Arthur Terry Learning Partnership

Together we are stronger

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026/2027



Document Control

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Summary of material changes	**This policy has been updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026. Key amendments include:** KCSIE 2026 updates ○ Gender questioning children ○ Mental Health ○ Potential Vulnerabilities ○ Early Identification and Help ○ Information Sharing

	○ All staff must read Part 1 KCSiE 2026 ○ Child-on-Child Abuse ○ Alternative Provision ○ Vetting of Volunteers ○ AI and Online Safety ○ Annual Filtering and Monitoring Checks ○ Mobile Phones These policies have been included in the list of related Trust policies: Suspensions and Exclusions Policy Relationships and Behaviour Policy Recruitment and Selection Policy Complaints Policy and Procedure An addition to the list of legislation and guidance of: • Online Safety Act 2023 • Children and Social Work Act 2017 • The Children's Well-being and School's Bill 2026 Non-statutory guidance: • Searching, Screening and Confiscation (Department for Education) • Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education) • Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (Department for Education) • Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People • Cybercrime: Training and Guidance for Schools and Colleges • Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges • Department for Education Guidance on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education

Note: For the purpose of this policy, references to Headteacher refers to Headteachers and Heads of School. References to parents refers to parents and carers.

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1. Statement of Intent

1.1. The ATLP is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical, mental and emotional welfare of every student. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. "Children" includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider what is in the best interests of the child.

1.2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing 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
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

1.3. Safeguarding arrangements across the ATLP are underpinned by four key principles:

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all staff, trustees, advocates, and volunteers must know and fulfil their responsibility to keep children safe. We have a safeguarding-first approach. This means ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of all our policies and processes. We always intentionally seek to operate in the best interests of the child.
2. Children are at the heart of everything we do. We seek to understand the needs and views of children. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly about anything that worries them. Children should feel confident that they will be listened to. They should know how to report and disclose abuse or harm.
3. We strive to build strong relationships with parents and carers and the wider community. We seek to know children and their families and understand their concerns so we can address them and remove any barriers to learning, attendance, good behaviour and participation. Our aim is that all our children and families experience equity, understanding, belonging and love.
4. Together we are stronger. We support and challenge each other to make the best decisions for children and to improve our practice where we can.

1.4. This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this statement of intent. It complies with the relevant statutory guidance. It will be achieved by:

- ensuring that members of the trust board, advocates, the headteacher/head of school and all staff understand their responsibilities as detailed in safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child abuse, and know to refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- teaching students how to keep safe and make informed choices, for example equipping students with knowledge about personal safety through our PSHE and RHE/RSHE curriculum with the knowledge and skills to recognise and report abuse, stay safe online and offline, and make informed decisions about healthy relationships
- identifying and making provision for any student that has been subject to, or is at risk of, abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- creating a culture of safer recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a risk to children and only appointing staff when all checks have been completed.

1.5 This policy does not reiterate extensive sections of statutory guidance. It must be read in conjunction with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026). We also recommend that all staff including trustees and advocates read the Data Protection in Schools guidance, available at www.gov.uk, Department for Education (DfE) Data Protection guidance for schools 2024. This guidance sets out how to: comply with data protection law; develop data policies; understand the staff and student data you need to keep; and prevent personal data breaches.

1.6 Staff will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Partnership in the Local Authority where their schools are situated or where the student resides.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and the Governance Handbook and competency framework.

2.2 We will comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by the relevant Local Safeguarding Partnerships. This policy has due regard to the latest edition of the relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 2002 (amended 2011)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2026
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Equality Act 2010 Public sector equality duty
- The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 – Code C
- The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation 2023
- DfE 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006' 2018
- HM Government 'multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation' 2020
- HM Government 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism' 2021
- Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage. Updated March 2023
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024 (Updated 2026)
- Children Missing Education 2024
- Academy Trust government guidance Part 7 Compliance
- DfE Guidance on the use of generative AI in education 2025
- The Children's Well-being and School's Bill 2026
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Online Safety Act 2023

2.3 Non-statutory guidance

- Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
- Department for Education (DfE) Mental health and behaviour in schools
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Recruit teachers from overseas.
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (Department for Education)
- Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (Department for Education)
- Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People

- Cybercrime: Training and Guidance for Schools and Colleges
- Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges
- Department for Education Guidance on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education

3. Overall Aims

3.1. This policy will contribute to the protection and safeguarding of all our students by ensuring that all staff are made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, vigilant to the needs of our children and follow the procedures set out in the documents named in this policy to keep children safe.

3.2. This policy extends to any establishment we commission to deliver education to our students on our behalf including alternative provision settings.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Staff responsibilities

All staff must **recognise, respond, record and report** their concerns.

Recognise

Everyone working with children must be able to recognise the signs of possible abuse and neglect. It is not adequate to wait for disclosure as the primary means of detecting child abuse. Children may not feel ready to disclose. They may not know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. They may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Therefore, the recognition and identification of signs of potential abuse forms part of our continuous professional development. It is the duty of all staff to show professional curiosity and follow up their concerns, however small. Abuse can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others and that this is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects.

Respond

All adults working in the Trust are trusted adults and are expected to be emotionally available to children - a crucial aspect of our safeguarding culture. We will not ignore harmful behaviours or actions. We will respond appropriately to concerns and disclosures of abuse from children.

Record and Report

It is our duty to record first-hand, in writing, any concerns and disclosures about or by children. This will be done promptly and securely using MyConcern and in line with the guidance issued by the ATLP. Additional guidance can be found in the ATLP MyConcern toolkit. All staff are expected to have read and understood the section on receiving disclosures in KCSiE 2026 and to follow this guidance. Staff will be supplied with log-in details for MyConcern and are expected to make appropriate use of the system. A limited group of staff, i.e., central team members and some school support roles, do not have access to MyConcern. These staff are required to report any concerns immediately to a DSL which shall be followed up in writing.

In cases of serious risk or harm to a child, an immediate, verbal alert to the DSL is required.

Documentation Review

All staff, including volunteers must read Part 1 of KCSiE (September 2026).

In addition, the ATLP expects all staff to read Part 4 (Allegations against staff). All staff must sign to say that they have read and understood these documents on an annual basis.

All staff will complete and electronically sign to say that they have read and understood these documents. Records of this, including statutory training, will be kept along with updates to staff profiles on SAM People.

General requirements

In addition, staff are expected to:

- provide a safe environment in which all children can learn
- keep themselves up to date with the systems within the school which support safeguarding
- raise any safeguarding concerns with the DSL. If at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral must be made to children's social care immediately
- be aware that they may be asked to support social workers to take decisions about individual children

- complete a formal written safeguarding concern on MyConcern or equivalent, immediately, always on the same day
- develop and act on their professional curiosity
- maintain an attitude that every child's rights must be protected, and any form of prejudice or discrimination must be challenged
- maintain an attitude that harmful sexual behaviour, harassment or violence is never acceptable and never rely on students to disclose abuse
- support the identification of children who may need extra help by sharing information and working together - All staff should be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessments
- know the school's procedures for dealing with children who are absent from education and reporting any such concerns to the DSL
- be fully aware of the Partnership's Relationships and Behaviour and Online Safety policies. This includes the support and training available regarding AI as outlined in the DfE guidance
- be aware of the early help/family help and their role in it, including: the identification of emerging problems, liaison with the DSL, and the sharing of information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- understand their statutory duty to report to the police should they suspect that female genital mutilation (FGM) has been carried out on a girl under 18. This individual responsibility must not be delegated
- be aware that mental health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- refer to the headteacher any concerns about another member of staff and act on any concerns that may appear low level or 'niggling' doubts. Staff must always report such concerns to the headteacher. If the concerns are about the headteacher these must be referred to the Strategic Lead who will support with the referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding process through the Partnership's whistleblowing policy
- fully engage in any professional learning and continuous development that is offered.
- be prepared to challenge decision-making when necessary. Do not unquestioningly rely on the expertise of safeguarding leads or other leaders or assume that an issue has been dealt with if there are doubts remaining.

