy
- Part one and Annex A- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. (Senior leaders, DSL's and Governing Bodies will assess whether staff who do not work directly with children will be suitably informed by reading (and signing for understanding) annex A of the guidance. Annex A is a condensed version of part 1. All staff who work directly with children in our school will read and sign acceptance of understanding for Part 1)

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (and deputies) will attend training every two years and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All of our other staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process (see part five)

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and Walsall Council offers training in Safeguarding Children and Young People, Child Protection, Safer Recruitment and other topics relating to safeguarding children. Staff training is not only crucial in protecting children and young people, but also makes them aware of how they can protect themselves against allegations. Further information about these courses can be accessed via the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/>

## **THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK AND LEGISLATIVE DUTIES**

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, our school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (section 175/157)
- Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection Procedures
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (DfE 2011)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility as follows:-

All people working in education and schools contribute to the safeguarding and promoting of children's welfare. All schools and further education institutions have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consequently, staff in these establishments play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm and by educating children, about managing risks and improving their resilience through the curriculum. All schools and further education institutions should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people, and should be able to manage situations where there are child welfare concerns.

## **LOCAL AND NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Our school will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:-

**[Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021](#)** (including part one summary for all staff and volunteers, and Annex A)

**[Teaching online safety in School](#)**

**[Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018](#)**

**[Walsall Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures](#)**

**[Walsall Safeguarding Adults Partnership procedures](#)**

**[The Education Act 2002 s157/s175](#)**

**[What to do if you're Worried a Child is being Abused March 2015](#)**

**[Information sharing guidance for practitioners and managers July 2018.](#)**

**[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)**

**[Education inspection framework](#)**

## PART TWO – TAKING ACTION

### SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

*Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families 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.*

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is:-

- 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;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Our staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating. All our staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

We have a designated safeguarding lead (and trained deputies) who provide support to staff and volunteers to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as Childrens Services.

We are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare follows the referral processes. Our staff understand they be required to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties

(Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE September 2021)

## **DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND DISCLOSURES**

All staff are trained and aware that:-

- a child may disclose something that has upset or harmed them;
- someone else might report something that a child has told them, or that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed;
- a child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation;
- a child's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused;
- the behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child may cause concern;
- a child demonstrates worrying behaviour towards other children;
- a child may display indicators of mental health.

We know that being professionally curious is not simply about asking the question. It is about the language used, creating a trusting relationship, a safe space in which to disclose and giving time to children and young people so they do not feel pressured.

All staff and volunteers are alert to the potential need for early help/referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;

- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is a privately fostered child.

We are aware that to consult with our designated safeguarding lead does not mean a referral has been made. This decision is mainly the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead for child protection who will contact the appropriate agency as and when required. However, all staff are aware that they can and should make referrals or consult with Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

**Our staff know that if they are unhappy with the response received from our designated safeguarding staff, they have the right to contact Walsall Children's Services.**

Our staff will always discuss concerns with parents and carers unless to do so would:

- place the child at risk of significant harm or further risk of significant harm;
- place a vulnerable adult at risk of harm;
- compromise and enquiries that need to be undertaken by Children's Services or the police;

Our school will endeavour to ensure that parents and carers have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL STAFF LEAVE SCHOOL WITHOUT DISCUSSING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN WITH A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S SAFEGUARDING TEAM.**

**Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.**

**When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that our actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.**

## PROCEDURES FOR WHEN SOMEONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON INCLUDING EARLY HELP

- all concerns for children and young people will be recorded using our safeguarding recording system. Staff should complete a 'yellow' concern form and hand it directly to one of the designated safeguarding leads;
- the concern **MUST** be recorded as soon as possible and passed on to the DSLs immediately, as any actions need to be taken within one hour of the disclosure;
- all concerns of significant harm will be referred to the Local Authority Childrens Services (MASH) without delay;
- all concerns shared with the designated safeguarding lead will be considered alongside Walsall's Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time guidance;
- All concerns of allegations in relation to staff and volunteers harmful behaviour will be referred to the headteacher. If the concern is in relation to the headteacher, the chair of governors should be informed without delay (see part five)

Remember records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of your concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If you are in doubt about recording requirements, you should discuss this with a member of the safeguarding team.

## PRINCIPLES FOR OUR SCHOOL

**"Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 we may share information without consent if, in our judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk."**

In our school we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils.

This may mean that they more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

### **WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED WHEN MAKING A REFERRAL**

We will be asked to provide as much information as possible; such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents, other siblings, chronology of previous concerns. If we do not have all these details, we will still make the call.

### **RESPONSES FROM PARENTS**

Research and experience indicates that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all categories of abuse:-

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb);
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development;
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries;
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries;
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child;
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child;
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse;
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household.

Staff will follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 24 hours. This will be done on a multi agency referral form (MARF) This can be downloaded from [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website](#)

### **MASH CONTACT NUMBERS**

**0300 555 2866 Monday-Thursday 8.45am-5.15pm, Friday 8.45am-4.45pm**

**0300 555 2922 or 0300 555 2836 Emergency Response Team**

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm call 999 in an emergency

Some of our pupils may not reside within Walsall Local Authority and we are aware that we should locate the number for the child's Local Authority's child protection referral team via <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

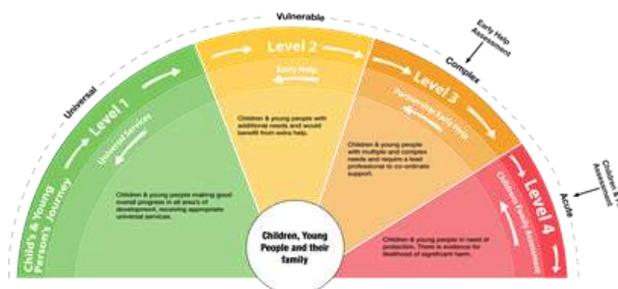
## KEY PROCESSES INCLUDING EARLY HELP

All staff and volunteers are aware of the referral pathway in Walsall including single and multi-agency Early Help offers as defined in Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time - Continuum of Need Guidance:-

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/37/FINAL%20Right%20Help%20Right%20Time%20Guidance%20-%20Amended.pdf>

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they act on them immediately. Many children are vulnerable in various ways and this is not always as a result of actions by parents/carers. Children can be deemed to be vulnerable in many ways as defined in section

The Walsall Pathway for levels of concern is defined below:-



Options will therefore include:

- managing any support for the child internally via our school own pastoral support processes or
- an early help assessment or
- a referral for statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm.

All staff are trained to identify children who may benefit from early help (levels 2 and 3) in addition to identifying risks of significant harm (level 4).

## EARLY HELP

If Early Help is appropriate, our designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will liaise with other agencies and initiate the setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional. Any such cases are kept under constant review and consideration is given to whether a referral to Children's Services for assessment for statutory services is necessary, should the child's situation appear to not be improving or getting worse.

## CHILD IN NEED

A 'Child in Need' is defined under the Children Act 1989;

- as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development or;
- a child whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired without the provision of services or;
- a child who is disabled.

Local authorities are required to provide services for Children in Need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

## CHILDREN SUFFERING OR LIKELY TO SUFFER SIGNIFICANT HARM

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquires under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour-based violence, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.

## THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The local authority will make a decision within one working day of a referral being made about the type of response that is required and should let the referrer know the outcome. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.

If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving, our school will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure our concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

When our staff members have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will decide what action to take. There is an expectation that this course of action is discussed and agreed with the school's safeguarding team.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, our school will ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

## RESPONDING TO A CONCERN - THE "6 R's RESPONSE"

**Receive      Reassure      React      Record      Refer      Reflect**

### RECEIVE

- If a child wants to talk to you, never ask them to come back later. Ask them what they want to talk to you about and, if you are concerned about their welfare, give them the time to speak to you.
- Never promise confidentiality, inform the child that you are happy to talk to them but if they tell you anything that you believe may be putting them at harm that you will have to talk to someone.
- Listen carefully to the child. Do not stop a child who is freely recalling information.
- Where a child is visibly upset or has an obvious injury, it is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how an injury was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you to help clarify vague concerns and result in the right action being taken.

### REASSURE

- Ensure that the child is aware that they have done the right thing in talking to you and that they have not done anything wrong.
- If you have any concerns that the child has been, or is at risk of harm, you must tell them that you will speak to someone to get help.

### REACT

- If you need to clarify information ask open-ended questions e.g. "Is there anything you'd like to tell me?", "Can you explain to me...", "Can you describe to me..."
- **Never** ask leading or suggestive questions e.g. 'Did he/she do anything that they shouldn't have done?'
- **Never** ask 'accusing' questions e.g. "Why didn't you tell someone earlier?"
- **Never** criticise the alleged perpetrator, it may be someone that they will continue to live with.
- **Never** ask the pupil to repeat their disclosure for any other member of staff, it is your responsibility to share the information
- These four factors may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by Children's Services or Police.

### RECORD

- Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the words that the child has used.
- Do not record your assumptions and interpretations, just what you heard and saw.
- Do not destroy original notes even if you later write things up more neatly and fully.
- Record the date, time and place of the disclosure.
- Sign any written records and identify your position in the school setting.
- **Do not ask a child to write and account or sign any of your documentation as this may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by Children's Services or Police.**

### REFER

- Immediately inform the Designated Senior Person for child protection (insert details) or in their absence the Deputy Designated Senior Person for child protection (insert details) who will be responsible for following the appropriate procedures. In the absence of anyone being available in school, contact the Local Authority

### REFLECT

- Ask yourself if you have done everything you can within your role.
- Refer any remaining concerns to the designated teacher, e.g. any knowledge of siblings in the school, or previous contact with parents.
- Dealing with disclosures can be difficult and disturbing; you should seek support for yourself via the support within your school or an alternative source but be aware of principles of confidentiality

## DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SHARING

We understand that information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. We have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes as reflected in our Information Sharing policy and procedure; and privacy notices.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, this is **not** a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information **will not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

When children leave our school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained; this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file. If we are the receiving school we will ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs, are aware as required.

## PART THREE – DEFINING ABUSE

### Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school. Our staff, especially the designated safeguarding lead will be considering the context of such incidents and/or behaviours. Such contextual safeguarding means our assessments of children will consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Additionally, Children's Services assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that we provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This allows any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

All staff are aware of safeguarding issues and aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancing and sexting put children in danger.

### **Physical Abuse**

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

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape;
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt;
- Bite marks;

- Round burn marks;
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks;
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given;
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred;
- Bald patches;
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning;
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather;
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- Fear of medical help;
- Fear of changing for PE;
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance;
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- Isolation from peers

### **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. In addition it may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse could also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another and may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist)

- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways - as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development;
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders;
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies;

- Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches;
- Self-harming, drug or solvent abuse;
- Fear of parents being contacted;
- Running away;
- Compulsive stealing;
- Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

N.B.: Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment.

### **Sexual Abuse**

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

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist)

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge;
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching;
- Reluctance to go home;
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness;
- Refusal to communicate;
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains;
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia;
- Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse;
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation;
- Unusual compliance;
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling;
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately;
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group;
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

## **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist)

- Constant hunger;
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food;
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness;
- Frequently dirty or unkempt;
- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather;
- Poor school attendance or often late for school;
- Poor concentration;
- Affection or attention seeking behaviour;
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated;
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight;
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially;
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers

## **FURTHER SPECIFIC RISKS**

All staff will have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

Annex A Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021 will be read and understood by all staff/volunteers.

### **CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children.

We will recognise these vulnerabilities and offer early help where necessary for the children, young people and their families to safeguard emotional wellbeing; we will access resources as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021.

### **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. We have procedures in place in response to children missing from education which support identification of such abuse and also helps prevent the risks of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority Children's Services and need a social worker, where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents and carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents and carers. Parents are reminded to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

Our school has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions)
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:

- leave school to be home educated (see below)
- move away from the school's location
- remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
- are permanently excluded

We know that many home-educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We expect parent's decisions to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, we know this is not the case for all and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

When a parent or carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from our school with a view to educating at home, we will work together with other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents and carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents and carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. We refer to [Elective Home Education Guidance](#) to support our processes and decisions.