4.2 Members of The Trust Board

Members of the Trust Board are required to provide written confirmation that they have completed annual child protection and safeguarding training in the autumn term and read Part One, Two, Four and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026

Members of the Trust Board will ensure that all ATLP schools comply with all their legal responsibilities as set out in KCSiE 2026. In addition, they will ensure that:

- there is an appropriate member of the senior leadership team who is the nominated Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (LDSL) in each school
- there is an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in place together with a Staff Code of Conduct, which are available and sign-posted to staff
- all staff undertake the core child protection and safeguarding training each autumn term and have read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Part One and Annex A prior to students returning to school; and that this is recorded on the Single Central Record (SCR)
- all advocates complete child protection and safeguarding training in the autumn term, and read Part One, Two, Four, and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- all staff receive appropriate training on the government's anti- radicalisation strategy, Prevent, on an annual basis
- all new members of staff are given a safeguarding induction which includes basic child protection training on the different types of abuse; indicators of abuse; how to respond to and report concerns; online safety including filtering and monitoring; key policies including this policy, Relationships and Behaviour policy, Staff Code of Conduct; Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Volunteers (Aged 16 or over) who teach, train or supervise children more than three times in a thirty-day period are now considered in regulated activity, necessitating the enhanced DBS check
- temporary/supply/agency staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities and are appropriately trained
- an Annual 157 Safeguarding Audit or equivalent is completed and when appropriate, an action plan drawn up to remedy any deficiencies

- the Partnership has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse and low-level concerns against staff and volunteers, and that these procedures are known by all staff
- procedures are in place in accordance with the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in the area in which the school is situated
- safeguarding procedures and systems, including those for filtering and monitoring, are reviewed across the partnership on an annual basis.

4.3 School leaders

School leaders, including the headteacher, are responsible for ensuring that:

- the school is compliant with all aspects of KCSiE 2026
- the school annually publishes a localised version of the ATLP Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as appropriate to its specific context, and that the policy and the ATLP Staff Code of Conduct is shared with all new staff
- all staff know and follow policies and procedures, particularly concerning cases of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- an appropriate senior member of staff from the leadership team is the nominated Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (LDSL)
- the LDSL/DDSL is given training, time and resources to carry out this role effectively
- there are sufficient Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) to carry out effective safeguarding and child protection
- Schools should have a clear and reliable system for when the DSL is not available
- the professional learning of all staff, which underpins a healthy safeguarding culture in our schools, will be continually updated and is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach.

4.4 Safeguarding Advocates

- Safeguarding advocates have no legal powers as per the ATLP scheme of delegation. Their role is to offer support and challenge and bring to the attention of the school leaders and trustees any issues of concern in the local community that require a safeguarding response, when such issues are known to them. They should provide a strong local voice in the support, challenge and guidance given to the Board on this subject.
- Advocates will liaise with the headteacher and the LDSL on a regular basis to undertake monitoring visits and offer support and challenge to their safeguarding work.
- Advocates must read Part One, Two, Four and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and sign to say that they have read and understood these documents.
- Additional training on current and contextual safeguarding issues will be provided for Safeguarding Advocates by the ATLP.

4.5 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is detailed in Annex B of KCSiE 2026

In addition, in our schools they must ensure that they:

- take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, as set out in their job description
- take the lead in creating a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- support all staff to identify vulnerable children and work alongside other key members of staff and external agencies to meet students' needs
- inform students of the process for raising a concern (about themselves or others), ensuring that students can identify a trusted adult and are aware of local support agencies
- possess a working knowledge of the Local Authority level of need threshold framework document relevant to the children in their schools. Reference to this guidance will inform the identification of risk and harm
- always have a DSL available during the school day in term time
- action and triage any alerts received via MyConcern on the same day
- categorise all alerts on MyConcern and identify the level of need as outlined in the ATLP MyConcern toolkit
- close or archive all files as appropriate and liaise with the DPO to ensure that the retention of local records is managed in accordance with relevant legislation
- quality assure MyConcern alerts and referrals both in terms of recording and reporting in line with KCSiE 2026 and the ATLP MyConcern tool kit

- review, summarise and share as appropriate any child protection information received by the school
- regularly analyse MyConcern and other data to identify emerging trends and potential unmet needs for individual children and families, including the number of alerts, referrals, and outcomes for children
- have a detailed understanding of the context of the school including specific local risks and that this information is shared with all staff on a regular basis
- liaise with the PSHE lead to ensure that the safeguarding curriculum reflects the school's local context
- take lead responsibility for online safety, overseeing and acting on filtering and monitoring reports, reviewing annually, alongside SLT and IT support, and working closely with IT providers to ensure these are fit for purpose
- arrange training for all staff to enable them to support the use of technology in the classroom
- communicate regularly with parents/carers about safeguarding issues, including online safety
- provide staff with updates about relevant outcomes and findings of local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Lessons Learnt Reviews
- set out and establish the school's early/family help offer which includes the range of services and assistance that the school provides for children and families
- undertake Operation Encompass training
- are alert to the need for early /family help for a child who has unexplainable or persistent absences from education, is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care, has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, is attending alternative provision or a student referral unit, has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- are aware of their local Safeguarding Children Partnerships process for the resolution of professional disagreements and are able to use this in the case of dispute
- undergo refresher training at least every two years and update their knowledge and skills
- access regular supervision.

DSLs must maintain an approach of **recognise**, **respond, refer, review and reflect**:

Recognise

All DSL's must ensure that they are able to recognise vulnerable children, the indicators of abuse and keep their knowledge up to date so that they are fully aware of any emerging trends or issues that might affect children.

Respond and refer

Any member of staff may make a referral to children's social care. In most cases this will be done by the DSL.

The DSL responds to and manages all actions, case notes and chronologies via MyConcern. The DSL will triage all concerns promptly against the Local Authority levels of need threshold framework. In normal circumstances, the DSL will decide the most appropriate action. This may be in consultation with the Local Authority Children's Social Care 'front door' which could lead to a referral to them. It could also include referrals to other agencies and programmes such as Prevent. When no referral is made, the DSL will record the rationale for this. The DSL must be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions.

Review

The Lead DSL will ensure that cases are kept under review through regular meetings with other DSLs, as well as behaviour and pastoral leads. This will include concerns that have not been referred to children's social care. This process will also include an ongoing review of students who are frequently absent from school.

Reflect

Lead DSLs should encourage staff to have the confidence to challenge them when needed. They should be receptive to challenge and reflective of their own practices to ensure that safeguarding policies, systems, and processes are kept under continuous review. We encourage and expect everyone who is DSL trained to access regular supervision.