Elmore Green primary School will;

- inform our Local Authority of all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll;
- ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority;
- record the name of a pupil's new school and their expected start date when they leave;
- inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

### **CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON**

These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We will work with the children and their families as much as possible to mitigate the harm by offering early help and emotional wellbeing support where necessary and recognise additional risks such as witnessing arrests, trauma of prison visits, concerns regarding an offender's release and return home.

## **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

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

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media). CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

**Potential vulnerabilities include:**

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;

- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories);
- Sexual identity.

**Although the above vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.**

Our school refers to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership procedures to consider completion of the screening tool and/or NWG risk assessment. [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

Our Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager is **Katie Storer-Young** who manages our exploitation team, if you are worried about exploitation or have concerns about a child please refer to MASH or the child's social worker. You should also copy [missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk) in to any referrals

### **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: COUNTY LINES**

Our staff and volunteers are aware that some specific forms of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening or committing serious violence to others.

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

Our staff have alerted to the fact that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same; however we are aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. We

know that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Some of the following can be indicators of child criminal exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK) using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move (and store) drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. Further information can be found at [County Lines Guidance](#)

Any concerns will be referred to Childrens Services and support will be sought from Katie Storer-Young (Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager). If you are worried about exploitation or concerns about a child please refer to MASH or the child's social worker. You should also copy [missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk) in to any referrals

### **CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

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

We are clear in our school that only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Our staff are well placed

to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

We understand that when children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (especially in the context of COVID 19), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. We know that early help is critical when supporting children and young people who are suffering trauma, depression, anxiety, low mood and other indicators of mental health.

**If our staff have a mental health concern about a child they know that it is also a safeguarding concern. Immediate action will be taken as with all other vulnerabilities. Records will be made and reported immediately to our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead.**

In our school we offer additional support by asking staff and pupils to report their feeling and concerns on a daily basis to our Mental Health First Aiders and/or Designated Safeguarding Leads

The School's Mental Health First Aiders are;

- Mr Mark Jones (AHT)
- Mrs Rachel Rolinson

We also have additional staff who are trained in counselling and therapy who can support staff and pupils as appropriate;

- Mrs K Vaughan - Young Children's Counselling, Children's Mental Health First Aid and Child Psychology.
- Mrs L Alders - Child Psychology.

Our school promotes resilience as part of a whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, and this is tailored to our pupils.

Further advice can be found via

- [Preventing and tackling Bullying](#)
- [Mental Health and behaviour in Schools](#)
- [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#)
- [Rise Above PHSE curriculum support](#)
- [Every Interaction Matters](#)
- [Wellbeing for Education recovery including bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma](#)

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

In our school we understand that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges for the following reasons:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

We identify pupils who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by:

- Identifying dedicated 'key-workers' who develop trusted relationships with pupils and who are experienced with their child's needs.
- Training staff in a range of communication strategies to ensure communication is not a barrier to disclosure.
- Liaising with parents and carers to develop safety plans as appropriate.

When working with children with disabilities staff are aware that additional possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, might be of concern on a non-mobile child;
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment;
- Poor toileting arrangements;
- Lack of stimulation;
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint;
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries;
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication;
- Ill-fitting equipment. for example callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting;
- Misappropriation of a child's finances; or
- Inappropriate invasive procedures.

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Our staff and volunteers understand that exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can be, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

### **Controlling behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

### **Coercive behaviour**

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Our school is signed up to Operation Encompass, the Walsall Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse - notifications to Schools. This protocol sets out Walsall's plans for a multi-agency operation to notify schools when a pupil has experienced domestic abuse in their household, which will allow the school to provide appropriate early intervention and support in a timely manner. Our DSL will receive notifications and ensure the children receive the right help at the right time.

Further information can be accessed at:

- The Government website - [Domestic violence and abuse](#)
- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects
- Refuge what is domestic abuse/effects of domestic abuse on children
- Safelives: young people and domestic abuse

### **EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS**

The extended school activities that are provided by and managed by our school, follow our own child protection policy and procedures.

Where is not the case, our governing body will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with school on these matters where appropriate.

Our governing body will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

When pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits, our school will ensure that the proprietors of the activity or venue operate safe practices to maintain the safety of our children and liaise with investigating agencies in the locality relevant to where the concern has taken place.

In the event that our pupils attend alternative education provision, we ensure that the management committee or governing body of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that our pupils may be vulnerable to. We obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that our school would otherwise perform in respect of our own staff as defined in part five.

The DfE provide two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners/our school of Alternative Provision will have regard:

- [Alternative provision - DfE Statutory Guidance](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - DfE Statutory Guidance](#)

Our school gives full regard to the guidance as above to ensure ongoing safeguarding of our pupils.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

Our staff and volunteers understand that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise or progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

We are aware that indicators may be:-

- household debt;

- rent arrears;
- domestic abuse;
- anti-social behaviour;
- the family being asked to leave a property.

Further information on homelessness can be found on the government website, where the strategy on reducing homelessness can also be found [Homeless Reduction Factsheet](#).

### **HONOUR BASED ABUSE (FORCED MARRIAGE, FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND BREAST IRONING)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called honour based abuse are serious (regardless of the motivation) and will be handled and reported as such.

If our staff and volunteers have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they will speak to our designated safeguarding lead (or deputies). We understand that if FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers**

#### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

The main risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society;
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM;
- girls who are withdrawn from Personal, Social, Health Education;
- visiting female elder from the country of origin;
- talk about a 'special procedure' or celebration to become a woman
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin;
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman.

#### **Forced Marriage**

We can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage, our staff have been briefed on the indicators of possible forced marriage and honour

based abuse and will refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. The government website details information on forced marriage ([Guidance for forced marriage](#))

### **ONLINE SAFETY**

We know pupils increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Our designated safeguarding lead takes lead responsibility for online safety in our school, supported by Mr Mark Alders - Online Safety Lead, and the school's safeguarding team.