5. Our role in preventing abuse

5.1 This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of our partnership which has a safeguarding-first approach. We will ensure that all ATLP students:

- are treated with respect and dignity
- are taught to treat each other with respect and dignity

- always feel safe
- have a voice and are listened to.

5.2 It is important that we are all aware of any additional risk factors. Some children are at increased risk of abuse, while some face additional barriers with respect to recognising or disclosing abuse. Staff must be fully aware of this.

5.3 We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognising the diverse circumstances of our children. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. When appropriate, we will make reasonable adjustments in line with our safeguarding principles. We will ensure appropriate consideration of children who may be considered vulnerable, for example who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- have experienced mental health issues
- are young carers
- may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- speak English as an additional language
- are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse, or domestic abuse
- have been subject to an Operation Encompass alert
- are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, radicalisation, modern slavery, CCE or CSE, honour or faith abuse
- are asylum seekers or refugees
- are recently bereaved
- are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- are in the care of the local authority or have previously been
- are living with kinship carers
- are living in private fostering arrangements
- have current or previous social work intervention
- are frequently missing/absent from education or have unexplained absences
- are at risk of being removed from the school's roll to be home educated, recognising these children as being less visible to professionals and are not always in receipt of a suitable education
- do not attend school full time
- are members of the LBGTQ+ community
- Are gender questioning
- teenage pregnancy or becoming a parent
- anti-social or criminal behaviour
- has a parent or carer in custody

5.4 Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning: A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. A child who is gender questioning should be considered separately to LGBTQ+

5.5 In line with the Cass review, ATLP schools should take a cautious approach for children questioning their gender and consider the broad range of children's individual needs on a case-by-case basis. Schools will work in partnership with parents and carers, unless to do so would place the child at significant risk of harm. They will signpost parents to appropriate clinical help and advice, and address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Schools should refer to the DfE Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children for advice on how to proceed in individual cases.

5.6 Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where children can speak out or share their concerns with trusted members of staff.

5.7 Schools should protect single sex spaces such as toilets, showers and changing rooms. Responding to a request to support any degree of social transition must not include allowing access to these spaces. As a default, all children should use the toilets, showers and changing facilities designated for their biological sex unless it will cause distress for them to do so. In some instances, schools should seek to find alternative arrangements while continuing to ensure spaces are single sex.

5.8 Abuse can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others. This is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects. Such exposure is a form of harm and can have a lasting impact on a child's

health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn. Staff should be alert to the signs that a child may be living in a context of domestic abuse and follow the procedures in this policy if they have any concerns.

5.9 We should all have an awareness of the contextual safeguarding risks our children face. Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It seeks to identify and address harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, whether from adults or from other young people.

5.10 As children move into adolescence, they spend increasing amounts of time socialising independently of their families and carers. During this time, the extent to which they encounter protection or abuse will be informed by the changes they undergo, their neighbourhoods and journey to school, their use of social media and the relationships that they form in these setting

5.11 Contextual safeguarding risks may include child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), serious youth violence, gang involvement, and online harms such as grooming, coercion to share sexual images, exposure to harmful content, online bullying, and radicalisation through extremist content. Nether Stowe School faces a typical range of contextual risks to many other secondary schools but is particularly aware of the risks presented by county lines, right wing extremism and the ever-changing risks presented online through usage and interaction.

5.12 We are mindful of the diverse communities our schools serve and the differing safeguarding risks that may be more prevalent in each. We recognise the importance of staff understanding these local risks so they can identify concerns early, provide appropriate support, and take swift action to reduce harm. This local knowledge is an essential part of our safeguarding culture and is reflected in staff training, vigilance, and proactive engagement with children, families, and partner agencies.

5.13 Safeguarding issues such as online safety (including misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories), child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, and extra-familial harm will be addressed through our curriculum in an age-appropriate way. Our PSHE and RHE/RSHE curriculum will remain responsive to emerging issues and will reflect the revised statutory guidance for implementation from 1 September 2025. This includes strengthened expectations for age-appropriate delivery, parental consultation, and transparency over curriculum content (see Appendix 7).

5.14 We recognise the many potential benefits of generative artificial intelligence (AI) to support teaching, learning, and administrative tasks. However, AI systems can also generate believable but harmful content, such as credible scam emails; provide instructions for illegal or dangerous activities; and produce inaccurate or false information presented as fact, known as hallucination.

5.15 In line with DfE guidance, students' use of generative AI in school will be managed and supervised to reduce the risk of exposure to harmful or inappropriate content. Staff will review any AI-generated material intended for use with students to ensure it is accurate, appropriate, and free from bias, misinformation, or harmful stereotypes. Students will also be taught, through our online safety curriculum, how to use AI tools responsibly, protect their personal information, and critically evaluate AI-generated content they may encounter outside school. The four categories of online risk, Content, Contact, Commerce and conduct, now explicitly cover AI, including AI-generated explicit images and AI applications that simulate harmful contact.

5.16 Each school will publish, in its local Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, a detailed analysis of the specific safeguarding risks to students in its care. This analysis will be reviewed regularly and made available on the school's website.

5.17 Each school should also ensure that staff receive regular updates and training on contextual safeguarding issues. This should be informed by local data, including reported crime statistics available online from West Mercia Police and safeguarding information recorded on MyConcern.

5.18 The Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (LDSL) is responsible for obtaining and analysing this data, identifying trends and emerging risks, and sharing findings with staff on a regular basis so they fully understand the local safeguarding context.

5.19 These identified risks will be set out in the school's individual Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, incorporated into staff CPD and reflected in the safeguarding curriculum delivered to students.

5.20 Mobile phones

School should be mobile phone free by default, covering the whole school day, not just lessons, with exceptions rare rather than routine

5.21 Safeguarding in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In line with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026)*, safeguarding arrangements for students in EYFS include clear expectations for the use of mobile phones, cameras, and other image-capturing or sharing devices. These are detailed in **Appendix 6** and should be read in conjunction with the ATLP Online Safety Policy. Staff working in EYFS must be familiar with and adhere to these procedures.

6. What we will do when we are concerned

- All staff should look out for any changes in behaviour or mood, listen to children and young people and share any concerns in writing with the DSL as set out above.

6.1 When unmet needs have been identified but there is no evidence of a significant risk, the DSL will oversee the development and delivery of an appropriate early help plan.

6.2 If a social care response is needed to meet an unmet safeguarding need, the DSL will initiate according to the procedures of the local safeguarding board.

6.3 The DSL will then oversee the agreed intervention.

6.4 Any staff member can refer to social care should the need arise. However, it is best practice that concerns are passed through the DSL team.

6.5 The referral process is summarised in the flow chart in Appendix One.

6.6 Details of how to make a child protection referral can be found in section 11. For further reference, staff can access additional information about specific safeguarding Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026)

6.7 If you are concerned that an adult working with children may have harmed a child, please refer to the ATLP policy, Allegations and concerns raised in relation to staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers. This policy provides details of how and when to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). A flowchart is included as Appendix Two, with further guidance in section 9 of this policy.

7. Types of abuse, neglect and exploitation

7.1 **Understanding Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation**

Staff must be fully aware of the different types of abuse, neglect and exploitation as detailed below. All referrals to Children's Social Care will be made under one or more of these broad categories of abuse.

Child abuse is the maltreatment of a child by another person, whether an adult or another child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse, including neglect, and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

7.2 **Physical Abuse**

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

7.3 **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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.

• Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate.

• Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, including interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing participation in normal social interaction.

• Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. [1]

• Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

• Verbal abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling.

7.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether 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 penetration with an object) or non - penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Staff should be aware that perpetrators of sexual abuse may be of any gender or age and may include children.

7.5 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because 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 caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

7.6 **Exploitation:** we recognise that exploitation in a variety of forms is abuse. This includes sexual and criminal exploitation as well as other forms in which children are forced to undertake certain activities against their will. CCE and CSE may also constitute as Modern Slavery

7.7 **Child-on-child abuse**

All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. This section covers child-on-child abuse in general terms. Staff should refer to Appendix 3 for detailed information about child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour.

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children. Such abuse takes place in school but may also take place outside of school and online. We maintain an attitude of 'it probably is happening here', even if there are no reports in school. We recognise that there are many reasons why such abuse often goes unreported.

For this reason, we seek to intentionally develop a culture in our schools that enables all students to be confident to speak up about their concerns, even when these involve their peers. Furthermore, we seek to develop a positive school culture that prevents child-on-child abuse from occurring.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- Girls are more likely to be victims for some, but not all, forms of abuse
- Threats of harm with a weapon

7.8 **Additional categories of abuse**

- Child to parent abuse - the definition of abuse now names harm children cause to other family members, referred to child-to-parent or care-giver abuse
- Pregnant pupils and teen parents
- Teenage pregnancy and becoming a parent
- Misogyny and Misandry - **Misogyny** is the hatred, prejudice, or deep-seated contempt toward women. **Misandry** is the equivalent prejudice or hatred directed toward men.

Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- could put students in the school at risk
- is violent
- involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol or
- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes).

7.9 The Serious Violence section has been significantly expanded and re-written, the guidance now is framed:

- As a continuing safeguarding concern that may involve weapons, peer conflict, bullying and criminal exploitation
- Places a clear duty on staff to report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon – or expressing an intent to do so – to the DSL
- Identifies children with disrupted education (suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in Alternative Provision) or a history of offending as being at higher risk
- Emphasises the importance of early, evidence-based support, including access to trusted adults, mentoring and therapeutic support, for children at risk and at critical points where concerns emerge
- Where a transferring pupil has previously carried, threatened with, or used a weapon, the receiving school must now risk assess and have a safety plan ready before the child arrives

7.10 Creating a positive school culture and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse. We will ensure that all staff recognise the important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding to any concerns they may have. We will ensure that all staff:

- model positive and respectful behaviours to students, other staff and parents and carers
- make the most of opportunities to teach students about the importance of respectful behaviours
- are well informed about issues facing people who share a protected characteristic
- are vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence that might impact, more typically, on boys
- help to create an environment in which students know they will be listened to
- reassure a victim that they are being taken seriously
- challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between children, including requesting or sending sexual images
- ensure our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- inform leaders if they become aware of 'hot spots' where abuse may be more likely to occur, whether this is in school or in the local community, or where students may not feel safe.

7.11 We ensure that staff are trained to understand:

- the potential signs of child-on-child abuse
- how to respond to any reports that are made to them directly
- that such abuse often goes unreported
- that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their age, vulnerability, special educational need, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

- that they must therefore act on any concerns they have immediately, rather than wait to be told
- that a student harming another child could be a sign that they are being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- that abuse can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others and that this is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects.

7.12 Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse:

- Staff must reassure the child that their concerns are being taken seriously. They must report the allegation to the DSL and record the allegation on MyConcern but not investigate it.
- The DSL will, if appropriate, contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.

7.13 **Children who are unexplainably missing from education or are persistently absent.** Children face additional risks when they are not in school. This includes students who are frequently absent from school, those who leave or are intended to leave the school's roll, those who attend part-time and those who receive part of their education elsewhere, such as through an offsite direction or alternative provision. All staff must be aware of our procedures for Children Missing/Absent from Education as well as the requirements outlined in KCSiE 2026

7.14 When a school places a student with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that student. In line with statutory guidance issued by the DfE, the school must obtain **written confirmation** of the provider's safeguarding arrangements. This must include:

- that appropriate safer recruitment and vetting checks have been carried out on all individuals working at the provider;
- the name and contact details of the provider's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- a copy of, or access to, the provider's child protection policy.

7.15 Schools should be satisfied that the placement meets the student's needs and is in their best interests. They must always know where the student is based during school hours and must review the provision frequently (at least half-termly) to ensure:

- the setting remains suitable;
- the student is attending regularly;
- the placement continues to be safe.

A link to the DfE statutory guidance can be found in Appendix 6.

7.16 **Operation Encompass**. Domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on children, who may witness, hear or experience its effects. Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are recognised as victims in their own right. The ATLP participates in Operation Encompass, a national police–education partnership that enables police to share relevant information with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) before the start of the next school day following a police-attended domestic abuse incident involving one of our students. The DSL will use this information to help ensure timely, appropriate support is provided, and that no action taken places the student or non-abusing parent/carer at further risk. This became a statutory duty in November and KCSIE 2026 is the first version to reflect it properly. The pupil is named so the school can offer support but any sexual offence disclosed goes through a normal safeguarding referral process.

7.17 **Overlapping** - KCSIE 2026 states that all staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm

8. Our role in preventing radicalisation

8.1 All staff should receive appropriate development on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Learning needs will be identified in accordance with local risk determined through regular Prevent risk assessments, which will be conducted as part of a school's safeguarding audit at least every 3 years, unless more urgent need is apparent.

8.2 According to this guidance, extremism is defined as the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

- negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others;

- undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).

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

8.4 Extremism is also vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

8.5 Terrorism is an action that: endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system.

8.6 The use or threat of terrorism is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

8.7 We are aware that all our schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism.

8.8 All our schools will have a named Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will liaise with the relevant authorities in the case of a concern. This person will be DSL trained. The SPOC will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

8.9 We will assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in the school's local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

8.10 We will ensure that suitable internet filtering and monitoring is in place and that this is in line with the Department for Education's filtering and monitoring standards and supports our students to stay safe online at school and at home. Our system will block any access to inappropriate sites and monitor any activity linked to attempted access as in line with our online safety policy. We will review our filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.

8.11 There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

8.12 Staff will be alerted to changes in students' behaviour. Educate Against Hate [1]provides useful resources to identify indicators of radicalisation.

8.13 All our schools will follow the procedures laid out in the Birmingham City Council 'No platform policy'[2] to ensure we uphold our duty of care towards all our schools by seeking to ensure no discrimination on the grounds of political opinion, age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, race, religion or sexual orientation shall be exercised by any individual on any ATLP site.

8.14 In the event that a Channel referral has been accepted but additional concerns arise, these must still be reported.

9 Responding to an allegation/ concern about a staff member, trainee teachers including supply staff, other staff, volunteers and contractors

9.1 The ATLP policy, Allegations and concerns raised in relation to trainee teachers, staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers, details specific guidance and expectations regarding low-level concerns. Staff must be aware of this guidance as well as KCSiE 2026 Part 4. The ATLP records details of such concerns in the Confide system, with records retained in accordance with relevant legislation. A brief summary of key considerations follows.

9.2 An allegation may involve any adult working in our schools such as a teacher, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor.

9.3 Any allegation about a member of staff must be reported to the headteacher without delay and without informing the staff member.

9.4 Headteachers must always consult with HR.

[1] https://www.educateagainsthate.com

[2] https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/18619/bcc_no_platform_policy

9.5 Any concerns about the headteacher must be reported to the Strategic Lead. Concerns about centrally employed staff must be reported to the CEO. Concerns about the Strategic Lead must be reported to the CEO. Concerns about the CEO, must be reported to the Chair of the Trust Board (see flow chart in Appendix Two).

9.6 All staff should be aware that they are vulnerable to allegations. They must adhere to the ATLP guidance in respect to safe conduct as well as guidance given on professional standards and conduct. They must know and uphold the expectations of their conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards and the latest edition of 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings'.[3]

9.7 Children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues. Staff must be aware of whistleblowing procedures. Details can be found in the ATLP whistleblowing policy or via the NSPCC.

10 Local arrangements and useful contacts

10.1 Each of our schools will identify through their own published version of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy their local arrangements for safeguarding as well as key staff with safeguarding responsibilities. These staff names will be clearly identified within individual schools' policies. These will include:

- Strategic Lead
- ATLP Safeguarding Lead
- Headteacher
- Safeguarding Advocate
- Chief Executive Officer
- Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Single Point of Contact
- Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
- Mental Health Lead
- Designated Attendance Lead.

10.2 The individual school policy will also include specific contact details and referral processes regarding safeguarding procedures aligned to the local safeguarding board.

11. Useful contacts for ATLP schools

11.1 West Midlands Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual (Covers Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire).

11.2 Twelve local authority areas collaborate with regard to child safeguarding procedures. Each local area's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are led by the statutory safeguarding partners/organisations: local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and the police.

11.3 How to use the manual:

- Use this link to the contents page to access the different sections of the regional procedures: Statutory Child Protection Procedures; Regional Safeguarding Guidance; Local Area Specific Safeguarding Information and Procedures.
- With respect to the Local Area Specific Safeguarding Information and Procedures, please choose from the drop-down list to access the localised content for your local partnership.

[3] https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/_files/ugd/f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e4470_84.pdf

11.4 Child protection referrals

- If you are a professional and want to make a referral to Children's Social Care, use this link and choose the area you're working in.
- For Staffordshire use this link.
- Details of threshold guidance can be found via the links below.
  Right Help: Right time – Local Levels of Need Threshold Guidance.
  Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership - Right Help, Right Time Home - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
  Staffordshire Threshold Framework Home - Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
  Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Safeguarding Children

Additional guidance can be gained from: -

- Birmingham City Council Advice Line CASS- 0121 303 1888
- Out of hours: 0121 675 4806
- Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door 03001118007
- Out of hours 03546042886
- Warwickshire Education Safeguarding Service 01926742525 or 01926742601
- Out of hours 01926886922
- West Midlands Police: 0845 113 5000
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- NSPCC Whistle blowing hotline: 0800 0280285.
- Counter Terrorism Unit Hotline Number – 0800 789 321
- BCC LADO: 0121 675 1669
- Staffordshire LADO 0300 111 8007
- Warwickshire LADO 01926745376
- https://www.keepingchildrensafeineducation.co.uk/annex_b.html

Appendices

Appendix 1: Responding to concerns about a child.

Appendix 2: Responding to concerns about a staff member.

Appendix 3: Child-on-child sexual abuse and harassment and harmful sexual behaviour.

Appendix 4: List of acronyms used in this document.

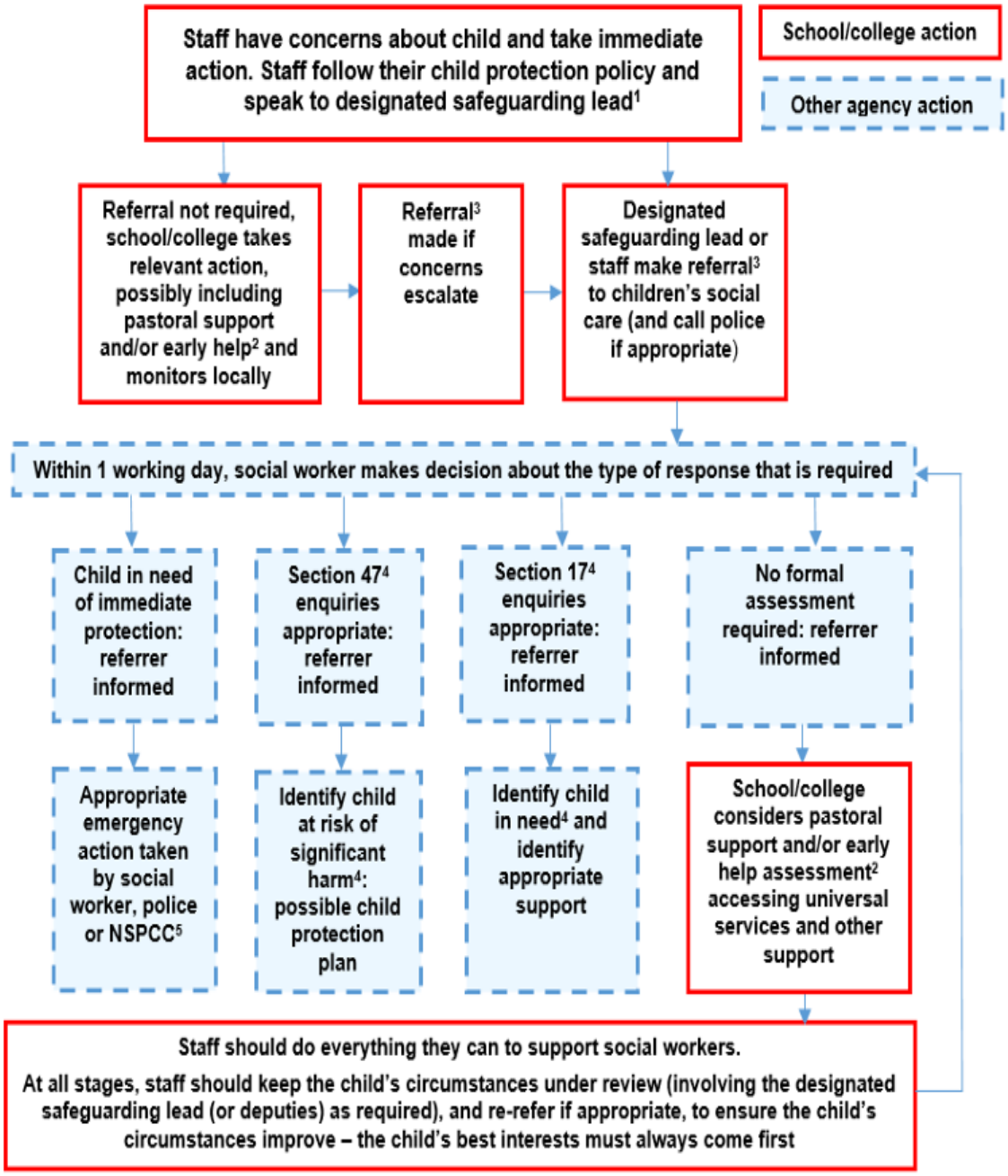
Appendix 5: PACE.

Appendix 6: How mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting (primary schools).