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

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

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying;
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Where children are being asked to learn online at home the DfE has provided advice to support schools and colleges do so safely and the school has developed safety guides which are shared with parents and carers in addition to information for adding 'filters' and 'firewalls' at home.

When our pupils use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems.

### **PEER ON PEER ABUSE**

Staff are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse.

This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);

- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment (see part four);
- gender-based violence;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery);
- initiation-type violence and rituals.

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

In our school we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some children will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy or online safety policy as appropriate.

Allegations may be made against children by others in school which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

**All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk from peer on peer abuse.**

Our staff will record and report all issues of peer on peer abuse to our designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and ensure the best action is taken to safeguard children and young people in our school. Our curriculum endorses peer on peer abuse is not acceptable and our actions are supported by associated safeguarding

policy and procedures in our school (anti-bullying, behaviour, online-safety, acceptable use policy, staff code of conduct and broader child protection procedures).

Children and young people who abuse others will be responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others within the school community through a multi-agency risk assessment. We ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will be considered separately from the needs of their victims.

### **PREVENTING RADICALISATION**

Our staff are aware that children can be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of our schools safeguarding approach.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where our staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they will discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

Staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society. We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

## Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes;
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures;
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school;
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature;
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups;
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent);
- secretive behaviour;
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles;
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality;
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes;
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others;
- verbalising anti-western or anti-British views;
- advocating violence towards others.

Our school governors, the Head Teacher, (who is the Single Point of Contact) and the designated safeguarding leads will assess the level of risk within our school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. We have risk assessments that include consideration of the school's RE curriculum, SEND policy, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of pupils by gender and SEN, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

The broader responsibilities for our school are defined within the Walsall Radicalisation and Extremism guidance September 2015.

### Channel

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. Our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral. The government guidance for Channel can be access on the Government website ([Channel Guidance](#)).

Our school uses 'Educate Against Hate', a website launched by the government to support and equip school leaders, teachers, and parents with information, tools and resources to help recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people as appropriate.

If a member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (if this is not the same person).

David Chadwick is the Walsall Prevent Education Officer & Prevent Coordinator. He can be contacted on the details below.

[david.chadwick@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:david.chadwick@walsall.gov.uk)

01922 654499

07766 160646

### **PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS**

Our staff are aware that a private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative (with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more).

Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be classed a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child.

It is the duty of local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered within their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded. It is the school's responsibility to be aware of and refer children who may be privately fostered.

If our school makes arrangements for children to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related, then we will consider whether the arrangement where children stay with UK families could amount to "private fostering"

All staff in our school will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies) of any children that fall into the category of private fostering.

## **REASONABLE FORCE**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for our staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions we will consider the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these children.

Our procedures are clear that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes a report immediately and share the report with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies) to ensure that:-

- the child was not harmed
- that first aid has been considered
- that the parents/carers of the child or young person have been informed
- that reasonable force was the best and most proportionate response to the situation

Further information can be found on the government's website ([Use of Reasonable Use in Schools](#))

## **SERIOUS VIOLENCE**

Our staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with; individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and also may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence. These include;

- such as being male;
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school;

- having experienced child maltreatment;
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

### **YOUNG CARERS**

We understand that a young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem.

Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister. They do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning, or helping someone to get dressed and move around.

Some children give a lot of physical help to a brother or sister who is disabled or ill. Along with doing things to help their brother or sister, they may also be giving emotional support to siblings and their parents.

We know that some of the risks associated with being a young carer are risk of truancy, under-achievement, isolation, mental and physical ill health, poverty and stress.

We will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures if we are concerned and complete the Young Carers Screening and Assessment, following local procedures (<http://www.mywalsall.org/walsallearlyhelp/providers-youngcarers/> )

## PART 4 - SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN/PEER ON PEER ABUSE

All of our staff and volunteers are aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and gender from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. We know this abuse may be driven by wider societal factors beyond our school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language and as such adapt our curriculum to counteract this wherever we can. We deliver a curriculum that is balanced in supporting children and young people to understand what peer on peer sexual abuse is.

We make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable. It will not be tolerated and it will never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. We will challenge physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

All staff in our school are regularly provided with updated and appropriate safeguarding training that enables them to understand:

- Their role in preventing peer-on-peer abuse.
- How to identify the indicators of abuse.
- What to do if they have a concern about a child.
- How to respond to a report of abuse.
- How to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s).
- Where to go if they need support.
- That children can abuse other children inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:

- Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages;
- Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups ;
- Sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content;
- That they need to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**'.
- That even if there are no reports in school, **it doesn't mean it's not happening**.
- The importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviour.
- That girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.
- To keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Abuse may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of our school.

#### We teach our pupils:

- what boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context);
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe;
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other contact;
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard;
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so;
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources;
- that they will be taken seriously and that they will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment;
- They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

#### Our curriculum includes teaching about:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- What respectful behaviour looks like.
- Consent - what is it and what does it mean?
- Gender roles - stereotyping and equality.

- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- Prejudiced behaviour.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.

### **Sexual violence is defined as:**

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

### **Consent is defined as:**

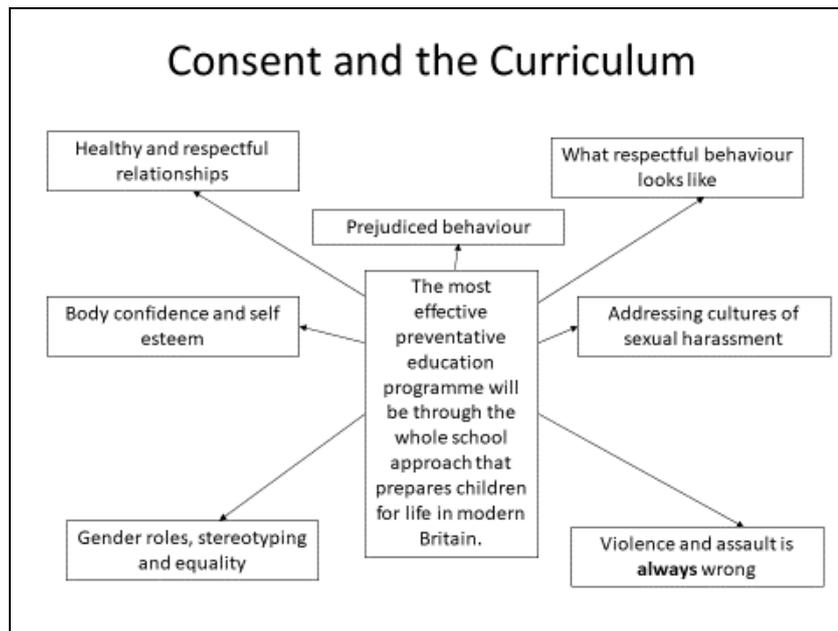
- Having the freedom and capacity to choose.
- Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

### **Sexual Consent**

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity.
- The age of consent is 16.

- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.



### Sexual harassment is defined as:

- 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school;
- 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 comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual 'jokes' or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (we consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos. The sharing of unwanted explicit content is an offence;
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence);
- sexualised online bullying (this is a criminal offence);
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats;

**Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB):**

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent.

Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage.

HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB will be considered in a child protection context and Walsall Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need guidance will be referred to.

When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

**Online:**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection to face to face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. These include the potential for the incident to take place across a number of social media platforms and services, and for things to move from platform to platform online. It also includes the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than a school's local community (e.g. for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator(s)) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities. There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online.

**The Legal status:**

It is unlawful for our school to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights include:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right);
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity;
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination;
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to an effective education.

## **Our schools procedures for responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment**

### **Procedures for online abuse**

Our procedures for dealing with the concerns are:-

- We will **never** view, download or share the imagery, or ask a child to share or download - **this is illegal**;
- If we have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), we will report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies);
- We will **not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it;
- We will **not** ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or our statutory partners;
- We will **not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers unless advised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or our statutory partners to do so;
- We will **not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved;
- We **will** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Confidentiality**

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice we will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved. We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. If required we will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

### **Risk assessment**

When there has been a report of sexual violence our Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support,
- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s),

- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) in school especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harm.

Risk assessments will be recorded and be kept under review. At all times we will be actively considering the risks posed to all pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required also.

The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions such as teaching timetables, break times and travelling to and from school.

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or require referrals to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising our behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support. If this is judged to be the case, all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded.

### **Early Help**

We may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from Early Help, meaning providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help and the option to manage a report internally do not need to be mutually exclusive. School may manage internally and seek Early Help for both the victim and perpetrator(s). In all cases, our concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded.

### **Referrals to Children's Services**

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger we will make a referral to Children's Services

At the point of referral to Children's Services we will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision will be made with the support of Children's Services.

If a referral is made Children's Services will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate we will work alongside, and cooperate with the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.

We will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Children's Services investigation before protecting the victim and other children in school. It is important for our school to work closely with Children's Services (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

In some cases, Children's Services will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. We will be prepared to refer again if we believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, we will consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.

### **Referrals to the Police**

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting principle is that we will refer on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach in these cases.

Referrals to the police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to Children's Services. Our designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will liaise closely with the local police presence. The police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.

Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People released under RUI can have no conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions. Whatever arrangements are in place, we will consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise.

Particular regard will be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim and the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness. We will ensure that any risk management measures strike a

balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence we will update the risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children in school and consider any suitable action in line with our behaviour policy. This process will include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remain(s) in school and the victim is still a registered pupil, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator(s) timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils in our school. We will ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

If the case is classed as 'no further action' (NFA'd) by the Police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded.

We will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. We understand the alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

We may make a referral to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) which is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report to one of their Child Protection Advisors will occur.

### **Victims**

We understand that victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with

## **PART FIVE – SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

### **SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCESSES**

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, our governing body and senior leaders adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in our school.

Key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training offered by the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership

### **Recruitment and Selection Processes**

Our adverts make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken and make clear our commitment to safeguarding by outlining the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification And state clearly whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

Where a role in our school involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children, we will include a statement in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

We require applicants to provide:

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number;
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving;
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment;
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award;
- details of referees/references;
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

**Our school does not accept copies of curriculum vitae in place of an application form.**

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to [Ministry of Justice guidance](#) on the disclosure of criminal records. The information will only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information will not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

Our procedures are clear that applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate will physically sign a hard copy of the application at point of interview.

When shortlisting at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise, we consider any inconsistencies, look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them. We explore all potential concerns.

We seek references for all potential candidates (including volunteers) to allow us to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions. Wherever possible we request references before interview, this allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding:

- we do not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern;
- we do not rely on applicants to obtain their own reference;
- we ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school based, the reference will be confirmed by the headteacher as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations);
- we obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed;
- we secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer;
- we always verify any information with the person who provided the reference;
- we ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source;
- we contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided;
- we compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate;

- we establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post;
- we ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

We ensure the information confirms whether we are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding allegations, but do not include information about allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

Our interview questions will always include:

- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children;
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role;
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this.

Our interviews will always be used to explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing will include:

- applicants implication that adults and children are equal;
- applicants lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children;
- applicants inappropriate idealisation of children;
- applicants inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children;
- applicants indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Our school believes children and young people should be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils is common and recognised as good practice in our school.

All information considered in decision making will be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

## **Pre-Appointment Vetting Checks, Regulated Activity and Recording Information**

Such checks will help us identify whether a person may be unsuitable to work with children (and in some cases is legally prohibited from working with children and/or working as a teacher). They are seen as the part of a wider safeguarding procedures in our school.

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks.