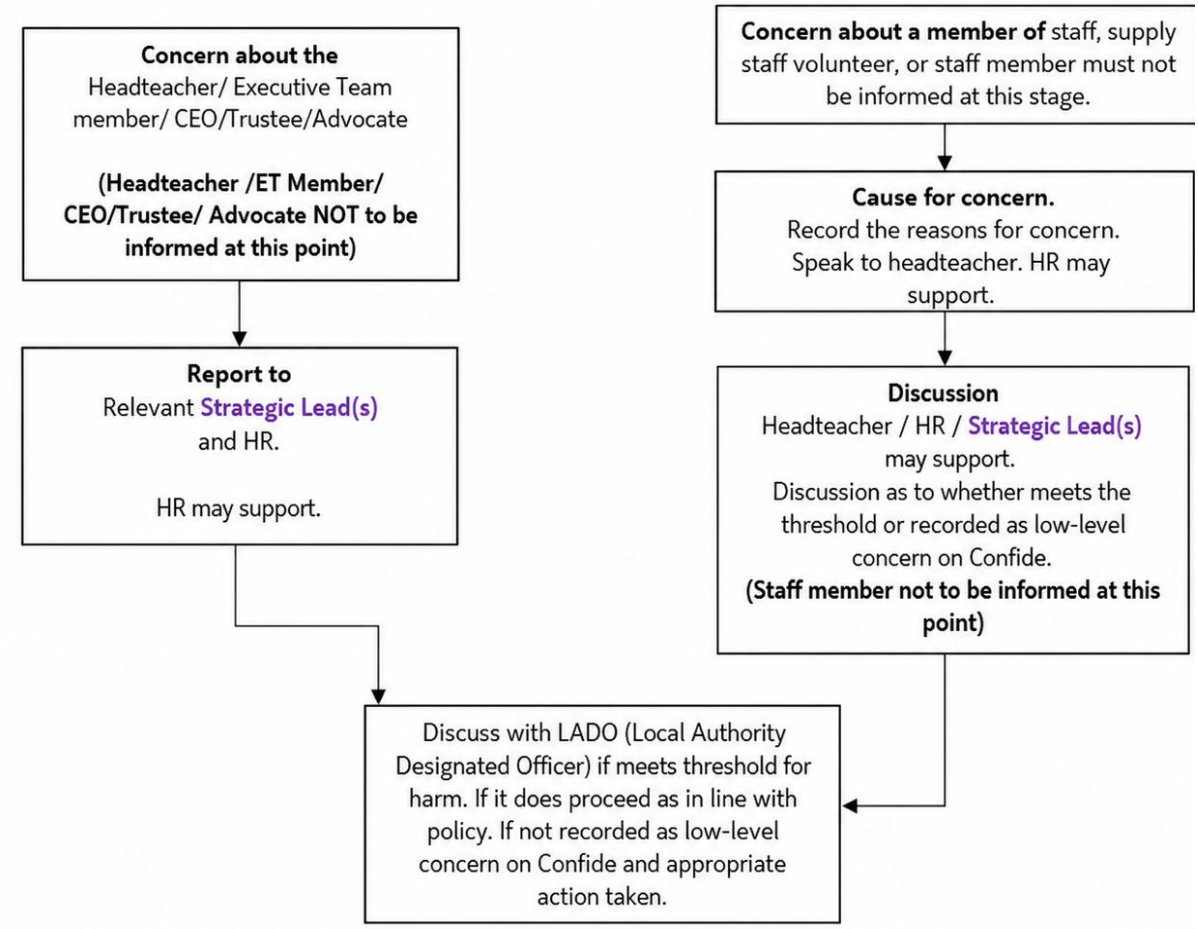
Appendix 7: Additional support and guidance.

Appendix 1: Key Procedures – Responding to concerns about a child

If the child is in immediate danger phone 999



Appendix 2: Responding to concerns about a staff member, volunteer or supply teacher flowchart, including low-level concerns.



Appendix 3: child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

1.1 The procedures outlined here should be read in conjunction with the Nether Stowe School anti-bullying and Relationship and Behaviour policies.
1.2 All staff will be encouraged to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and that as far as sexual abuse is concerned, 'it probably is happening here'.
1.3 Sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) can occur between two or more children of any age and sex and through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.
1.4 Nether Stowe School recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.
1.5 We recognise that this behaviour can take place in school or any setting where students are together, including online. We recognise that the impact of this behaviour on children can be extremely distressing, affecting their emotional health and well-being as well as their academic achievement.
1.6 Any reports, or suspected incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment **must** be referred **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
1.7 We operate a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable and will never be tolerated. This means that staff must never ignore incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment, including for example sexualised, sexist or homophobic language or behaviour, wherever it is used. How staff respond to such incidents is vital in setting a positive and respectful culture. We will ensure that all staff are trained and empowered to deal with such incidents.
1.8 We fully recognise and acknowledge the scale of harassment and abuse. We are fully committed to playing our role in identifying and responding to such incidents. We embrace our role in promoting true equality between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and therefore the contribution that we can make to a fair and respectful society.
1.9 We recognise the gendered nature of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Girls are more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse and boys are more likely to be the perpetrators. We recognise that boys are also victims of sexual abuse, as are transgender students. We recognise that students with SEND are much more likely to victims of sexual abuse than are their peers and are less likely to disclose such abuse.
1.10 We will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have taken place outside school and/or online. We will seek to reassure all victims, whatever section of our community they come from, that their concerns are being taken seriously.

2. Definitions

Sexual abuse is an umbrella term covering a range of behaviours as set out below.

2.1 Sexual Violence – Sexual violence refers to sexual offences as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- 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.
- 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.

We note that:

- 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.

We recognise the particular importance of teaching all children and young people to understand what is meant by consent and to returning to this teaching whenever it is necessary to do so. This is covered in our PSHE programme.

2.2 **Sexual Harassment** refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. We refer to this in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. It can include:

- sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as deliberating brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos (both often referred to as sexting); sharing of unwanted explicit content; sexualised online bullying and inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

We recognise the prevalent nature of sexual harassment as set out in Ofsted's Sexual Abuse Review (2021). We recognise the role we have to play in ensuring that such harassment does not remain commonplace in schools and in wider society. We are committed to ensuring that all students will know the importance of speaking up about all types of sexual harassment and never accepting these as normal or appropriate.

2.3 **Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)**: Children's sexual behaviour exists on a spectrum from developmentally normal to problematic. We recognise that harmful sexual behaviour defines a spectrum of developmentally inappropriate behaviours that range from inappropriate to violent. We also acknowledge that HSB can progress on a continuum, particularly if it is not addressed. We are committed to ensuring that we keep up to date about the type and range of behaviours that may be classed as HSB. We will ensure that our staff have the training, resources and support to understand what is meant by HSB and are therefore able to respond appropriately to incidents of HSB.

Harmful sexual behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour, and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards. It may include:

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse
- sexting.

3 Responding to reports and concerns of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children

3.1 We have covered above what we do when responding to child-on-child abuse concerns/disclosures. These processes **all** apply to cases of sexual violence and sexual harassment. However, we recognise the complexity and challenges that we face with cases of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

3.2 The statutory guidance does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what we should do in any or every case; it provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for us to consider in our decision-making process and on a case-by-case basis.

3.3 We understand that our initial response to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of the victim. The culture in our setting is key to ensuring that we get the initial response right. We are also committed to reflecting on and learning from issues we deal with.

3.4 In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed. A child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. As per the guidance above, staff must act immediately if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, rather than wait to be told.

3.5 On occasions the victim may not wish for their identity to be known. There are no easy or definitive answers when this is requested. If the victim does not give consent to share information, we may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest; for example, to protect children from harm and promote the welfare of children.

3.6 A student is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be anyone on the school or college staff or even a visitor to school. Therefore, all staff will be trained to manage reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. We will ensure that visitors to school know how to report any concerns.

3.7 When dealing with disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment, **staff at Nether Stowe School will**:

- take any disclosure seriously
- listen carefully and use the child's language in reflecting back what has been shared.
- reassure and be non-judgemental
- devote their full attention to the child
- handle the situation with sensitivity
- ask open and non-leading questions
- only prompt, when necessary, with open questions: where, what, when etc.
- be clear about boundaries and next steps
- use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child
- ascertain where the abuse occurred as this may highlight 'hot spots' or vulnerable locations in our schools or the community, which may need to be revisited by either ourselves (in school) or by alerting police/partners
- ascertain whether other children witnessed this abuse
- wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary
- record the facts only as the child has reported them
- inform the DSL as soon as practically possible
- only share the report with those people necessary to progress it

Staff at Nether Stowe School will not:

- make children feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting a concern or making a disclosure
- promise confidentiality**.** It is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) or local authority children's social care) to decide next steps.
- ask leading questions
- insert their own opinion or any form of supposition into the report
- **view or forward illegal images of a child.** Staff should always seek the advice of the DSL and/or trust safeguarding lead and/or police when necessary.

3.8 Our LDSL will take the lead role when dealing with this type of abuse, using their professional judgement and knowledge of working together practices. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. It is important to maintain a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports. **No one should feel alone when faced with cases of sexual violence and sexual harassment**. DSLs have the further support of hub safeguarding lead, and specific expertise in harmful sexual behaviour in our trust safeguarding leads to call upon if need be.

3.9 The LDSL will consider the following:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed
- how to ensure that the victim is 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 - we will balance this aspect and the need to balance our duty and responsibility to protect other children
- the nature of the alleged incident(s) including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour

- the ages of the students involved
- the developmental stages of the students involved
- whether there is a power imbalance between the students (e.g., Is the perpetrator older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?)
- whether the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children
- whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or staff
- other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation.

3.10 Parents or carers of the victim will be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk). Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes and the DSL will have to balance the wishes of the victim against their duty to protect the child who has harmed and other children within the school setting. If we decide to make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against the wishes of victim, this will be handled extremely carefully. The reasons will in most cases be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered.

If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral must be made to local authority children's social care.

3.11 We will give all the necessary support for the victim to remain in school; however, if the trauma results in the child who has been harmed being unable to remain in school, alternative provision or a move to another school or college will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

3.12 When we speak to the alleged perpetrator we will:

- listen to what they say and not dismiss their account
- handle the situation with sensitivity
- offer ongoing support
- record all conversations and all action taken
- consider any referrals for external support.

We will carefully consider when to inform the alleged perpetrator of the allegation. When a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a rule, we will seek advice as to the next steps.

4. Scenario considerations

There are four likely scenarios we will need to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:

1. Manage internally - In some cases of sexual harassment (for example, one-off incidents), we may take the view that the students concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally using our own sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy and by providing pastoral intervention and support.
2. Early help. We may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help where we are the lead professional.
3. Reporting to the police - see below.
4. Referral to children's social care - see below.

5. Reporting to the Police

5.1 At **Nether Stowe School** we understand our responsibility to report certain forms of child-on-child abuse (see below) to the police. We must record the rationale behind any decision to inform or not inform the police on MyConcern.

5.2 If we suspect that an offence has been committed, a report may be made to the police. When a report is made to the police, we will consult with the police and agree what information is appropriate to disclose to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

5.3 This may also include the development of a clear and robust safety and support plan as part of this early help process. Risk assessing, and safety planning is a key aspect in managing cases child-on-child abuse (see Post Incident Management section 10).

5.4 When there is a report of a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the starting point is that this should be passed to the police who will advise and log according to their own guidelines.

5.5 Additional guidance can be found in 'When to call the police (guidance for schools and colleges)'[4] and Outcome 21 Sexting guidance[5].

5.6 We will ask the police if we have any questions about the progress of the matter for example, are there any bail conditions in place or has there been a charging decision. It is key to have a central point of contact with the police for updates and progress. When required, advice from the police will be sought to help us to manage our safeguarding responsibilities. When bail is deemed proportionate and necessary, as above, we will work with children's social care and the police to manage any implications and safeguard our children.

6. Referring to children's social care

6.1 In all cases of child-on-child abuse that include sexual violence and sexual harassment, we will consider whether the incident should be reported to children's social care. We must consider whether a child is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger. Again, the rationale behind any decision to refer or not refer must be recorded on MyConcern.

6.2 In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide that a statutory intervention is not appropriate, and, in these circumstances, we will consider other support mechanisms, such as early help, specialist support/referrals and pastoral support as part of a formalised plan. We will consider starting an early help process where we are the lead professional.

6.3 However, if the DSL/DDSL feels that the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm, they may refer again.

6.4 At this referral stage, we will inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (e.g., when 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 social care. If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services.

6.5 When statutory assessments are appropriate, we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker.

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

7. Engaging with our parents and carers

7.1 At **Nether Stowe School** we will, in most instances, engage with both the parents of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator when there has been a report of child-on-child abuse including sexual or sexual harassment. The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe that informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

7.2 We will carefully consider what information is provided to the respective parents or carers about other children involved, and when to do so.

[4] https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/2020/when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf

[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578979/GD8_-_Sexting_Guidance.pdf

7.3 In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view on this aspect, and it will be important for us to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

7.4 It should be the case that we will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

7.5 It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes they share with the victim and what this means for their education.

7.6 We will be clear and transparent and explain the reason behind any decisions. Support for the alleged perpetrator will be discussed including any referrals, if appropriate.

7.7 We realise that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of sexual abuse or has abused another child. Details of organisations that support parents are provided on the school website and at the end of this policy.

8. Sanctions

8.1 We will decide appropriate sanctions on a case-by-case basis in line with the school's behaviour policy. When appropriate and taking the victim's wishes into account, we will do this in a restorative way to resolve conflict. It will not always be appropriate to take this approach.

8.2 If there is police involvement, we will work closely with them to ensure that any disciplinary action does not jeopardise the police investigation.

8.3 Imposing a sanction does not and should not prevent us from supporting the alleged perpetrator, bearing in mind that they may themselves have been the victim of abuse.

9. Post Incident Management

9.1 It is vital that all children involved in child-on-child abuse are given appropriate and ongoing support for as long as it is required/needed. This may include referrals to other agencies/professionals outside our setting and this decision will be made in conjunction with the children, their parents/carers, and other professionals.

9.2 If there are other professionals involved, then we will liaise with those colleagues to ensure that we are working together and understand one another's role in this support.

9.3 There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. However, we will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim the alleged perpetrator and other children in the school and moving forward with our post-incident management.

9.4 It is it is imperative that following any incident, the children involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they tell us that they are coping and managing. We will do our best to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g., self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) will happen as part of this plan.