Our school:

- verifies a candidate's identity because it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Wherever possible and as part of best practice we check the name on their birth certificate. We use [government guidance for these checks.](#);
- obtains (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity with children). When using the DBS update service we still obtain the original physical certificate;
- obtains a separate children's barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available;
- verifies the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (as defined in Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003);
- verifies the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then we follow advice on the [Right to Work website](#);
- checks if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, and make any further checks considered appropriate;
- verifies professional qualifications, as appropriate. The Teaching Regulation Agency's (TRA) Employer Access Service is used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS), and the completion of teacher induction or probation;
- ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

When obtaining an enhanced DBS; if an applicant is moving from a previous post which ended not more than three months before the person's appointment within our school we will follow guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

We use [DfE guidance DBS and barring checks](#) to ensure that the right level of DBS and barring checks are completed in our school. Once complete we will be able to compare any information disclosed on the certificate with any information shared by the applicant during the recruitment process. When assessing any disclosure information on a DBS certificate we will take into consideration the explanation from the applicant, including:

- the seriousness and relevance to the post applied for,
- how long ago the offence occurred,
- whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents,
- the circumstances around the incident,
- whether the individual accepted responsibility for their actions.

We will also consider the incident in the context of the Teachers' Standards and Teacher misconduct guidance, if the applicant is applying for a teaching post.

When using the update service we will:

- obtain consent from the individual to carry out an online check to view the status of an existing standard or enhanced DBS check;
- confirm the DBS certificate matches the individual's identity;
- examine the original certificate to ensure that it is valid for our school;
- ensure that the level of the check is appropriate to the job they are applying for.

### **Procedures for prohibitions, directions, sanctions and restrictions**

A person who is prohibited will not be appointed to a role that involves teaching work (as defined in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012). We are aware that a number of individuals are still subject to disciplinary sanctions, which were imposed by the General Teaching Council of England (GTCE) prior to its abolition in 2012. We will access details from the Teacher Regulation Agency's (TRA) secure access system where checks can be made.

We complete checks under section 128 direction to check if someone is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a maintained school. From 01 January 2021 the TRA teacher services system no longer maintains a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in European Economic Area (EEA) member states.

We maintain a single central record of pre-appointment checks. This is checked for accuracy by senior members of staff and nominated governors. We keep evidence of all safer recruitment checks. Our single central record includes all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply

staff, all members of the governing body and volunteers. We also record safer recruitment checks for contractors where necessary.

For agency and third-party supply staff we include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, the date this confirmation was received and whether details of any enhanced DBS certificate have been provided in respect of the member of staff.

The details of an individual will be removed from the single central record once they no longer work at our school. We know that we do not have to keep copies of DBS certificates in order to fulfil the duty of maintaining the single central record. If we choose to retain a copy of DBS checks we will comply with requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, by recording a valid reason for doing so and that it will not be kept for longer than six months. When the information is destroyed we may keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result and the recruitment decision taken if they choose to. A copy of the other documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file.

Our school has procedures in place to check section 128 directions, meaning a person subject to a section 128 direction is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a maintained school. Governors in our school are required to have an enhanced DBS check. It is the responsibility of our governing body to apply for the certificate for any governors who do not already have one. As governance is not a regulated activity relating to children, governors do not need a children's barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

We have procedures in place to undertake the necessary childcare disqualification checks for staff who work with children aged 5 and under, including reception classes, but also apply to those working in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, such as breakfast clubs and after school care. We refer to [Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018](#) for clarity of checks.

### **Procedures for other checks that may be necessary for staff, volunteers and others**

In our school individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK undergo the same checks as all other staff. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, we make any further checks we think appropriate so that any relevant

events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU), we apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

To consider suitability of the applicant where available we obtain criminal records checks for overseas applicants and obtain a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

We are aware and consider that not all countries provide criminal record information, and where they do, the nature and detail of the information provided varies from country to country. We are mindful that the criteria for disclosing offences in other countries often have a different threshold than those in the UK.

To support us in this process we refer to [Recruiting teachers from overseas guidance](#)

When employing third part or agency/supply staff we obtain written notification from any agency, or third party organisation, that they have carried out the checks on an individual who will be working in our school. In respect of the enhanced DBS check, we ensure that written notification confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business. Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work in a school, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, we obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency. We always check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

We ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at our school, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity relating to children will require an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including children's barred list information) will be required. Under no circumstances will a contractor on whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity relating to children. We check the identity of contractors on arrival at our school.

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by our school, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. If the trainee teachers are engaging in regulated activity relating to children, an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information) will be obtained. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. We obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that we would otherwise be required to perform, and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

We have an assurance letter from Walsall Local Authority that Children's Services and Health staff (including Social Workers, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, SEND Case Workers, Early Help Officers and other roles that involved working with children, young people and their families) work within our school have had the appropriate DBS check. We will request evidence of their identification badge that has been issued by their employer. We will only admit persons upon sight of this identification which must have a photograph. We will not require these staff to present their DBS certificate to our school.

In our school under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. We complete risk assessments for volunteers and these consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision;
- what we know about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability; and
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and if it is, what level is appropriate.

Details of the risk assessment will always be recorded.

### **Ongoing Vigilance**

Senior leaders, DSL's and our governing body ensures we have processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. This includes regular safeguarding training and briefings, audits of our safeguarding recording systems, promotion and challenge of staff's understanding of our safeguarding ethos supported by safeguarding policies.

Our senior leaders have created a culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters from both within, and where it is appropriate, from outside of the workplace, which may have implications for the safeguarding of children. This ensures we can support staff, where there is a need, and help them manage children's safety and welfare, potentially providing them with information that will help them consider whether there are further measures or changes to procedures that need to be put in place to safeguard children in their care.

Our school is alert to the requirements of referring an individual to the DBS if we believe they have:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults which should result in them being unable to perform regulated activity;
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults;
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

Our school is alert to the duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency because of an individual's serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first.

### **ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING A MEMBER OF STAFF/VOLUNTEER**

Despite our commitment to safer recruitment processes we are aware there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously.

In these circumstances all allegations against other members of staff or volunteers will be referred to the Headteacher. In their absence you should seek to speak with a member of staff from the Senior Leadership Team. If your concern is about the Headteacher, you need to speak to the Chair of Governors.

Information sharing should not be barrier but in the unlikely event that you cannot access the people above please discuss your concerns with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (01922) 654040, 07432 422205 or email [lado@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walsall.gov.uk)

### **If a concern has reached the harm threshold**

The following procedure will be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) has:

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

Whilst we are not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. When using a supply agency, we will inform the agency of our process for managing allegations but also take account of the agency's policies and their duty to refer to the DBS as personnel suppliers. This will include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The LADO will discuss the matter with the Headteacher to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Children's Services is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Suspension will not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. All options to avoid suspension will be considered prior to taking that step. The headteacher or chair of governors must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at school, or until the allegation is resolved. It will be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at school is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, the headteacher or chair of governors will seek views from Walsall Council Human Resources and the LADO, as well as the police and Children's Services where they have been involved.

Where it is deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the

reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within school and provided with their contact details.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be:

- formally told about the allegation as soon as possible. The headteacher/governor will consult the LADO and where involved Childrens Services and/or the police on what information can be disclosed
- kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child - no information can be shared regarding the staff member
- made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers in schools whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002.

Where the initial discussion leads to no further action, our headteacher/governor and the LADO will:

- record the decision and justification for it
- agree on what information will be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom

Some allegations will require immediate referral to the Children Services and the Police, but common sense and judgement will be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO will immediately refer the matter to the Children's Services and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened.

Where the safety of other children is in question as a result of the allegation, consideration will be given to invoking the Complex (organised or multiple) Abuse Procedure (this can be found on the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/> ).

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by Childrens Services. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the LADO will be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure

so that he or she can consult police and Children's Services colleagues as appropriate.

Where a referral is made directly to Children's Services, they will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police and the headteacher or chair of governors.

Where such allegations are made consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1. Investigation by the police of a possible criminal offence.
2. Enquiries and assessment by Children's Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services.
3. Consideration by the school as the employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

The definitions that will be used when we determine the outcome of an allegation are set out below:

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

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation needs help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Services may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per Walsall Council's code of conduct policy.

Where an adult makes an allegation to our school that they were abused as a child, the individual will be advised and supported to report the allegation to the police. Historic allegations made by a child will be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with Children's Services and the police.

### **If a concern has not reached the harm threshold**

Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example suspicion, complaint or a disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside our schools; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding we ensure that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of our school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. By creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. When implemented correctly, this will enforce our open and transparent culture; enable us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of our school as set out in part one of the policy.

A 'low-level' concern is still a concern - no matter how small, even if it is no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of our school may have acted in an inappropriate way.

Examples of behaviours that may cause concern could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children,
- having favourites,
- taking photographs of children on personal devices,
- 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.

Our training helps staff understand that such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

We would investigate all concerns and evaluate whether the behaviours of the adult follow the expectations of the staff code of conduct and whether or not they meet the allegations threshold and whether the behaviours are considered serious enough for referral to the LADO.

In all cases this preliminary investigation will be documented and advice sought from Walsall local authority officers as appropriate. The record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and any action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted. If the individual raising the concern wishes to remain anonymous, then that will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Our records for such level of concern will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This allows for records to be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SUPPLY TEACHERS AND ALL CONTRACTED STAFF**

In some circumstances Elmore Green may have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply because agencies will have their own policies and procedures; for example, supply teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business.

Whilst Elmore Green Primary School is not the employer of supply teachers, they will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will our school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome.

The school's safeguarding team will discuss any concerns with the supply agency or the employers of the contracted staff and share their concerns with the LADO. In partnership with the LADO, they will decide whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

Agencies will be fully involved and are expected to co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social care. Elmore Green Primary School will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process.

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by us, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body when working in school. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support.

An allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency or agencies are taken into account during the investigation.

When using a supply agency, Elmore Green Primary School will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations but also take account of the agency's policies and their duty to refer to the DBS as personnel suppliers. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

### **Whistleblowing**

All staff and volunteers are able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our schools safeguarding regime; concerns are taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

If there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in our school staff will refer to the Whistle-blowing Policy.