9.5 Referrals may have already happened as mentioned previously in this policy, but it is important to establish which professionals continue to work with ALL children involved in this process and this is helped with robust planning.

10. Safety planning/Risk assessment

10.1 Integral to post incident management is robust safety planning/risk assessment. When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL or DDSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. When there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

When drawing up a risk assessment we will consider:

- the importance of ensuring that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education.
- the importance of the alleged perpetrator in continuing to access education and support.
- whether the victim and alleged share classes
- any measures that need to be put in place when children move between lessons/classes
- any measures that need to be put in place for unstructured time (break and lunchtimes
- any measures that need to be put in pace for the arrival at the start of the school day and leaving at the end of the school day
- whether the victim and alleged perpetrator travel to and from school using the same form of transport
- appropriate information sharing with staff in our setting in order that the plan is manageable and as successful as possible.
- if the alleged perpetrator is moved to another educational institution (for any reason), then we will inform that the new educational institution of any ongoing support needs.

10.2 In all cases, we will record our decision making together with the rationale behind those decisions on MyConcern.

10.3 We will ensure that all risk assessments are kept under review. We will consider any risks posed to other students and put adequate measures in place to protect them.

10.4 The LDSL or DDSL will liaise with children's social care and specialist services as required. When 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. The school's risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting students and updating the school's risk assessment.

10.5 Safety and support planning/risk assessments must be considered in ALL cases of child-on-child abuse, not just sexual violence and sexual harassment between children. However, when there is evidence of sexual violence and harassment a proportionate risk assessment must be in place as in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

11. Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

11.1 As set out above, all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed.

11.2 If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate.

11.3 If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school or college, should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

12. Supporting all students

12.1 We will ensure that we support all students who have been affected in any way by a report of sexual harassment or sexual violence. We will seek to ensure that both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s), and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed, including online. We are aware of the potentially damaging role that social media can play in such cases and will ensure that students are educated about these dangers and signposted to specialist support when necessary.

12.2 **Nether Stowe School** operates a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is **never** acceptable and will not be tolerated. We seek to create an environment in in which all children are supportive and respectful of their peers when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.

12.3 We will keep this guidance under review, ensuring that we reflect on its effectiveness when reports of sexual harassment or sexual violence are made, and that we respond to any emerging issues or trends in the data, sharing these with safeguarding partners as appropriate.

Appendix 4: acronyms used in this policy.

ATLP-Arthur Terry Learning Partnership

BCC- Birmingham City Council

BCSC-Birmingham Children's Safeguarding Board

BCT Birmingham Children's Trust

CASS- Child Advice and Support Service

CCE-Child Criminal Exploitation

CME-Children Missing Education

CSE-Child Sexual Exploitation

CTU-Counter Terrorism Unit

DBS- Disclosure Barring Service

DDSL -Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

DfE- Department for Education

DSL-Designated Safeguarding Lead

EHP- Early Help Plan

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

FGM- Female Genital Mutilation

FHP Family Help Plan

GDPR –General Data Protection Regulations

IT - Information Technology

LAC-Looked After Child

LADO- Local Authority Designated Officer

NSPCC-National Society for the Protection Cruelty to Children

RHRT-Right Help Right Time

RSE- Relationship and Sex Education

SCC- Staffordshire County Council

SCR- Single Central Record

SEND -Special Educational Needs and Disability

SPOC- Single Point of Contact

SSCB-Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board

UKCIS UK Council for Internet Safety

WCC-Warwickshire County Council

WSCB -Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board

Definitions of key terms used in this policy can be found in the relevant section of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Appendix 5: the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) Code 3

The headteacher/head of school, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSL) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police officers.

1. PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for these purposes.
2. PACE also states that if at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.
3. If a police officer arrives at the school wishing to speak with a student, the receptionist will inform the headteacher and the DSL and follow the school's visitor procedures. The DSL will ensure that arrangements are made to inform parents that this is the case and seek their presence at the school as the appropriate adult. If for any reason the parent cannot attend to be an appropriate adult the DSL or headteacher will ensure that an appropriate adult is provided from the school leadership team.
4. The DSL (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any police officer who wishes to speak to a student about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded on our online safeguarding system.
5. If having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the DSL (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they will ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns immediately.
6. A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned[1] before questioned about an offence[2] or asked further questions if the answers they provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect's answers or silence, (i.e., failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution.
7. A Police Officer must not caution a child or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult's presence.
8. The 'appropriate adult' means, in the case of a child:

    - the parent, guardian or, if the child is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
    - a social worker of a local authority or, failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
    - police officer
    - employed by the police.
    - under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or
    - a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions.

    Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.

    [1] The police caution is: *"You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence."*

2 A person need not be cautioned if questions are for other necessary purposes, e.g. (a) solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; to obtain information in accordance with any relevant statutory requirement; in furtherance of the proper and effective conduct of a search, e.g. to determine the need to search in the exercise of powers of stop and search or to seek co-operation while carrying out a search; or to seek verification of a written record.

Appendix 6 - How mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting (Primary Schools)

The Trust recognises that iPads, and other devices with audio, photo, and video recording functions can be valuable tools to support teaching and learning. Further details can be found in our Online Safety and Acceptable Use policies.

Staff use

- Staff may use school-owned devices to take photographs, videos, or audio recordings of students for legitimate educational purposes, including facilitating learning, assessment, and review.
- Such recordings must be stored securely in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and deleted when no longer required.
- Recording or photography will only take place with the appropriate consent from parents/carers and in compliance with safeguarding requirements.

Student use

- Students may have access to devices with recording capabilities as part of learning activities.
- Students must follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy when using these functions, and misuse may result in sanctions.
- Files (photos, videos, audio) created by students on their devices are not routinely monitored or reviewed by staff.
- Parents/carers are responsible for periodically reviewing their child's saved files to ensure appropriate use and content.
- The Trust recommends that parents/carers speak regularly with their child about safe and respectful use of recording technology.
- School should be mobile phone free by default, covering the whole school day, not just lessons, with exceptions rare rather than routine

General safeguards

- Any concerns regarding inappropriate use of recording functions by students should be reported immediately to the school so they can be addressed under the relevant behaviour and safeguarding procedures.
- Recording devices should never be used in areas where there is an expectation of privacy (e.g., toilets, changing rooms).

Appendix 7: Additional support and guidance

- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026)
- Working together to safeguard children 2026
- Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance
- Review of the RSHE statutory guidance - GOV.UK 2025
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- Children missing education
- Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026
- Behaviour and discipline in schools
- Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Preventing and tackling bullying (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Cyberbullying advice
- Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- The NSPCC email help@nspcc.org.uk
- The UK safer internet centre email at helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
- Think u know
- County Lines Toolkit For Professionals | The Children's Society (childrenssociety.org.uk)
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service | SWGfL
- Marie Collins Foundation
- Practice improvement - CSA Centre
- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK
- About Shore - Shore
- Stop_It_Now_harmful_sexual_behaviour_prevention_toolkit_Oct_2020.pdf
- Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) or peer-on-peer sexual abuse | NSPCC Learning
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67a1ee367da1f1ac64e5fe2c/Arranging_Alternative_Provision_-_A_Guide_for_Local_Authorities_and_Schools.pdf
- West Midlands Regional Safeguarding Procedures.
- Home - Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Plan technology for your school - GOV.UK