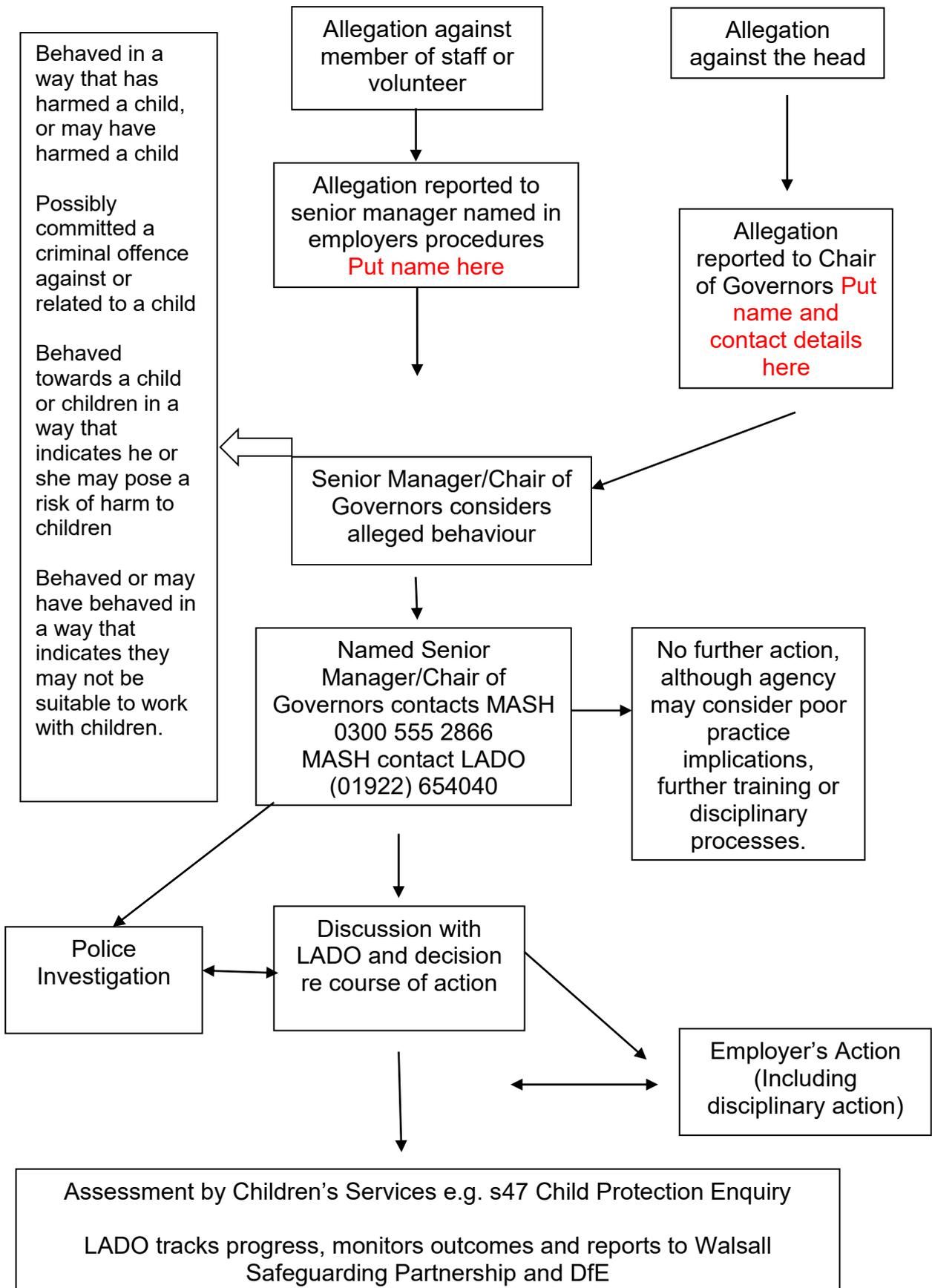
A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
- a legal obligation has been breached;
- there has been a miscarriage of justice;
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered;
- the environment has been damaged;
- information about any of the above has been concealed.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding safeguarding failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 800 5000 - line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). (<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> and <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/> )

More information and the full Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection Procedures can be found at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/>

### Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers



## APPENDIX 1

### The Seven Golden Rules to Sharing Information

1. Remember that the *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*, *Data Protection Act 2018* and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

4. Where possible, share information with consent, and respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared (where possible). Under the *GDPR* and *Data Protection Act 2018* you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

## APPENDIX 2 - CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES - Additional advice and support

<b>Abuse or Safeguarding issue</b>	<b>Link to Guidance/Advice</b>	<b>Source</b>
Abuse	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused	DfE advice
	Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance	Home Office
	Faith based abuse: National Action Plan	DfE advice
	Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody	Home Office website
Bullying	Preventing bullying including cyberbullying	DfE advice
Children and the courts	Advice for 5-11-year olds witnesses in criminal courts	MoJ advice
	Advice for 12-17 year old witnesses in criminal courts	MoJ advice
Children missing from education, home or care	Children missing education	DfE statutory guidance
	Child missing from home or care	DfE statutory guidance
	Children and adults missing strategy	Home Office strategy
Children with family members in prison	National Information Centre on Children of Offenders	Barnardo's in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advice
Child exploitation	County Lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults	Home Office guidance
	Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners	DfE
	Trafficking: safeguarding children	DfE and HO guidance

## APPENDIX 2 -Continued (pg. 2 of 3)

Drugs	Drugs-advice for schools	DfE and ACPO advice
	Drug strategy 2017	Home Office strategy
	Information and advice on drugs	Talk to Frank website
	ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug (& alcohol) prevention	Website developed by Mentor UK
"Honour Based Abuse" (so called)	Female genital mutilation: information and resources	Home Office
	Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
	Forced marriage: information and practice guidelines	Foreign Commonwealth Office and Home Office
Health and Well-being	Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children	DfE, Department for Health and Home Office
	Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience	Public Health England resources
	Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school	DfE statutory guidance
	Mental health and behaviour	DfE advice
Homelessness	Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions	HCLG
Online	Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children	UK Council for Child Internet Safety
	Teaching online safety in school	DfE - statutory guidance

## APPENDIX 2 -Continued (pg. 3 of 3)

Private fostering	Private fostering: local authorities	DfE - statutory guidance
Public Health England	Rise Above: secondary school mental health lessons and support	Public Health
Radicalisation	Prevent duty guidance	Home Office guidance
	Prevent duty advice for schools	DfE advice
	Educate Against Hate Website	DfE and Home Office
Violence	Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges	Home Office advice
	Tackling violence against women and girls strategy	DfE July 2021
	Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims	Home Office guidance
	Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges	DfE advice Sept 2021
	Serious violence strategy	Home Office Strategy

### **APPENDIX 3 - Host families - homestay during exchange visits**

Schools and colleges often make arrangements for children to take part in exchange visits, either to other parts of the UK or abroad. Exchanges can benefit learning across a range of subjects. In particular, foreign visits can enrich the languages curriculum and provide exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and expertise in the use of other languages.

We have a duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare. This extends to considering their safety and how best to minimise risk of harm to those children during any exchange visit the school or college arranges, and when organising for the care and accommodation of a child with a host family (known as homestays) as part of the exchange.

When arranging a homestay we will consider the suitability of the adults in the respective families who will be responsible for the visiting child during the stay.

In circumstances where we arrange for a visiting child to be provided with care and accommodation in the UK (including where they engage a company to make those arrangements) in the home of a family to which the child is not related the responsible adults will be engaging in regulated activity for the period of the stay. In such cases and where the school or college has the power to terminate such a homestay the school or college would be the regulated activity provider.

A regulated activity provider commits a criminal offence if it knows, or has reason to believe that, an individual is barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from engaging in regulated activity but allows that individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

Where the child's parent(s) or a student themselves arranges their own homestay, this would be a private arrangement therefore the school or college would not be the regulated activity provider.